

Feudalism vs. Modernity

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	Feudalism	Capitalist Nation States
Power	Power is personal and connected to the nobility. Each nobleman wields an amount of power dependent on the number of armed vassals under him and the amount of loyalty (fealty) he can call on in times of crisis. "Infeudation" creates complicated networks of power distribution.	Power is a state monopoly. All instruments of coercion are in the hands of the state (police, militia, armed forces) and citizens must turn to the state to have their grievances addressed.
Legitimacy	The legitimacy of power is based on divine right – the laying on of hands from the disciples of Christ to the anointing of kings and emperors – and further on the exchange of labor and commodities for protection.	Legitimacy is based on the population. Either the population votes for the leadership, or the leadership claims legitimacy based on an ideology or attribute it represents in the name of the ruled: race, class, ethnicity, etc.
Sovereignty and Territory	Sovereignty is not strong and is not territorial, but weak and personal. Indeed, the word did not even exist before the 16 th century. Feudal noblemen command varying degrees of loyalty from their vassals and owe loyalty to their lords. Noblemen have lands (fiefs) under their control, but these are usually not in a solid, territorial block. Instead, they are scattered over a wider area. Furthermore, these lands change hands and are redistributed over time depending on vassalage and family relations.	The state exercises absolute, centralized sovereignty over a distinct territory. This territory is based on features which are usually deemed somehow eternal or primal: ethnic or religious borders, geographic features, divine providence. Territorial changes are considered traumatic. What sovereignty entails has changed over time, but can include claims to the exclusive loyalty of the population, control of religion, control of the cross-border traffic, control of information and communication, etc.

Law and Jurisdiction	Noblemen exercise jurisdiction over the people on their fiefs. The laws and traditions which apply to people depend not on their "citizenship", but on their estate, or place in society. The clergy, the Jews, the nobility, the serfs, the townspeople – all these classes are subject to differing legal treatment with varying duties and privileges.	Within a state territory, laws are uniform across the board and the state has the final word. The citizens of a state are subject to the same laws as others who live on the territory of the same state. If there are differences for particular groups, this is because those groups are not full citizens: illegal aliens, racially excluded groups, etc.
Economy	While there are free trade elements in long-distance trade and within the cities, the foundation of the economy is land. Economic activity involves the payment of labor and commodities up the chain of command, from the serf to vassal to lord, in return for administrative and military protection. There is little or no private property, as all of Europe is theoretically a papal or "Roman" imperial fief. The peasants are tied to the land and the land is tied to families or vassalage.	The state protects private property and regulates a free market. The foundation of wealth changes with technology. In recent centuries, it has moved from agriculture to manufacturing to information and services. Economic activity is generated by supply and demand. People are economic actors and goods, land and services are bought and sold.
Cities	Urban centers are very small. They are not seats of political power, as the nobility lives in rural castles and the clergy in monasteries. Indeed, politically, cities are zones where exceptions to the normal rule are in effect. Economically, they are not unimportant, but this varies regionally. The mainstay of the economy and the main source of wealth are agrarian, non-urban. The exceptions here are bishop seats, which are often towns, and late medieval city states.	Cities are the centers of economic and political power. Every nation state has one (sometimes two) capital cities from where power is projected. The majority of the population lives in cities and rural areas are often considered backward.
Ethnicity and language	The ethnicity, nationality or language of the people and their leaders are hardly relevant. Indeed, often "foreigners" are invited in to rule or are intentionally married into the family to solidify alliances with ruling factions in other areas.	The population of a nation state is assumed to have a single ethnicity or language. Special solutions have to be developed for minorities (exceptional regulations or oppression). A leader who belongs to another ethnic group would not be trusted.

