

A Study on the Differences and Similarities of Social Structures Dominated by Military Politics in Different Cultural Contexts: Taking *War and Peace* and *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* as Example

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Abstract: This paper focuses on *War and Peace* and *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, exploring in depth the similarities and differences in the social structures dominated by military and political forces in different cultural contexts of Russia and China. By analyzing the distribution of character classes, military power composition, and political power structure in the two works, the common and individual characteristics of military and political dominant social structures under different cultural backgrounds are revealed, demonstrating the profound influence of culture on the formation and development of social structures, and providing new perspectives and references for cross-cultural historical and social research.

Keywords: cultural context; Military and political dominance; social structure

1. Introduction

Literary works are often mirrors that reflect the social structure and cultural landscape of a specific historical period. *War and Peace* depicts a grand picture of Russian society in the early 19th century against the backdrop of the Napoleonic Wars, while *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* portrays the turmoil and conflicts in Chinese society from the late Eastern Han Dynasty to the Three Kingdoms period. Both works are in a historical stage dominated by military and politics. However, due to the different cultural traditions, values, and other factors between Russia and China, their social structures present a complex picture of both similarities and differences^[1]. Comparative research on the two can help to gain a deeper understanding of the inherent connections between military politics and social structures in different cultural contexts, and uncover deeper historical and cultural connotations as well as social development laws hidden behind literature.

2. The Military Political Dominance of Social Structure in *War and Peace*

In the process of exploring the social landscape of Russia's specific historical period, "War and Peace" is like a mirror, clearly reflecting the trajectory and internal logic of the social structure under the strong military and political dominance at that time, and is worthy of in-depth analysis and interpretation.

2.1 Character Class and Social Structure

In *War and Peace*, the social classes in Russia are clearly defined. The aristocratic class occupies the upper echelons of society, owning vast amounts of land, wealth, and high social status^[2]. For example, the Rostov family and the Bulganski family play important roles in social, political, and military affairs. According to statistics, nobles account for about 60% of the main characters involved in the work (see Table 1). The children of these aristocratic families often join the military or participate in court politics, becoming the core force of military and political activities. They receive a good education and value family honor and tradition. During times of war, male members of the family often go to the front lines to defend the country or fight for honor. The common people, including farmers, small merchants, etc., are at the bottom of society, bearing heavy taxes and labor, and have almost no say in military and political decision-making^[3]. Farmers worked hard on the land of nobles,

providing food and other supplies for war, but were unable to participate in the formulation of military strategies or the distribution of political power. As show in Figure 1.

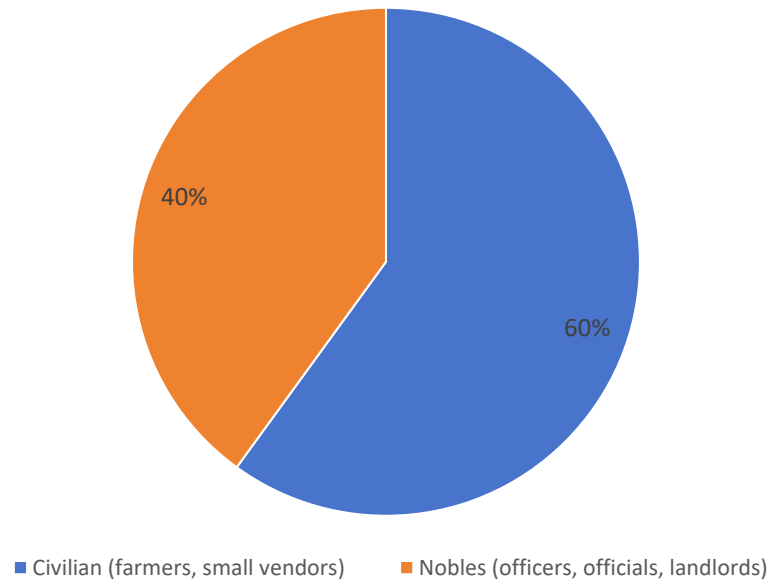


Figure 1: Character Class and Social Structure

2.2 Composition and role of military forces

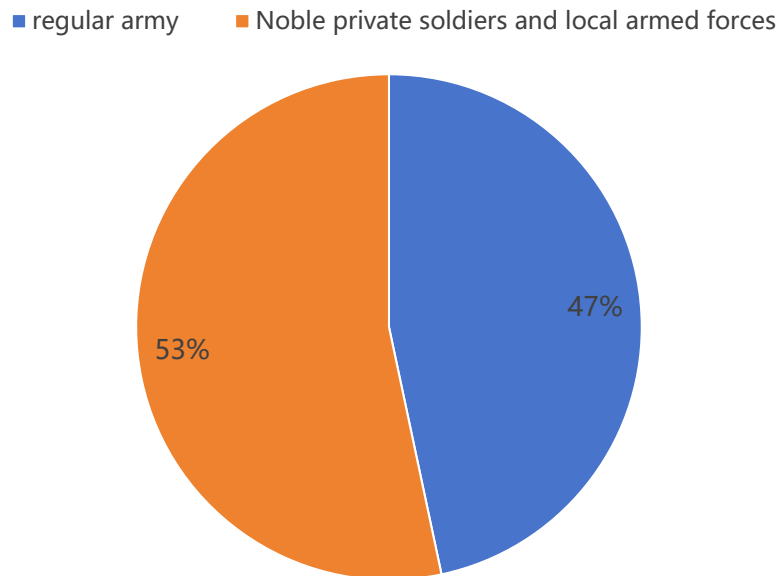


Figure 2: Proportion of troops

The military force of Russia is mainly composed of regular troops and aristocratic private soldiers. The regular army undertook the main combat tasks in the face of Napoleon's invasion, with a certain system of organization, training, and equipment. For example, under the leadership of Marshal Kutuzov, the Russian army fought against the French army in multiple battles^[4]. The regular army operates in a coordinated manner according to a certain military organization, from infantry, cavalry to artillery and other branches of the army. Soldiers receive systematic military training and are equipped with advanced weapons such as guns and cannons at that time. At the same time, aristocratic private soldiers also played a role in defending family territories and participating in local battles. In the Battle of Borodino, about 70% of the participating troops were regular troops, who formed a strong defense line on the battlefield and engaged in large-scale battles; 30% are aristocratic private soldiers or local armed

forces (see Table 2). Noble private soldiers often show loyalty to their families and demonstrate bravery in small-scale conflicts or battles to defend family interests. Military power is not only a tool for defending the country, but also affects the domestic political landscape to a certain extent. Military commanders have high prestige in the court and can influence some political decisions. For example, after the victory in war, the status of military commanders in the court increased, and their advice on national policies and influence on political personnel also correspondingly increased. As show in Figure 2.

2.3 Political Power Structure and Operation

The political power in Russia was highly concentrated in the hands of the Tsar, but there were struggles among different political factions and power groups within the court. The nobles compete for political resources and power status through their influence and military achievements in the court. For example, during the war, some nobles advocated for peace with Napoleon to protect their own interests, while others strongly supported resistance. This divergence reflects the contradictions and games in the political power structure. The decisions of the Tsar often require balancing the interests of all parties, and are constrained by various factors such as the aristocratic class and military commanders in the choice between war and peace. The political factions within the palace competed for influence over the Tsar, using political alliances, palace conspiracies, and other means to consolidate their position or weaken their opponents. Military victories or failures often became important bargaining chips in political power struggles.

3. The Military and Political Dominance of Social Structure in *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*

As the wheels of history roll towards the end of the Eastern Han Dynasty, the curtain of the Three Kingdoms' disputes unfolds. "Romance of the Three Kingdoms" vividly depicts how the social structure during this period underwent profound changes and reconstructions under the dominance of military and politics, with the ups and downs of characters and power closely linked to it.

3.1 Character Class and Social Structure

In the late Eastern Han Dynasty, the aristocratic class rose and became an important force in the dominant social structure of Chinese society. The gentry have a profound cultural heritage, a huge family power, and abundant land resources. Like the "Four Generations and Three Dukes" of the Yuan family in Runan, they have extremely high prestige in politics and society. Among the main characters depicted in *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, those from aristocratic backgrounds account for about 45% (see Table 3). The children of the aristocratic class received Confucian classic education from a young age, emphasizing their family background and personal moral cultivation^[5]. They often served as civil servants and strategists in politics, providing advice and strategies for the feudal lords, and controlling the political discourse power. In addition, there is also the military general class, who rose to power in turbulent times with their military talents, such as Guan Yu, Zhang Fei, etc. They often rely on different political forces and become the core backbone of various military forces. The generals are known for their bravery and military strategy, charging forward on the battlefield and fighting for territories for the lords. Ordinary people, on the other hand, suffer from displacement during wars and are at the bottom of society, providing military and material support to various forces. The common people were forced to migrate in the midst of war, and their lives were unbearable, but they were unable to change their own fate and could only become sacrifices or basic forces in military and political struggles. As show in Table 1.

Table 1: Comparison of Class Proportion

classes	Proportion of main characters	Main professions and roles
gentry	45%	Strategists, civil officials, local tycoons, etc
warrior	35%	Generals, military commanders, etc
civilian	20%	Farmers, craftsmen, soldiers, etc

3.2 Composition and Role of Military Forces

The military power during the Three Kingdoms period was mainly composed of the armies of

various feudal lords. These armies come from various sources, including recruited refugees, private soldiers of noble families, and locally incorporated armed forces. For example, Cao Cao's army initially consisted mainly of soldiers recruited by his family in the Yanzhou area and the remaining Yellow Turban troops incorporated. In the Battle of Red Cliffs, Cao Cao's army claimed to be one million, with about 40% of the troops being his direct line. These direct line troops were well-trained and highly loyal to Cao Cao, making them the core of his military strength; The Jingzhou Navy and other troops included in the organization account for about 60% (see Table 4). The composition of the integrated troops is complex and requires integration and training to exert effective combat effectiveness, but it plays an important role in expanding military forces. Military power played a decisive role in the Three Kingdoms struggle, as the feudal lords relied on military expansion to compete for territories, control populations, and ultimately achieve political domination and hegemony. The outcome of a war directly determines the rise and fall of the feudal power. The victors can occupy more resources and further expand their military strength, while the losers may suffer a setback. As show in Table 2.

Table 2: Data Table of Sources of Force in the Situation

Source of military power	Proportion of the Battle of Red Cliffs	main features
Direct line troops	40%	Well trained and highly loyal
Integrate troops	60%	Complex composition and difficult integration

3.3 Political Power Structure and Operation

The political power was dispersed among the various feudal forces, forming a tripartite situation. Each feudal power has its own political core within, such as Cao Cao's Prime Minister's Office and Liu Bei's Shu Han court. Political decision-making often revolves around military strategy, with strategists providing advice and strategies for the lords, while generals are responsible for executing military actions. The various feudal forces constantly adjusted their political power structure through alliances, wars, and other means, such as the Sun Liu alliance against Cao Cao. This political power structure had strong dynamics and competitiveness, and was closely related to the cultural background of Chinese society at that time, which was in a state of division and turmoil, with various forces vying for control of the Central Plains. In order to achieve the goal of unifying the world, the feudal lords constantly recruited talents, developed the economy, expanded military power, and carried out political reforms and governance to enhance their comprehensive strength and competitiveness.

4. Differences and Similarities in the Military Political Dominance of Social Structures in Two Works

Through in-depth study of "War and Peace" and "Romance of the Three Kingdoms", it can be found that although the two are located in different time and space, the social structures under military and political dominance have both common characteristics and distinct differences due to cultural differences, which are worth comparing and exploring in detail.

4.1 Similarities

4.1.1 Class differentiation and military political connections

In the societies reflected in both works, there is a clear class differentiation, and the upper class is closely connected to military politics. Whether it is the nobility of Russia or the aristocrats and generals of China, they play a crucial role on the military and political stage based on their own status, wealth, and talent, while the lower class mainly provides human and material resources for military and political activities. The upper class consolidates their political status through military achievements, which in turn provides support and resource guarantees for their military actions^[6].

4.1.2 The impact of military power on the political landscape

Military power has had a significant influence on the political landscape in both countries' social structures. The outcome of war and the rise and fall of military power directly determine the distribution and transfer of political power, such as the political changes in Russia after the Napoleonic Wars and the rise and fall of various feudal powers during the Three Kingdoms period due to military successes and failures. The side that achieves military victory often holds a dominant position in

politics, formulating policies and rules that benefit itself, while the loser faces a weakening or even loss of political power.

4.2 Differences

4.2.1 Differences in class dominance types

Russian society is dominated by the aristocratic class, whose social status and power are mainly based on family background and land ownership, emphasizing the honor and responsibility of the aristocracy in military and political activities. Aristocracy received aristocratic education from a young age, emphasizing etiquette and family inheritance. They often prioritize maintaining family honor and national interests in military operations. At the end of the Eastern Han Dynasty in China, it was jointly dominated by the gentry and generals. The gentry relied on cultural inheritance and family networks, while the generals relied on military talent. The two cooperated and balanced each other, and this difference stemmed from the different cultural traditions and historical development paths of China and Russia. Chinese ancient culture emphasized the balance between culture, governance, and martial arts. The gentry provided political wisdom and governance experience, while the generals provided military support.

4.2.2 Form of Political Power Structure

The political power structure in Russia presents a form of palace political struggle under centralization. Although the Tsar is the highest authority, the influence of the aristocratic group cannot be ignored. The political struggle within the palace revolved around the Tsar, and the nobles sought the Tsar's trust and support through various means. During the Three Kingdoms period in China, it was a political pattern of feudal separatism, with power dispersed among multiple relatively independent political forces, and political competition becoming more diverse and intense. This is related to the long history of feudal separatism in ancient China, as well as the political concepts influenced by Confucianism, Legalism, and other ideological and cultural influences. The feudal lords acted independently, launched mutual attacks, and engaged in all-round competition in politics, military, economy, and other aspects.

5. The Influence of Cultural Context on Military Political Dominance of Social Structure

Russian culture is deeply influenced by Eastern Orthodoxy, emphasizing collectivism, hierarchical order, and reverence for authority. This cultural background has led to the Russian social structure being dominated by the aristocratic class, relatively centralized in power, and emphasizing the operation of palace politics under military and political dominance. Nobles often follow traditional concepts of honor and court etiquette norms in military and political activities^[7]. They show respect for the authority of the Tsar and also follow certain rules and order when fighting for family interests in court politics. Chinese traditional culture, with Confucianism as its core, emphasizes family ethics, moral governance, and the social responsibility of scholars. In the chaotic era of the late Eastern Han Dynasty, the aristocratic class rose on the political stage as a family unit under the influence of Confucian culture. Military commanders were also influenced by the Confucian concept of loyalty and righteousness, practicing their military missions in different political forces, thus forming a unique social structure dominated by the common dominance of the aristocratic and military commanders, and the competition among the feudal lords. Confucianism emphasizes personal moral cultivation and family honor. The aristocrats cultivate numerous political talents through education and inheritance within their families, while the generals serve the vassals they follow based on loyalty and righteousness.

6. Conclusion

Through the study of the military and political dominant social structures reflected in the different cultural contexts of *War and Peace* and *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, it can be seen that although there is a commonality between the two in terms of military and political dominance, due to differences in cultural contexts, there are significant differences in class composition, power structure, and other aspects. These similarities and differences reflect the profound shaping of social structure formation and evolution by the different cultural traditions and historical development trajectories of Russia and China. A deep understanding of the relationship between culture and social structure can help better

interpret the history and literary works of different countries and regions in cross-cultural research, providing rich materials and diverse perspectives for further exploring the laws of human social development. In today's era of globalization, this cross-cultural comparative research also helps to promote mutual understanding and communication between different cultures, draw lessons from historical culture, and address various challenges and problems in modern society. Whether studying the international political landscape or social development patterns, useful insights can be gained from comparing these historical and cultural aspects, thereby better promoting the development of human society towards greater harmony, stability, and progress.

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