

## **Knowledge Transition and State Innovation: Zhang Junmai's Study on the Transformation of Representative System in Europe, 1919-1921**

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### **Abstract**

After World War I, the wave of national innovation emerged in Europe. Not only newly-created countries drew constitution and laws, but also existing countries engaged to amend their constitution or laws. The common trend was the transformation of representative system. From the 19th to the 20th century, the West had been facing a knowledge transition. These new constitutions and the laws were considered as the achievements of the new theories established before the war, and attracted the attention of many Chinese intellectuals. Since the late Qing Dynasty, Zhang Junmai was a constitutionalist and he respected parliamentary system. This paper explores Zhang Junmai's study on the transformation of representative system in Europe when he traveled to Europe from 1919 to 1921. His investigations were mainly in Britain, France, Germany, and Russia, and they represented different transformation models of representative system. He examined the elections and the operations of parliamentary politics in Britain and France, where the parliamentary politics have stood the test of war. As a result, Zhang Junmai more believed in the value of democracy. Germany eventually returned to the track of representative system after a brief Soviet revolution. The transformation of representative system in Germany was to implement the sovereignty of the people. Beside

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parliament politics, Germany established the economic council, which is comprised of the representatives of capitalists and the coalition of labor union. Zhang Junmai applauded this liberalism and socialism reconcile. As for Russia, in order to carry out the socialist transformation, discarded the representatives and replaced it by the Soviets. Zhang Junmai disagreed with that. In short, Zhang Junmai's discourse on the transformation of representative system in Europe was not only a part of spread and response of western legal knowledge before and after the 1920s among Chinese intellectuals, but also was an important stage in the construction of his own legal knowledge in his life. And then further became an important knowledge base for his Chinese national transformation program in the future.

Keywords: Zhang Junmai, representative system, Weimar Constitution, Soviet System, socialism