

## Article

Looking at China's Economic System beyond  
the Binary Systemic Perspective<sup>i)</sup>

Hiroshi Tanaka

## Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to reconsider the theoretical perspective from which to examine the economic system of our neighboring country, China.

I worked at the School of Economics, Ritsumeikan University for more than 20 years. The lecture subject I gave at that time was "Comparative Economic Studies". The predecessor of this course lecture was "Socialist Economic Studies". As can be imagined, its contents had its starting point in lecture on the comparative superiority (and deficiencies) of capitalist and socialist economic systems. However, since the end of the 1980s, when the socialist economic systems of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union began to disintegrate and the international order known as the 'Cold War' came to an end in Europe, this comparison has lost much of its significance and importance. Instead, comparisons between transition countries have come to the fore, and comparisons between capitalist economies have been added to the content of lectures (varieties of capitalist systems and sectoral comparisons), and so-called emerging market economies have also been included in this scope. However, comparative economic research is at a point where Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which began in April 2022, is likely to bring in from another direction the need to re-examine the military-political-economic system of the former Soviet Union, which Russia inherited as a path dependency.

In the last class of my lecture, I asked the question; "Modern Chinese socialism: is China not capitalist?". Why did China not collapse its system like the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe? Has China transformed into capitalism? The Chinese economic system has always been a puzzle not only for researchers but also for China-watchers. When talking about the Chinese economic system in comparative economic theory, it is difficult to explain it in

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i) This article is a revised and expanded version of my original article (in Japanese) published in *Study China*, No.11 (Vol.131), 1 October 2020.

a positive way, as it has many characteristics of what it is not. This is because Chinese society is outside the academic doctrines originating in the West and it is difficult to talk about it in its academic terms (terminology of comparative economic theory).

## 1. Is China Socialist ?

On 21 December 2019, a symposium entitled “Is China Socialist?” was held at Doshisha University (Kyoto), and was attended by over 300 members of the public, who listened attentively to the debate. The organization of this symposium was due to a change in Japanese public opinion trends that argue that China is becoming capitalist, and a shift in the views of many researchers who have come to support this view.

The first presenter, Fumio Ashida, argued that China’s socialist market economy is at the stage of ‘marketisation of the factors and means of production’ and that when 20th century socialism, including China, is considered from the perspective of the 21st century socialist vision of an ‘associated society’, it was a system of control from above by the ‘state’. In the second presentation, Keiji Ide first confirms the theoretical flaws of Marx’s theory of non-market socialism. Then, he argues that China that has re-examined the mistakes and experiences of the collapsed former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, on the one hand, embodying Chinese own national, political, social and historical institutions, while on the other hand, having political defects such as the party-state system, the one-party system, the suppression of freedom of speech and fundamental human rights guarantees, etc., is transforming to ‘socialism based on a market economy. He regards the planned control including “public ownership, distribution according to work, co-wealthification and social solidarity” as characteristic of the current stage of socialism. In the third presentation, Hiroshi Onishi holds that, theoretically, only capitalism can be a society in which capital accumulation is the primary task of society, and then characterizes China as “state monopoly capitalism with an orientation towards socialism”. He sees China’s state monopoly capital or ‘state-owned enterprise system’ is functioning well and further, confirms China’s attempt to achieve an economic hegemony that differs from the US hegemony under the uneven development of world capitalism. In the fourth presentation, Tsuneto Yamamoto agrees with the view that China is on the path of “big government capitalism” or “state capitalism”, and judges that China is at a crossroads heading towards between a ‘legal market economy’ and ‘gongqi capitalism’ from the actual perspective of the socialization of the means of production and capital-labour relations. The last presenter and the coordinator of this symposium, Hiroshi Kikunami, from the viewpoint that the market economy is not the same as capitalism, predicts that if the market in China is left unchecked and controlled, as it is now, it will not be compatible with socialism.

According to Toshiyasu Saito, the five discussants appreciated the fact that China, which has initiated marketisation and opening up to the outside world, has overcome the failures of the Mao-era authoritarian economic system and the former planned economic systems of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, but they had different views and arguments on whether it is a capitalist system or a socialist system and on understanding the current and future economic system in China. In addition, the same issue of 'Study China' contributed the following views of the participants; The biggest challenge is the revival of the whole culture of Chinese society in the "motherland China" that remains in rural areas amidst marketisation. Interdisciplinary researches beyond the framework of Marxist economics is necessary to solve this issue (Takeshi Iwabayashi); There is a divergence between insiders' understanding of the assessment of China's overall system and that of external observers (Masaharu Harada); The goodness or badness of the system should not be assessed by economic indicators such as GDP, but by overall indicators such as Happiness Index. However, China cannot necessarily be said to clear these indicators (Hitoshi Kono); China's socialism has reached the stage of the so-called 'birdcage economy' (Chen Yun), and even at the stage where the means of production are not marketised, the harsh strengthening of international competition in expanding exports after joining the WTO seems to step out of socialism (Hideo Kinoshita); China is facing a period of seeking cooperation, reciprocation and overlapping between the state, the market and civil society, and the challenge for China is to uplift the nation-state system that created the "party-state system" through the construction of international regional communities (Shuji Matsuno); and China's current society is in a "special transition period" with a double transition from "tradition" to "modernity" and from "planned control" to "market", and its systemic essence is "state capitalism" at the crossroads of the transition to original capitalism (Shozaburo Sakai).

The above divergent views and various approach perspectives at least force us to look at China's economic system beyond the binary systemic perspective.<sup>2)</sup>

## 2. Approaching the Chinese system from the scalar perspective

To digress a little into personal matters, I had the opportunity to observe the "quiet" collapse and regime change of the Hungarian socialist system in Budapest between 1991 and 1993 as a specialist researcher for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tokyo. At that time, I was faced with the difficult question of what theoretical and analytical perspective to use to observe and analyze this transformation and where it was heading. The only way to answer these difficult questions was through on-the-site observation and daily experience, but even on that basis, two analytical approaches, institutional and scalar, provided

a small ray of light. In the following, I will approach the Chinese system from this angle.

The first concerns about China's spatial scalar. In considering its geographical scalar, the point is to avoid methodological nationalism, which sees the nation-state (economy) as the basic unit of the modern world with its homogeneous organization/community. From this point of view, it is not the Japanese or US economy that can be compared to the Chinese economy, but the European (EU) economy. Both are continental scale economies. European (EU) capitalism does not only consist of the EU with its (semi-) federal union character in Brussels, but is also a collection of diverse and differentiated national capitalisms, including the Nordic countries, Central and Western Europe like Germany, Southern Europe and Eastern Europe. In contrast, is one model of economic system sufficient for the vast territory of China? Is it a special economic system with competing regional (sub-national) capitalisms of various models? Or is it a regional 'multi-uklad' system? For example, competing sub-national capitalisms include the Guangdong Special Zone, which combines Hong Kong-based foreign-funded enterprises, special zone labour, rural migrant labour and overseas market orientation, the Sunan Transnational Technology Complex, which has leapt from township enterprises to foreign-funded enterprises, Wenzhou and Zhejiang, which have developed from township enterprise to large private companies, East Asian Silicon Valley-style Shenzhen, and historically state-owned enterprise-dominated Chongqing are typical (Jun Zhang and James Peck 2016).<sup>3)</sup>

The substance of society (and economy) that encompasses one-sixth of the world's population, just under 1.4 billion people, is inherently diverse and cannot be monolithically homogeneous. Given this diversity and in homogeneity, as well as its integration into the variegated global economy after the reform and opening up, the governance of the economic system must be regionally and politically diverse, complex and contested. China may be a 'federalist' developmental state system that embeds and contains competing regional capitalisms of diverse models.

### 3. Approaching the Chinese system from the institutional perspective

The question can then be asked what are the characteristics of the 'federalist' developmental state system that spans competing subnational regional capitalisms. To explore what they are, we can start by understanding what institutions are. An institution can be defined as a set of principles, norms or, more broadly speaking, a set of rules that people produce or regulate through their interactions. Oliver Williamson (2000) of the New Institutional School, noting the four scalar time frames and their characteristics, holds institutions as an accumulation of various institutional levels, as follows in terms of frequency (years). (L1) one hundred years to one thousand years: informal institutions, customs, tra-

ditions, norms, religions and ethics, various 'embeddings', unpredictability, autogenous evolution; (L2) ten years to one hundred years: formal rules over property rights (political, legal, bureaucratic), adequacy of institutional environment; (3) one year to ten years: Governance: play of the game, contract structures over contracts, aligning governance structures with transactions; (4) Instantaneous and continuous change: Resource allocation and employment, alignment of prices, quantities and incentives, and marginal optimization.

Two trends of modernization have developed in the institutions of Western societies. One is the sharpening and ordering of the boundaries (of consciousness) between (L1), (L2), (L3) and (L4) (and their respective lower tiers). Another is to open up pathways, routes, through which interactions between the different levels can occur, and in which the upper-level layers embed and constrain the lower layers, but, at the same time, the lower layers counteract the actions from the upper layers. This results in two aspects: path dependency and path emergence.

However, instead of an order based on the sharpening of institutional boundaries at each level layer, Chinese society has maintained and evolved a 'relationship'-driven social network that seamlessly intermeshes between (and within) each institution over a very long period of time (Xiao Gakuwei 2019<sup>5</sup>). This long-term 'relationship'-driven social network refers to the level (L1).

In contrast, the mainstream neoclassical economics takes (L4) as its main and fundamental field of analysis and research. Institutional economics and theories of transition/transformation have raised the field of analysis and research from (L4) level to (L3) and (L2) and extended the scope of research by incorporating various institutions at the (L3) and (L2) level into the existing framework of economics and transition/transformation policies (scenarios). In particular, they have taken the private property system, which links (L3) and (L2), as a sacred foundation.

On the other hand, (L1) has been expelled from the subject of economic logical development by mainstream economics (and classical economics as well). Rather, Western capitalism is said to have developed by liberating people's economic and business thinking from (L1). The former Soviet and Eastern European regimes assumed that they could build and operate a socio-economic and political system that would harmonize and develop the systems from (L1) to (L3) by introducing a one-party system, concentration of state ownership and a central planning system from above in order to eliminate (L4) related problems. But they failed to do so. The subsequent transformations in Russia and Eastern Europe introduced (L4) and (L3), (L2) based on internal and external liberalization and privatization (introduction of private ownership), but it was the neoliberalism of the US and EU, and German-style social market economy theory that they learned from. According to Tsuneo Morita (2020<sup>6</sup>) these transformations failed to produce ethics and social norms that govern civil society at the level of (L1) even after 30 years. So how did such

ethics and social norms function in China ?

Less than 30 years of the post-war Maoist era in China have highlighted the boundaries between the Party and the state (state administrative organization and state enterprises) in the traditional intermeshed fusion-type of “relationship” driven social network described above, separating and projecting them from society (from the Constitution of the People’s Republic of China to “unit society” and “urban and rural household registration” at the bottom). On top of this, furthermore, the Cultural Revolution attempted to thoroughly destroy the fusion-type of “relationship” driven social network’. However, this destruction led to the immediate collapse of the Chinese economy. Over the next four decades, a partial and gradual revival and evolution of the “relationship” driven network that seamlessly interconnects (LI) institutions, including ethics and social norms different from those in the West, with the other layers of institutions. In other words, it was not only Western-style, Japanese and East Asian institutions, and the know-how of overseas Chinese abroad that China learned. Rather, it was the revival and evolution of the above-mentioned traditions and marketisation that unleashed the energy of reform and opening up in China. This process of revival and liberation differs from the systemic transformation ways of Russia and Eastern Europe in that it was the other way round.

Within the existing economic framework, there are two basic trends in contemporary China. On the one hand, the economy has moved away from a command economy system with central planning, becoming more decentralized, and the market has gained momentum, while on the other hand, the political leadership role of the Communist Party and capabilities of the central government have not been weakened but rather strengthened. However, since the Cultural Revolution to the present day, the ‘idea’ of socialism has remained in flux, with slogans of ‘socialism with Chinese characteristics’ such as the state ownership dominance, mixed ownership, and the realization of communal enrichment and social justice. The main battleground in which fierce competition is taking place is not the market economic space such as the institutional strengthening of fragile private property (since 1990), the ‘privatization’ of land and housing, the efficient allocation of investment, trade liberalization, the private enterprise establishment and the growing consumer goods markets. The main battleground is both the space of the expansion of influence and interest networks by local government and the bureaucracy within the party and state structures, and the space of the ‘sardine swarm’ (sardine clustering) of countless specialized family businesses and small enterprises that operate within and below them. These two institutional spaces, above and below, are embedded and seamlessly fused together by a ‘relationship’-driven social network that has gradually been revitalized and evolved.

This fusion has created competing diversity of the above-mentioned regional capitalist models within the country. In this context, land remains in the hands of the state, but a system of long-term lease contracts has been introduced. The investment rate over the

past two decades has been high, at 45-49% of GDP, but its efficiency is very low, offset by a high proportion of input factors and neglect of the environment (Three peaks and one trough). Controls on the exchangeability of the Chinese yuan have led to restrictions on trade and capital markets. The growth of the non-state sector has reached 70% of GDP, of which the truly private sector has only exceeded 20% of GDP. Accession to the WTO in 2001 did not bring full liberalization and transparency in the areas of trade and investment. The trade and current account surpluses amounting to 3-8% of gross national income are anomalous compared to the huge external deficits of the developing economies. It has not yet activated domestic demand-driven market mechanisms. In contrast to the standard features of classical command economies, the Chinese economy has become a highly arbitrary, policy-driven model, i.e. an economy where interventionism has become the rule rather than the exception. This interventionism depends entirely on the goodwill and reputation of the authorities, and regions and localities compete for it. Interventionism is more regional than central in character, but Communist Party control is unquestioned. However, a powerful trend is emerging in which the strengthening of traditional fusion-type 'relationship'-driven social networks is linked to marketisation, privatization and innovation. The Xi Jinping's government is determined to prevent it thoroughly during 2012-2020, and the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China aims to build a strong, modernized socialist state, including the prevention (<https://www.jetro.go.jp/biznews/2022/10/ba87828a38db6d95.html>).

#### 4. Conclusion: systemic governance and China.

The Hungarian comparative economist, Laszlo Csaba, attempts to understand what gives rise to these Chinese characteristics from the analytical lens of systemic governance.<sup>7)</sup>

This analytical lens is an attempt to understand macroeconomic phenomena from a micro perspective, and to explain the behavior in macroeconomic situations not only in terms of the power, subordination and administrative relations of the public administration, the central government and ruler-ruled, but also in terms of the horizontal interplay of incentives and information processing. In other words, systemic governance is formed by the interaction between the complexity of constructivist and artificial rules, and the spontaneous reactions of corporations, individuals, national and international players in a game of millions of actors. In short, it is the interface between human deliberation and largely spontaneous outcomes. Systemic governance is a combination of managerial, microeconomic, interdisciplinary, financial-economic and social engineering approaches to real-world phenomena, but its theoretical source is attributed to Walter Eucken, the founder of the German social market economy.

According to Csaba's understanding, China's systemic governance is characterized by horizontal adjustment mechanisms of equal relevance to vertical adjustment mechanisms, maintenance of decentralization by the active central state, the separation of economic and political trajectories of change, instructions of experimenting with the introduction of various property forms and tendencies to keep them to an average size not exceeding 22-25% of national assets, acceptance of partial liberalization of the economy under the central government control, tendencies to leave much of the detail in the hands of local administrators, and tendencies of macroeconomic and political processes left in the hands of the Communist Party leadership. In terms of economic growth, it is noted that the high economic growth resulting from the above-mentioned tendencies has been constrained by the fact that the Chinese economy was at a low-level stage of development. It also argued that in order to catch up with the per capita levels of Singapore and Hong Kong without falling into the middle-income trap, further efforts are needed in terms of marketisation and further institutionalization of relevant rules and regulations to guarantee the cultural outcomes of business interactions.

Csaba's exploration, however, takes a different direction from the investigations in sections 2 and 3, while observing almost the same reality. The difference lies in 'relationship' driven social networks and systemic governance. China cannot be viewed with the same logic as the western lens through which capitalism is viewed. Price controls, restrictions on private ownership, trade and currency restrictions, and administrative restrictions on the entry and exit of enterprises are more pro-socialist. In the term of development economic theory, it is a combination of decentralized authoritarianism, political centralization, and economic diversity decentralization, but a 'federalist' system in which they are combined with 'relationship' driven social network in which the party bureaucracy is also embedded. The unique Chinese economic system needed to be viewed beyond the alternative, capitalism vs. socialism, systemic perspective.

#### Notes

- 1) The following is dependent on "Study China" No 11 (whole No 131), and Ashida, Ide, Ohnishi, Kikunami and Yamamoto (2020) *Is China Socialist?*, June 2020, Kamogawa Publishing.
- 2) For the following recognition of the current state of the Chinese economy, see Laszlo Csaba, China at the crossroads. *Acta Oeconomica*, vol. 70, pp.5-14, 2020.
- 3) Jun Zhang & Jamie Peck (2016) Variegated Capitalism, Chinese Style: Regional Models, Multi-scalar Constructions, *Regional Studies*, Volume 50, 2016, issue 1. pp.52-78.
- 4) Oliver E. Williamson, The New Institutional Economics: Taking Stock, Looking Ahead, *Journal of Economic Literature*, Vol. 38, No. 3. Sep. 2000, pp. 595-613.
- 5) Xiao Gakuwei (2019) *Society and Principles of Action in Contemporary China*. 2019, Iwanami Shoten).
- 6) Tsuneo Morita (2020) *Political Economy and Sociology of Transformation*, Nihon Hyoronsha.
- 7) Laszlo Csaba (2022) Systemic Governance, in Dallago, B. and Casagrande, S. (eds.) *Routledge Handbook of Comparative Economics*, (2023 publication to be confirmed).



# 超越二元系统视角看中国经济体系<sup>i) ii)</sup>

田 中 宏

## 引 言

本文的目的是重新思考从何种理论角度研究我们的邻国—中国经济体系。

我在立命馆大学经济学院工作了20多年。当时我讲的课程主题是“比较经济研究”。这个课程的前身是“社会主义经济研究”，主要讲授资本主义和社会主义经济体系的比较优势（以及不足/缺陷）。然而，自从20世纪80年代末，东欧和苏联的社会主义经济体系开始解体，被称为“冷战”的国际秩序在欧洲结束。于是这种比较失去了很多意义和重要性。相反，转型国家之间的比较成为重点，资本主义经济体之间的比较也被纳入到讲座内容之中（资本主义制度的种类和部门比较），所谓的新兴市场经济体也被纳入到这个范围。然而，比较经济研究正处于这样一个阶段：俄罗斯从2022年4月开始入侵乌克兰，这从另一个角度提示我们以路径依赖的方式继承的重新审视前苏联军事-政治-经济体系的必要。

在我的最后一堂课上，我提出了这样一个问题：“现代中国社会主义：中国不是资本主义吗？为什么中国没有像苏联和东欧那样崩溃其体系？中国已经转变为资本主义了吗？中国的经济体系一直是一个谜，我们不仅是研究者，也是中国的观察者。在比较经济理论中谈论中国经济体系时，我们很难从正面解释它，因为有很多不符合它应有的特征。中国社会处于西方学术理论体系之外，很难用其学术术语（比较经济理论的术语）来谈论它。

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i) 本文是我在《中国研究》第11期（第131卷）上发表的原创文章（日文）的修订和扩展版本，发表于2020年10月1日。

ii) 中文翻译由立命馆大学经济研究科博士生徐钰蕊协助完成。

## 1. 中国是社会主义吗？

2019年12月21日，本人在同志社大学（京都）举行了主题为“中国是社会主义吗？”的座谈会，有300多名观众参加并进行了热烈的辩论<sup>1)</sup>。组织这次研讨会的起因是日本舆论趋势发生了变化，认为中国是资本主义国家，且许多研究人员也开始支持这种观点。

第一位演讲者芦田文夫认为，中国的社会主义市场经济处于“生产要素和生产方式的市场化”阶段，如果从21世纪社会主义“关联社会”愿景角度讨论20世纪社会主义，它是一个由“国家”从上方控制的系统。在第二个演讲中，井手啓二首先指出了马克思的非市场社会主义理论的逻辑错误。然后，他认为重新审视已崩溃的前苏联和东欧的错误和中国经验，一方面体现了自己的民族、政治、社会和历史体制的特点，另一方面又有党国体制、一党制、压制言论自由和基本人权保障等政治缺陷，致使它正在向‘基于市场经济的社会主义’转型。他认为包括“公有制、按劳分配、共同富裕和社会团结”等计划控制是现阶段社会主义的特点。在第三个发言中，大西弘毅认为，从理论上讲，只有资本主义才能成为一个以资本积累为主要任务的社会，并将中国描述为“以社会主义为方向的国家垄断资本主义”的国家。他认为中国的国家垄断资本和“国有企业制度”的良好运作证实了世界资本主义发展不均衡的情况下，中国试图实现不同于美国霸权的经济霸权。在第四个汇报中，山本恒人认同中国正走在“大政府资本主义”或“国家资本主义”道路上的观点，并认为生产资料社会化和资本-劳动关系的实际角度来看，中国正处于走向“合法市场经济”和“功利资本主义”之间的交叉路口。最后一位报告人，也是和本次研讨会的负责人聴涛弘从市场经济不等于资本主义的角度预测，如果中国的市场像现在这样不受约束和控制，它将很难与社会主义相容。

斋藤敏康认为，五位讨论者都赞赏中国启动了市场化和对外开放，克服了毛泽东时代的专制经济体制和苏联、东欧的原计划经济体制的失败，但他们对中国是资本主义体制还是社会主义体制以及中国当前和未来的经济体制的理解有不同的看法和争论。此外，同一期的《学习中国》贡献了与会者的以下观点：最大的挑战是市场化进程中如何复兴留在农村地区的“中国故乡”的整个社会文化。要解决这个问题，有必要进行超越马克思主义经济学框架的跨学科研究（岩林

彪)；对于中国整体制度的评估，中国国内学者的理解与外部观察者的理解存在分歧(菱田雅治)；制度的好坏不应该由GDP等经济指标来评估，而应该由幸福指数等整体指标来评估。然而，这些数据在中国有时并不能被明确展示(河野仁)；中国的社会主义已经到了所谓‘鸟笼经济’的阶段(陈云)，即使在生产资料没有市场化的阶段，中国加入WTO后在扩大出口方面极力地加强国际竞争力，这似乎已经与社会主义有所背离(木下英雄)。中国正面临着国家、市场和公民社会三者之间寻求合作、互惠和并存的时期。中国面临的挑战是如何通过国际区域共同体建设来提升并创造“党国体制”的民族国家体系(松野周治)。而中国目前的社会正处于从“传统”到“现代”、从“计划控制”到“市场”的双重转型的“特殊过渡期”，其制度本质是处于向原始资本主义转型的“国家资本主义”(酒井正三郎)。

上述种种或一致或分歧的观点，更加明确我们有必要持着超越两套制度的视角看待中国经济体制的必要性。<sup>2)</sup>

## 2. 从“距离”角度看待中国制度

扯远一点，我在1991年至1993年期间，曾作为东京外务省专业研究员，有机会在布达佩斯观察匈牙利社会主义制度的“悄然”崩溃和政权更迭。当时，我面临着一个困难的问题，即用什么理论和分析角度来观察和分析这个政权的变化以及它的走向。回答这些难题的唯一方法是通过现场观察和日常经验。尽管如此，两种分析方法—机构和标度—也提供了一丝曙光。以下，我们从这个角度探讨中国制度。

首先是关于中国的空间标度。在考虑其地理标度时，重点是要避免方法论上的民族主义，即把国家(经济)视为现代世界的基本单位，其组织/社区是同质的。从这个角度看，可以与中国经济相比的不是日本或美国经济，而是欧洲(欧盟)经济。两者都是大陆性的国家标度。欧洲(欧盟)资本主义不仅包括在布鲁塞尔具有(半)联邦联盟性质的欧盟，而且也是一个多样化和差异化的国家资本主义的集合，包括北欧国家、德国等中欧和西欧、南欧和东欧。相比之下，一个经济体系模式是否足以满足中国的广大领土？它是一个特殊的经济体系，有各种模式的区域(次国家)资本主义的竞争，或者是一个区域性的“多经济制度”体系？比方说，相互竞争的次国家资本主义包括广东特区，它结合了以香港为基地

的外资企业、特区劳工、农村移民劳工和海外市场，苏南跨国科技园区从乡镇企业跃升为外资企业，温州和浙江从乡镇企业发展为大型民营企业，东亚硅谷式的深圳和历史上以国有企业为主的重庆也是典型的例子（Jun Zhang and James Peck 2016<sup>3)</sup>）。

中国有14亿人口，反应世界人口六分之一的社会和经济的实质，必然是多样化的，不可能是单一的。鉴于这种多样性和非同质性，以及改革开放后融入多变的全球经济，经济体系治理必须具有区域和政策的多样性、复杂性和争议性。中国可能是一个“联邦主义”的发展中国家体系，其中包含了不同模式的区域资本主义的竞争。

### 3. 从制度的角度看中国制度

那么，我们可以提出这样的问题：横跨不同国家 / 区域资本主义的“联邦主义”国家体系的特征是什么。我们从制度概念开始讨论这个问题。制度可以被定义为一套原则、规范或广义上的一套规则，人们通过他们的互动产生规范。新制度学派的奥利弗·威廉姆森（2000年<sup>4)</sup>）注意到四个标度的时间框架及其特点，认为制度是各种制度层面的积累，按频率（年）计算如下。（L1）一百年到一千年：非正式的制度、习俗、传统、规范、宗教和道德，各种“嵌入”，不可预测，自生的演变；（L2）十年到一百年。体制环境，产权的正式规则（政治、司法、官僚机构），制度环境的合理性；（L3）一年到十年。契约构造，管理构造的合理性；（L4）瞬息万变、不断变化：因价格、数量、奖励机制而产生的调整，以及通过限制进行的优化。

在西方社会的体制中，有两种现代化的趋势。一个是（L1）、（L2）、（L3）和（L4）（以及它们各自的次级层次）之间的界限的锐化和有序化。另一个是开辟新的途径、路线，通过这些途径，不同层次之间可以发生互动，上层嵌入并制约下层，但同时，下层又反作用于上层的行动。这导致了两个方面的问题：路径依赖性和路径涌现。

然而，中国社会并没有建立在每个层次的制度边界尖锐化的基础之上，而是在很长一段时期内保持和发展了一个“关系”驱动的社会网络，在每个机构之间（和内部）无缝交融（肖阁伟 2019<sup>5)</sup>）。这种长期“关系”驱动的社会网络与水平（L1）有关。

与此相反，主流的新古典经济学将（L4）作为其主要和基本的分析和研究领域。制度经济学和转型 / 变革理论将分析和研究的领域从（L4）层面提高到（L3）和（L2），并通过将（L3）和（L2）层面的各种制度纳入现有经济学和转型 / 变革政策框架（情景）扩大研究范围。特别是，他们把连接（L3）和（L2）的私有制作为一个神圣的基础。

另一方面，（L1）却被主流经济学（也包括古典经济学）从经济逻辑发展的主题中剔除。相反，西方资本主义通过将人们的经济和商业思维从（L1）中解放而发展起来的。前苏联和东欧政权认为他们可以通过引入一党制、国家所有权的集中和自上而下的中央计划系统建立和运行一个社会经济和政治系统，协调和发展从（L1）到（L3）的系统，以摒弃（L4）相关问题。但他们没能做到这一点。俄罗斯和东欧随后的转型中引入了（L4）和（L3），（L2）基于内部和外部自由化和私有化（引入私有制），但他们学习的是美国和欧盟的新自由主义，以及德国式社会主义市场经济理论。根据盛田常夫（2020）<sup>6)</sup>的说法，这些转型未能在（L1）的层面上产生管理公民社会的伦理和社会规范，即使在30年后。那么，这种伦理和社会规范在中国是如何运作的呢？

中国战后持续了不到30年的毛泽东时代，在传统的相互融合型‘关系’驱动的社会网络中，突出了党和国家（国家行政组织和国有企业）的界限，将它们与社会（从《中华人民共和国宪法》到‘单位社会’和‘城乡户籍’的底层）分离和投射。在此基础上，进一步说，文革试图彻底摧毁‘关系’驱动的社会网络’的融合型。然而，这种破坏导致了中国经济的瞬间崩溃。在随后的四十年里，“关系”驱动的网络逐步恢复和演变，它将（L1）机构，以及西方不同的伦理和社会规范，与其他层次的机构无缝连接起来。换句话说，中国学习的不仅仅是西式的、日本的和东亚的制度以及海外华人的技术。相反，是上述传统和市场化的复兴和演变释放了改革开放的能量。这种复兴和改革过程与俄罗斯和东欧的制度转型方式不同，它是反过来的。

在现有的经济学框架下，当代中国有两个基本趋势。一方面，经济已经脱离了中央计划的指令性经济体制，变得更加分散，市场的发展势头良好；另一方面，共产党的政治领导作用和中央政府的能力没有被削弱，反而得到了加强。然而，自文化大革命到至今，社会主义的“理念”仍在不断变化，中国政府提出了“中国特色社会主义”的口号，如国家所有制主导，混合所有制，以及实现社区致富和社会公正。激烈竞争的主要战场并不是市场经济空间，如从制度上加强脆弱的私有制（1990年以来），土地和住房的‘私有化’，投资的有效分配，贸易自由化，

私营企业的建立和消费品市场的增长。主战场既是地方政府和官僚机构在党和国家结构中扩大影响力和利益网络的空间，也是在其内部和下属的无数专业化家族企业和小企业的‘沙丁鱼群’（沙丁鱼经营的集群）的空间。这上下两个机构空间被一个逐渐恢复和发展的‘关系’驱动的社会网络嵌入并无缝融合在一起。

这种融合在一个国家内形成了上述区域资本主义模式的竞争多样性。在这种情况下，土地仍然掌握在国家手中，但已经引入了长期租赁合同制度。在过去20年中，土地投资率很高，占GDP的45-49%，但效率很低，这一部分由高比例的要素投入和对环境破坏作为代价（三高一低）。人民币可兑换性的控制制约了贸易和资本市场的限制。非国有部门的增长已经达到GDP的70%，而真正的私有部门只占了GDP的两成。2001年加入世贸组织并没有带来贸易和投资领域的全面自由化和透明度。与发展中经济体的巨额对外赤字相比，中国占国民总收入3-8%的贸易和经常账户盈余是不正常的。它还没有启动国内需求驱动的市场机制。与古典的命令式经济的典型特征不同，如今的中国经济遵循一种高度任意的、政策驱动的模式，即干预主义已经成为一种常规而非例外的经济模式。这种干预主义完全取决于当局的善意和声誉，也导致了各地区和地方之间的相互竞争。干预主义的特点是区域性多于中央性，虽然如此，共产党的控制也是不容置疑的。然而，一个强有力的新趋势正在出现，即传统的融合型“关系”驱动的社会网络的加强与市场化、私有化和创新的融合。习近平政权在2012-2020年期间一直试图彻底防止这种情况的发生，中国共产党第二十次全国代表大会的目标是全面建设社会主义现代化社会主义强国。（<https://www.jetro.go.jp/biznews/2022/10/ba87828a38db6d95.html>）。

#### 4. 综上所述：系统治理与中国。

匈牙利比较经济学家 Laszlo Csaba 试图从系统性治理的分析视角来理解是什么导致了这些中国特色的显现<sup>7)</sup>。

这些分析视角试图从微观角度理解宏观经济现象，不仅从公共行政部门、中央政府和统治者-非统治者的权力、从属关系和行政关系来解释机构在宏观经济形势下的行为，而且还从激励和信息处理的横向相互作用来解释。换句话说，系统治理是由建构主义和人工规则的复杂性，以及企业、个人和国内及国际参与者在数以百万计的参与者的游戏中自然形成。换句话说，它是人类的思维活动和大部分自发结果之间的交互。系统治理是管理学、微观经济学、跨学科、金融经济

和社会工程方法对现实世界现象的结合，但其理论来源归于德国社会市场经济的创始人沃尔特-欧肯。

根据 Csaba 的理解，中国的系统性治理的特点是横向调整机制与纵向调整机制同等重要，通过积极的权力下放分离经济和政治的变化轨迹。政府尝试引入多种资产形式，并倾向于将其保持在不超过国家资产22-25%的中等规模，接受中央政府控制下的经济部分自由化，倾向于将大部分细节交给地方管理者，以及倾向于将宏观经济和政治进程交给共产党领导。在经济增长方面，报告指出，由于中国经济处于低水平的发展阶段，上述倾向导致了经济增长受到限制。报告还认为，如若希望追赶新加坡和香港的人均水平且不落入中等收入国家的陷阱，中国政府需要在市场化方面进一步努力，并将相关规则和条例进一步制度化，以保证商业互动的文化成果。

虽然，Csaba 的探索与第二节和第三节的调查方向不同，但观察到的现实几乎相同。差异在于“关系”社会网络和系统性治理。不能用看待西方资本主义的视角与逻辑来看待中国。价格控制、对私有制的限制、贸易和货币限制以及对企业进入和退出的行政限制都是极大的亲社会主义。用发展经济理论的术语来说，它是分权专制、政治集权和经济多元化分权的结合体，但却是一个“联邦主义”体系，其中它们与“关系”社会网络相结合，党的官僚机构也嵌入其中。必须超越二元系统、要以资本主义与社会主义的系统视角来观察独特的中国经济体系。

#### 注

- 1) 以下是《学习中国》第11期（全本第131期）的内容。另有芦田、伊德、大西、听涛、山本，《中国成为社会主义》，2020年6月，鸭川出版社。
- 2) 有关以下对中国经济现状的认识，请参阅 Laszlo Csaba, 《十字路口的中国》。经济学报，第70卷，第5-14页，2020年。
- 3) Jun Zhang & Jamie Peck (2016) Variegated Capitalism, Chinese Style: Regional Models, Multi-scalar Constructions, *Regional Studies*, Volume 50, 2016, issue 1. pp.52-78
- 4) Oliver E. Williamson, The New Institutional Economics: Taking Stock, Looking Ahead, *Journal of Economic Literature*, Vol. 38, No. 3. Sep. 2000, pp. 595-613.
- 5) 邓阁伟，《当代中国的社会与行为原则》，2019年，岩波書店。
- 6) 盛田常夫，《政权变革的政治和经济社会学》，2020年，日本评论。
- 7) Laszlo Csaba (2022) Systemic Governance, in. Dallago, B. and Casagrande, S. (eds.) *Routledge Handbook of Comparative Economics*, (2023 publication to be confirmed).