

Enemies and Friends: Peace and Conflicts in the Modern Era

Jierui Kang^{1, †}, Chenyu Liu^{2, †}, Rui Lu^{3, †} and Yifei Xiong^{4, *, †}

¹International Department, Changsha Yali High School, Changsha, China

²Department of Sociology, University of York, Heslington, York, United Kingdom

³Tianjin Xinhua Middle School, Tianjin, China

⁴Faculty of Foreign Studies, Beijing Language and Culture University, Beijing, China

*Corresponding author: 201911581076@stu.blcu.edu.cn

†These authors contributed equally.

Abstract. As Charles Dickens said in his masterpiece *A Tale of Two Cities*, it was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the season of light, it was the season of darkness. Indeed, living in the modern era, the era of uncertainty, although human beings have experienced challenges brought about by alliances and conflicts among different nations. Humans seem only to bemoan the disastrous consequences of wars and regional conflicts; meanwhile they gloat at the sight of peace while bragging about the illusions of a bright future. Overall, human beings are somehow blinded only by appearances of peace and conflicts among different nations, instead of recognizing the essence of conflicts or utilizing specialized theories to analyze them. The aim of this study is to analyze and evaluate the alliances and conflicts within modern history by using Carl Schmitt's political theories, hoping to avoid those bumpy paths human beings have witnessed and instead lead to the path of peace and prosperity. Specifically, this study used Carl Schmitt's political theories to analyze 1) Conflicts between social classes, 2) Peace and Conflicts between different ethnic groups, 3) Peace and conflicts between China and United States economically in the expectation of creating a better future for mankind.

Keywords: Carl Schmitt; Peace and Conflicts; Global Politics; Modern Era.

1. Introduction

Humans have witnessed the capricious state of global politics challenges in the modern era. Unfortunately, we as human beings, seem to underestimate the challenges brought about by the conflicts among different nations. In this article, the authors attempted to evaluate the alliances and conflicts within the modern history by applying Carl Schmitt's political theories.

Carl Schmitt was a German legal theorist whose book, *The Concept of the Political*, creatively posited the idea “the specific political distinction ... can be reduced to that between friend and enemy [1].” The most important part of Schmitt's attack on classical liberalism was his insistence that liberals were too optimistic towards the political reality. In this essay, Carl Schmitt lashed out against the idea that debate could replace combat, toleration could replace animosity, and the possibility of maintaining a peaceful world. Liberalism, Schmitt argued, depends on systematic neutralizations—fictions by which all individuals and points of view are imagined to be equal, and by which the confrontations of political life seem to be transformed into peaceful, rule-governed debates with open-ended, undetermined outcomes. For Schmitt, conflict was definitive of the political as such, and the political was essential to the human being, his thorough and uncompromising rejection of classical liberalism has inspired various attacks on toleration, limited government as well as peace.

Carl Schmitt understood liberalism well and rejected it totally, in his book *The Concept of the Political* he also argued that “This materializes only when the real possibility of war is precluded and every friend and enemy grouping becomes impossible. In this universal society, there would no longer be nations in the form of political entities, no class struggles, and no enemy groupings [2].” In this article, the authors will apply Carl Schmitt's theories into three different sections within the global politics, which includes social classes, ethnicities as well as the economic systems. To begin with, the authors attempt to analyze the societal and class conflicts, in this section, the authors will mainly

concentrate on the Chinese Civil War (1927–1937) and the American Civil War. Still, further discussion will mainly take these two examples into evaluation.

In the third section, the topic of peace and conflicts in ethnicities will be divided and evaluated into two parts. The first part delves into the velvet divorce of Czechoslovakia, using that as a case for study, the second part evaluates the ethnic conflicts in Bosnia-Herzegovina. In the final section, the authors will evaluate the friend and enemy state from an economic standpoint, with the discussion focusing on the ebb and flow of China and US relations.

Living in the midst of the fifth industrial revolution, as advances in technology improve the ability of people to communicate worldwide, the world continues to move toward a global worldview. As a result, the amount of power entrusted to governments has become increasingly intricate, thus the frequent transposing of the concepts of global politics. Consequently, analyzing alliances and conflicts in modern history helps us understand the future direction of global politics. Hopefully, our research can provide some insights into future global political studies, thus creating a better tomorrow.

2. The Conflicts Between Social Classes

In Carl Schmitt's work *The Concept of the Political*, he proposed an important point that is politics is a struggle with the enemy. Hence, conflict is the main part of politics. The conflict between different societal classes is a familiar form in the human history. To be sure, societal classes conflict has more political nature than other forms of conflicts which includes conflicts among different nations. In Carl Schmitt's theory, politics is distinguishing the friend and enemy. In the class conflict, the friend and enemy are blurry. By comparison, the conflict between nation and religion is clear to distinguish between friend and enemy.

2.1 The Representative Example of the Conflict Between Classes: Revolution

The familiar form of class conflict is the revolution, and the 'revolution' is an accurate word to describe the conflict between classes. In the Oxford dictionary, the 'revolution' means an attempt, by a large number of people, to change the government of a country, especially by violent action. Therefore, the revolution means a change in politics. Sometimes, the people who lived in the underclass launched the revolution, they joined the revolution because they were hungry or oppressed, for example, Russian Revolution in 1917. And some other forms of the revolution were launched by the capitalist, they want more rights from the traditional ruling class, a classic example is the Glorious Revolution.

2.2 The Chinese Civil War

The Chinese Civil War from 1927 to 1937 is a significant example of the conflict between different classes. There are two main political forces in this war, the Nationalist government and the Chinese Communist Party. In Schmitt's point, the civil is conflict within an organized unit, the Chinese civil war conform to this characteristic. The Nationalist government represents the interests of the capitalists and compradors. The Communist Party represents the interests of the people who live in the underclass such as farmers and laborers. This war began as the Shanghai massacre which Kuomintang purged the communist in their party and ended in Anti-Japanese War in 1937 [3]. This war became a most important event in the first half of the 20th century. In the point of Schmitt, distinguish of friend and enemy in interior make a decisive effect in the armed conflicts. And from 1920s to 1940s in China, the domestic politics trumped external politics such as the conflict with Japan. Therefore, the Chinese civil war is a most important political and it decided China's political trend and the world situation.

2.3 The Proposition of Two Parties and Two Classes

Before the Chinese civil war, the Kuomintang and the Chinese Communist Party was an ally to struggle with feudal warlord and the landowners. However, the Kuomintang government has broken

this ally when they acquired the regime in China. The main supporters of the Kuomintang government were capitalists and compradors, hence their core area of governance in the city and wealthy region in China [4]. The follower of the Chinese Communist Party was Farmer and labourers, this person was oppressed for a long time. So, the Communist Party has a huge of follower in the fame in China. Overall, the Kuomintang and the Chinese Communist Party represented two-class people in China.

3. The Peace and Conflicts in Ethnicities

The conflicts between ethnic/ ethnic nations were a problem that last for a long time. Different groups united themselves, and acquire resources to enlarge them. When they encounter other groups and have an argument, they will either use a peaceful way or use a violent method to their alien. Then, the contrary of friend and enemy occurred. The conflict in Bosnian-Herzegovina from 1992 to 1994, was a violent bloody conflict. However, the Velvet divorce of Czechoslovakia was undergone peaceful.

3.1 The differentiation of Bosnian From Yugoslavian

The ancestors of residents of Yugoslavia can be distinguished into two groups: The natives of the Balkan, and the later coming ancient Slavic. Inter-marriage and interaction with the local natives, plus the influence of isolated landscapes in the peninsula made them separate into different groups, and live in different regions. With these influences, these Slavs evolved different preferences in spoken language and converted into different religions, and their descendants became the first Yugoslavians.

As one branch of Yugoslavians, the religious factor and political factors post a huge impact on the differentiation of ethnic/nations in Bosnian. The occupation of the Ottoman empire converts Croatian, Serbian, and other residents in Bosnia into Muslims. Based on their beliefs, residents were classified into new ethnic, by Josep Broz Tito's policy. This new "Bosnian" nation was proposed, as a method to balance the population percentage of Serbian ethnic [5].

3.2 The Civil War in Bosnia

Confused with ethnic identities and deviated from the political idea, In April of 1992, 12 years after the death of Tito, 8 months after the break up of SFRY, with disagreement over the country's prospects, Bosnia Serbian, Bosnia Croatian, and Bosnia Muslim established own governments and declared war on each other. The war was 40 months long, caused almost two hundred thousand casualties, and results in 2 million people being homeless [6]. In 1995, 11th of July, the heinous Srebrenica massacre occurred as the result of conflicts and hatred between ethnic. More than 8000 Bosnian Muslim males were killed by Bosnian Serbian armed men [7]. Similar criminal activities happened in other ethnic as well. As Carl Schmidt described in his book "Concept of political", the concept of friends or enemies was never related to morality or emotion. The harmony between ethnic in SFRY under Tito's regime was realized under a common ideal, which acts as a bond of a belt. When the belt no longer exists, conflicts between ethnic appeared, and the unanimity break, then the wars come up. During the war, heinous crimes were done, however, the war wouldn't be rational [8]. The enemy should be exterminated by all possible methods. In the Massacre of Srebrenica, "History", "Ethnic argue", and "Self-defence" was not the reason, but an "excuse" for irreconcilable racial contradictions, by using slaughter [9]. These factors were given for exoneration, however, as Carl Schmidt suggested, when the factor of politics is involved, all factors are no purer [10].

3.3 Differences and Reconciliation Between The Two Ethnic

Recognized as the "West Slavs", the ethnic of Czech and Slovakia was once believed to share similarities, such as similar spoken language, and as part of the Great Moravian State, Holy Roman Empire the history. However, this thought was wrong. As partial Slovak believed, both ethnic's spoken languages are similar, but not identical. A corresponding standard of written text was thus

introduced in 1843 [11]. Which signed an end to the cultural unity possibility of the "Czechoslovakia" ethnic, even before the founding of the Czechoslovakia Republic. Czech, on the other hand, didn't realize the difference between them that need to be overcome. When divergence occurs between Czech and Slovak, it made them more "Inimicus" but not "Hostis", because their conflict is the result of failing to achieve the "Czechoslovakia" nation. The attempt to unite into a new nation had failed, and other political factors besides are not involved. Perhaps it could explain why the Velvet divorce went peacefully: the "enemy" only needs to go back to their border and remain as Czech and Slovak.

4. The Peace and Conflicts Between China and United States in Economic

4.1 The Military Support From United States to China

To begin with, in the last fifty years, the relationship between China and the US has had a great change, from "friends" to "enemies". There is no absolute friend or enemy, and all in all, it depends on the connection to interest. In the 20th century, China and the Soviet Union had a war on Zhenbao Island, because the Soviet Union tried to control China and invaded their territory from Xinjiang. Consequently, The Soviet Union suffered losses and had the willingness to set the N-war. However, this information was received by the US. For the reason that there was the Cold War, the US needed to find a way to restrict the Soviet Union, so they informed China, in order to have a cooperation. Thus, America and China tended to be friends, because they have a common interest, which is about fighting against the Soviet Union. Also, China was financially weak at that time, so they were eager to find someone to help them—America, the leader of technological and educational development, was a great choice. As a result, the US and China established diplomatic relations in 1979. During the time that they are friends, the US announced that it was prepared to sell some types of "non-lethal" military-related equipment to China [12]. What's more, they provided China with advanced technological help, and they even had spaceflight tests together. Meanwhile, China agreed to join in WTO and opened their economic market for America. Therefore, at that time, China and America were friends, because they could help each other on their finance. This kind of cooperation lasted for about ten years, until the Soviet Union collapsed. Their common enemy disappeared, as a result of which, the initial reason that they helped each other was false. Though having the financial help was another reason, America lost the primitive motivation to treat China nice, not to mention that China became the second powerful country in the world, a menace to America.

4.2 The US-China Trade War

There was another reason why America set the US—China trade war, and China didn't want to get along with America well. In fact, China not only opened their market but also invited millions of students to study in America. Their primary aim was to let students to study knowledge and went back to China to make a contribution. Nevertheless, many of them didn't want to go back any more, due to the fact that America had better environment to live and study compared to China in that period. This led to the great loss of elites for China, which could make a bad influence on the development of technology and economy. No elites meant that the country couldn't reach the highest level of improving. Besides, for America, after China had opened their market, Chinese handicrafts almost took up American market, because they are low-cost and high-quality. Hence, this was a huge strike for the US, and many Americans lost their job, which burden the government on dealing with the jobless people. The most important thing was that though China joined in WTO, they didn't keep the promise about opening their media, and that could be an excuse for the US to start the trade war. Also, Trump tweeted on April 4, 2018 that "a Trade Deficit of \$500 Billion a year, with Intellectual Property Theft of another \$300 Billion. We cannot let this continue" [13]! Thus, they focus on China, trying to solve this problem by suppressing the country with huge market. The US put tariffs on Chinese products for three times on electronic components. In addition, China and the specific 1,300 tariffs were American target at least from August 2017, and likely in internal planning when Trump first took office in January 2017 [14]. At this time, China and the US can't be friends. They lost the same

target to develop, and because both of them are strong enough, they needed to closely refine each other. In other words, China is the enemy for America now in Schmitt's view. This is the time about digit and information. Although they don't have the war about really killing people, they do have a war because of the economic conflicts.

5. Conclusion

Admittedly, the peace and conflicts within global politics brought magnificent opportunities and challenges towards a more stable political reality. Consequently, we as human beings, have experienced turbulent and precarious global political reality in the past, while in the meantime, an unpredictable future awaits us. Although the road to the future is bumpy and unstable, by analyzing and evaluating Carl Schmitt's political theories towards the alliances and conflicts in modern history, we may have a chance to avoid those bumpy paths we have witnessed and instead lead to the path of peace and prosperity.

Indeed, by analyzing the Chinese Civil War, we understand that power is not be in the hands of a few powerful people. Instead, power should be shared by all the people and ensuring the majority rule. Besides, only power supported by the people can form a government. From the case study of the ethnic conflicts in Bosnia-Herzegovina and the velvet divorce of Czechoslovakia, we learned the concepts of alliances and enemies are not related to morality or rationality. As a matter of fact, political interests constitute the deciding factors that manipulate all the issues in the political landscape. In addition, a country does not have permanent friends, only permanent interests. In this context, modern political reality tends to be capricious and highly unpredictable. However, by applying Carl Schmitt's theories to the political research available, we are more likely to understand the trends of political reality in the future.

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