

From Geographical Frontier to Interest Frontier——On the Change of Traditional Border Connotation and the Development Construction of New Border Forms

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Abstract: The traditional concept of Frontier mainly refers to the "hard frontier" composed of national land, sea and air. The interest frontier studied in this paper is not the traditional natural geographical frontier, but the frontier with national capacity as the core in international relation system. With the development of economic and technological globalization, new frontier concepts such as interest frontier, strategic frontier, cultural frontier and information frontier have emerged one after another. The form of frontier has been developing continuously. Its connotation covers many aspects of the country's political, economic, cultural, social, information, strategic interests, and so on. The extension of the national strength results in the expansion and fluctuation of national interests. In the context of globalization, it is a strategic need for all countries to further strengthen the national governance system and capacity-building. In the process of the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, China urgently needs to increase the construction and development of its own interest frontier to form a global discourse expression of national interests.

Traditional Frontier Concept and Its Development

Tracing the historical evolution of the formation and development of frontier first appeared to refer to the peripheral areas of the territory close to the national boundary, which is the consensus of most scholars at present. But the further elaboration of its scope is different. Some think that the frontier is the entity concept that refers to the geographical edge, which is the so-called "frontier realism"; Others think that the frontier concept is composed of multiple elements, including geography, politics, nationality, society, history, etc, which is an interdisciplinary and comprehensive concept, from that the edge of the "frontier constructivism" developed later Up.

The connotation of the traditional frontier concept is mainly expressed in the context of sovereign geographical frontier, which is defined by the location of the territory near the border. The primary element of "frontier" is political. The sovereignty political attribute of the border area is the leading condition to determine geographical confirmation, supplemented by the unique role of cultural identification, and becomes the main component of the traditional border area system.

Globalization Promotes the Evolution of Interest Frontier

The frontier is the product of a certain historical process. The national interests of industrial society extend to a larger geographical "sphere of influence", and the national strategic control exceeds its boundary. The development of the frontier concept is in line with the development of contemporary international social politics and economy as well as the promotion of national strength. Globalization gave birth to interest frontier, which made the connotation of international sovereignty have changed and continue to change deeply."[1] The recognition and construction of the interest frontier, has a profound impact on human society. The basic reason for this new concept of frontier lies in the development of industrial society, economy and military, which makes the national interest not only exist in its territory, but also extend beyond a country's natural geographical boundaries to the areas it can reach and cover. More and more countries use interest frontier to define their own

overseas interests. "New frontier concepts such as interest frontier have emerged as an extension of national interest" [2]. On this basis, the concept of interest frontier first proposed by the West has gradually evolved into the basic concept of defining the scope of National Overseas Interests in the context of globalization. The interests of various countries are increasingly integrated into the world, and political, economic and cultural interests at home and abroad are more closely linked.

The interest frontier is the product of the development of the era of globalization. It is a compound concept with multiple characteristics. The existence of interest frontier has been generally recognized, and has become an important basis for safeguarding national sovereignty and formulating national strategy, also known as strategic frontiers. Interest frontier "is not only an important buffer zone for the development of domestic overseas interests, but also a frontier zone for other countries to launch external competition" [3].

In the modern international society, the frontier theory and outlook have always been a developing system [4]. It can be seen that, with the development of competition and development space between countries, the connotation and strategic extension of sovereignty of contemporary national interests are constantly adjusted and expanded with the times. The extension of a country's border areas has changed elastically in the interaction between its own strength and the international pattern. The connotation of safeguarding national sovereignty also extends to two levels, including not only safeguarding national territory and frontier, but also safeguarding national "interest frontier".

The Basic Connotation and Characteristics of Interest Frontier

The connotation of interest frontier. "Interest frontier is the result of defining the scope of national overseas interests with the new concept of national territory, and it is the concept of describing or referring to national overseas interest gathering area with the concept of national territory under the condition of globalization" [5]. The interest frontier is not sovereign, but a region that the state can actually control and serve the national interest. The concept of interest frontier, which is now widely used, refers to the scope of overseas interests that a country can control or exert effective influence. [6] Interest frontier is a dynamic, all-round and multi-dimensional concept system.

The connotation of interest frontier includes two dimensions: static and dynamic. At the static level, it includes the political, economic, cultural, scientific and technological, military, security and other substantive elements of a sovereign state, as well as the national psychology, consciousness and other spiritual elements of a state. On the dynamic level, it shows the expansion of space and capacity and the corresponding realization of national interests in different historical development stages, that is, the geopolitical projection of national interests. The interest frontier is the product of specific historical process in the era of globalization. It takes the national interest as the core to define the boundary and scope of interest division between sovereign states or with other actors.

The interest frontier of a country covers its discourse power and executive power in international interest, which is the rebalancing and re-division of international interests. National interest frontier has the inherent characteristics of expanding as much as possible in the scope of international society. However, the expansion and acquisition of a country's interest must find a coexisting balance point and recognition degree in the international interest system.

Categories of interest frontier. The category of interest frontier includes hard power and soft power, and the scope can be divided into five areas: national political and ideological frontier, economic frontier, cultural frontier, information frontier and security frontier. The hard power frontier based on politics, economy and security, while the soft power frontier driven by culture and information. The hard power frontier plays a decisive role in the expansion and confirmation of national interest margin. In today's world, the ability of a country to maintain its own and common security, as well as the level of economic development and political identity, are taken as important indicators to establish a country's interest scope. With the high prosperity and mainstream coverage of culture, the great enrichment and outward dissemination of information as an important carrier, promote the recognition and centripetal force of a country's interest frontier in the international scope. The importance of interest frontier can be divided into survival interest, key interest and important

interest according to its decisive role in the survival and development of sovereign states. Different levels of importance will act on different strategic intentions and realistic layout of construction methods. Any country will always, in accordance with the order of priority, maximize its national interests within the scope of its own national strength, and maintain the guarantee and support of its own development.

Characteristics of interest frontier. As a compound concept, interest frontier has multiple characteristics. One is the clarity of the core. The core of the interest frontier is the fundamental interest of the sovereign state and the endogenous demand for the survival and development. Second, the marginal flexibility. In the process of its expansion, the inherent attribute is to pursue the maximization of the national interest that can be realized, transcend the inherent geographical boundaries, and reach the scope that the national strength can go. The third is the construction and plasticity of the whole. Interest frontier is the product of outward development and shaping with the improvement of state strength. Its relationship with the original country is not accompanied, but constructive. The scope of a country's overseas interests is closely related to its promotion of interest frontier, which is the product of construction, and the extension of traditional frontier. Fourth, the interaction and relevance of development. No country can stand on its own for exclusive overseas interests, and no country's overseas interests do not need to achieve balanced coexistence in the field of international relations.

China Urgently Needs to Build Its Own Interest Frontier

Interest frontier and national interest. Marx pointed out that "everything people strive for is related to their interests." [7] The essence of international relations is the constituent system of national interests. National interest is the main benefit, right or benefit point that a country pursues, reflecting the needs and interests of all its citizens and various interest groups. [8] As for sovereign countries, national interests are the inevitable needs of national survival and development. Globalization has transformed the national interest to an open system, and greatly increased the factors that frame the national interest, which has resulted in significant changes in the content, structure and maintenance means of the national interest.

China's current strength promote the understanding and shaping the concept of national interests. The essence of the development process and globalization of sovereign states is to break through the traditional territory and seek the maximization of individual or overall interests. The different pursuit of interest frontier will bring different effects and consequences. Driven by the interest, the pursuit of hegemony by some big countries also exists objectively. However, the key to the problem is not the interest frontier itself, but the cognitive attitude, behavior and border control adopted by sovereign states in the face of the interest frontier. What kind of international social balance a single country's self-development should be placed in and what kind of community of interests should be formed? This is an important basis for whether a country's national interests have space and realistic guarantee in the international community. Therefore, we must change our narrow understanding of the change of the interest frontier, especially the view that talking about the interest frontier is to imitate the Western geo-expansionism and new colonialism, or that the interest frontier bases its own development on the invasion and extrusion of the interests of other countries. These are all misunderstandings and misreading of the interest frontier, which is in direct proportion to the strength of the country. The interest frontier in line with the orderly competition and the survival of the fittest is an objectively recognized existence.

The foundation of interest frontier. Globalization is an indispensable basic condition for the emergence and development of "interest frontier". First of all, the new technological revolution, the rapid improvement of productivity, and the innovative development of economic models have greatly shortened the traditional geographical space and the distance between countries. With the unprecedented close relationship between countries, communication, cooperation, influence or competition, extrusion and confrontation are inevitable. The narrowing of regional space provides an important natural material basis for the emergence of interest frontier, and then develops into the

coexistence of the reality of regional space in the global scope and the expansion of non-geographical space interests and capabilities of a single country.

Secondly, globalization has brought profound changes to the traditional social structure, and the formation and development of cross-border social structure has laid the organizational system foundation for the emergence of interest frontier. The high-speed information flow based on the Internet era makes the expansion and fluctuation of national interests more reasonable and natural. This connection and conscious preparation laid a mature structural foundation for the establishment and expansion of national interest frontier.

The close geographical space, the progress of network, the change of communication mode and social structure, and the integration of mutual interests among countries all over the world have expanded the traditional interest cognition within the national sovereignty based on the Westphalia System. Under the condition of globalization, the national territory and frontier can't cover all the contents of national sovereignty, which needs the concept of interest frontier to support. In other words, the commonly used concept of interest frontier refers to the scope of overseas interests that a country can control or exert effective influence. Some scholars think directly that "interest frontier mainly refers to the boundary and scope that are generated in the historical process and highlighted in the era of globalization, with national interests as the core, to determine the interests of sovereign states or other actors." [9]

The importance of building interest frontier. First of all, globalization is deepening in an all-round way and has a fundamental impact on the interest relationship between countries. In the era of globalization, China has been integrated into the international community. "China should also have its own interests and borders. This is also a major problem that must be faced in building a modern national governance system under the new historical conditions. "[10] "China, which has come close to the center of the world stage, should make full use of the concept of interest frontier used by other countries to discuss its own interests, so as to effectively describe and maintain the scope of its overseas interest space" [11]. Therefore, our frontier theory and outlook must be based on the development of the times, society and the expansion of national interests.

Secondly, economic globalization brings about the integration of international interests, breaks through the limitation of national boundaries, and makes the win-win and contraction of national interests become the recognized portrayal of strength. National interests tend to interact and blend. The increasing interdependence of the international community has strengthened the consensus of pursuing "relative interests" among countries. National interest is no longer an absolute recognition within the scope of sovereign territory, but a construction and balance of symbiosis and interdependence between a country's own development strength and the international community.

Third, the global public problems brought by globalization lead to the situation of intertwined interests among state actors. Only by building the interest frontier can we establish the safety margin. Globalization is a double-edged sword. It keeps close contact with each other and deepens mutual influence. At the same time, it also makes the advantages and disadvantages of countries and the problems of events no longer an isolated phenomenon within a country. Without strong interest frontier as the backing, the core interests of a country are difficult to be safe. The establishment of a strong interest frontier can extend the country's ability to the areas where it needs to be, keep a keen eye on changes and be alert to problems, so as to make a more accurate response to safeguard its own interests and security.

The highlight of China's interest frontier and its significance. First of all, it is an urgent task for China to integrate into the international community and accelerate its development under the new situation to establish a national interest and border strategy with a global perspective. The development of contemporary China must be placed in the current international system, and the frontier strategy must be developed and adjusted with the times. It is an indisputable fact that the interests of one country are highly integrated and interwoven with those of other countries. The interest frontier has been placed in front of China objectively.

Secondly, China urgently needs to build its own interest frontier to meet the requirements of the severe international strategic situation. Especially in the current international situation of Sino-U.S.

game, we must build our overseas interest system and safeguard our defense mechanism in a more active way. The promotion of national strength, implementation of "going out" strategy, view of resources, pattern of interests in the whole region, can bring the historical opportunities for China's rejuvenation.

Third, the rise of a great power starts from the sea. To build interest frontier is the need of China's maritime strategic channel security protection. The establishment of China's maritime strategic channel is bound to require the support of the corresponding interest frontier maintenance system, otherwise, the situation of China's maritime interest line hanging out alone will not be reversed, and the continuation and development of overseas interests will be empty talk.

Fourthly, it is an urgent need to build the interest frontier to solve the contradiction between the rapid growth of China's overseas assets and the lagging maintenance. With the enhancement of China's comprehensive national strength and the implementation of the strategy of going global, China's productivity has been greatly improved overseas, and enterprises and various factors of production are competing for development overseas. At the same time, China's protection system and capacity-building for the above-mentioned overseas interests and assets are seriously lagging behind, leading to a large number of national interests hanging on overseas, or even an unprotected blank area, which seriously affects the promotion of the country's position in the international community and the acquisition of its influence and voice.

In the era of globalization, the overseas interests of all countries have been extended to different degrees, which make the national interests of all countries present certain compatibility. "In addition to compatibility, the extension of overseas interests of all countries will also cause certain overlap, leading to exclusiveness, which is also one of the motivations of international competition and conflict." [12] It is the realistic need of national development to construct the interest frontier. The construction of interest frontier responds to the strategic needs of national interest in the new stage of national development. In the new era of safeguarding national security and development interests, it is urgent to shape, expand and safeguard interest frontier actively, which is the place of national interest.

Conclusion

With the development of the world economic globalization and the re-adjustment of international political and economic pattern based on the national strength, the evolution and change of the frontier form has become a need and reality. The traditional theory and construction practice of frontier concept based on geographical frontier have been developing constantly. The "soft frontier" represented by the interest frontier has become the scope and region that the national ability and interest can reach, and the important field that countries compete with each other in the new era. We should attach importance to and strengthen the layout construction and development shaping of the interest frontier.

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