



RELATIONSHIP AND INSTITUTION: A THEORETICAL INTERPRETATION FRAMEWORK FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF CHINESE POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

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Abstract

China's way of doing things is the typical East way, which is the group-based thinking, paying attention to people-oriented, focusing on "people" in dealing with things, having strong interpersonal relationships, and strong flexibility. The management of the West countries adopt the dichotomy method of thinking, which is unclear. All of them are governed by law, in accordance with institution management, without flexibility. For them, interpersonal relationships are weak, but with clear division of labor, powerful checks and balances, as well as clear rights and obligations. Because of the different social forms of the East and West countries and different social situations, China and other Eastern countries have paid more attention to the overall relationship, while Western countries have focused on the individual and specific issues of independence. This paper analyzes the Eastern and Western cultures based on the genetic differences between the East and the West. Starting from the group standard of the eastern countries and the individual standard of the western countries, the differences between the eastern and western cultures are analyzed from the philosophical level.

Key words: Chinese relationship; Western institution; Group standard; Individual standard, Political philosophy

1. INTRODUCTION

Based on cultural genes, people's perceptions of the self are also different. People who grow up in Western individualistic culture are more advocating institutionalism, and people in Eastern collectivist culture are more dependent on relationshipism. Cultural concepts



influence all aspects of humanity. From small things to life, to foreign affairs and even international relations. Some scholars have pointed out that the East and the West are different due to cultural differences. Western individualism has shaped the unique independence and institutional habits of its culture, while the Eastern collectivism has spawned the unique dependence and relationship under its culture habit.

2. ANALYSIS OF ORIENTAL “RELATIONSHIP” AND WESTERN “INSTITUTIONALISM” AND ITS CAUSES

2.1. Interpretation of the Connotation of “Relationship” in the East

The so-called “relationship” is actually the human feelings, face, feelings and reports (reward, repay, reward, etc.) that the Chinese people pay attention to every day, but it is quite difficult to clarify the academic significance of these everyday words. In my personal view, human relationships and relationships are two concepts derived from face (“emotions” and “messages” are hidden in these three concepts). This logically means that the individual’s resource state determines the state of the relational resource. According to the daily meaning of the two concepts of human relations and relationships, we have empirically found that their presence or absence is caused by the presence or absence of a person. For the scholar Zhai Xuewei’s perspective, Chinese people generally do not talk about human relationships and relationships with people without face when they interact with society. Even if they want to talk about it, they must also keep an eye on the face of another person. (Zhai Xuewei 2004) Although the Chinese people are objectively in blood, geography or other relationships, anyone who has such a relationship usually speaks “face”. The Chinese-style relationship explored here is to study the meanings of human feelings and faces together as an academic concept “relationship”.

Due to its unique geographical location, the Chinese culture determines its unique development process and has made its Chinese civilization. Chinese culture does not look at people and society from the dimension of rights, but treats issues from two dimensions: relationship and mind. These two dimensions are closely related and integrated. The surface of the relationship of the East can be understood as a generalism, and its origin may be traced to the origin of human beings. Throughout the world, relationshipism exists on a global scale. It exists because of human factors and social culture. Of course, the relationshipism is particularly widespread in the eastern countries represented by China. The “nepotism relationship” of ancient China is a typical example.

2.2. Interpretation of the Connotation of Western “Institutionalism”



In the eyes of Western scholars, the origin of Western institutionalism is the study of institutional economics. Such research is based on the principle that “private property rights have the highest efficiency.” All the research they have developed around the issue of property rights has never deviated from this core point of view. The connotation of the system is mainly determined by the deep-rooted concept of market economy in the West. The famous American economist Veblen pointed out that “Institutions are essentially the general habits of individuals or societies in relation to certain relationships or certain functions, and lifestyle constitutes a certain period or social development. The sum of a system that is prevailing at a stage. Therefore, it can be generalized from a psychological aspect to be a popular state of mind or a popular theory of life. In the end, it can be summarized as a popular type of personality. It is the customary way of how to move forward when it comes into contact with the physical environment in the life of the society.” (Veblen 1964) As North, the American Economist said, that the system is a social game rule, a framework created by people to restrict people’s interactions. He divided the game into two broad categories: formal rules (constitution, property rights, and contracts) and informal rules (norms and customs).

The American institutional scholar Philippe Burton believes that “Institutions are understood as normative systems related to specific sets of behavior. Institutions are fundamentally composed of informal constraints, formal rules, and the implementation characteristics of both. The key factor of economic development is that they regulate the social behavior of individuals, although this official position may be imperfect.” (Philippe Burton 1998) German economist Ke Wugang and Shi Manfei argued in their book “Institutional Economics”, the definition of the system is: “Institutions are defined here as rules made by people. They inhibit the possibility of interpersonal interactions, including arbitrary behavior and opportunistic behavior. The system is shared by a community and is always implemented by some kinds of punishment. The system without punishment is useless. Only by using punishment can the individual’s behavior become more predictable. Rules with punishment create a certain degree of order, introducing human behavior into a track that can be reasonably expected.” (Ke Wugang, Shi Manfei, 2000)

To sum up, in the framework of Western institutional analysis, the system probably has the following three aspects: Firstly, the system has an intrinsic connection with human motivation and behavior. From a deeper perspective, people and institutions in history perspective are human interests. And the result of its choice; secondly, the system is a “public goods” and is a scarce resource; thirdly, the system and organization are different, the system is a social game rule, which is created by people, used to restrain a framework in which people interact with each other. And it is also an organization with a group of certain goals that are used to solve certain problems.



2.3. Analysis of the Causes of the Cognitive Differences between the East and the West

To put it simply, China's way of doing things is typical of the East way is the group-based thinking, paying attention to people-oriented, and dealing with things using the three-point method of thinking, which is difficult to understand. The Chinese people's management focus is on "people" and has a strong interpersonal relationship. Therefore, the Chinese people's handling process is "cultivating themselves." Chinese people are very flexible, and the system is very flexible. They can achieve balance theory outside the law and rely on corporate culture to constrain employees. However, in Western countries, people often adopt a dichotomous way of thinking, which is not clear. All are governed by law and in accordance with the system, and there is no flexibility. In this environment, the interpersonal relationship in Western countries is relatively weak. The division of labor is clear. The checks and balances are powerful. The rights and obligations are clear. Chinese people pay attention to love, and Westerners pay attention to strength. Many books on management science use western management culture to promote Chinese enterprises. There are also many books describing the influence of traditional Chinese management culture on enterprises. As a big unified country, China faces many national interests and contradictions. If the method of separation of powers is adopted, it will inevitably lead to confrontation, and finally the whole country will fall into the civil war. Therefore, based on different social forms, different social situations, China and other eastern countries pay more attention to the overall relationship, while western countries focus on individual and specific issues of independence.

Due to geographical, historical and cultural differences, there are some commonalities between the East and the West in terms of understanding, but the majority is dominated by the individuality between the two sides. For example, Chinese people pay more attention to spiritual feelings, while Westerners pay attention to practicality; Chinese people pay attention to the sense of ritual, while Westerners pay attention to content and favor utilitarianism; Chinese people focus on morality and affection, while Westerners focus on sensibility and rationality. In the western cognition system, the relationship between people is often the relationship between "I and you", based on a single independent individual to see interpersonal relationships; and in the concept of the Orientals represented by the Chinese, human beings Relationships are usually "us" and a collective concept. Seeing the micro-knowledge, the tendency to explore and understand the relationship between the East and the West, we must grasp the cultural differences and cultural factors, which is extremely important for understanding international relations, dealing with political relations between countries, and improving the efficiency of global governance.



3. COMPARISON OF “RELATIONSHIP” AND “INSTITUTION” BETWEEN EAST AND WEST ON THE PHILOSOPHICAL LEVEL: HARMONY AND CONFLICT

3.1. Analysis of the Relationship between China and the Concept of Harmony

The most important feature of traditional Chinese society is farming civilization. Even in the 21st century, about 700 million people still live in rural areas, engaged in agricultural and non-agricultural production. The most influential factors that the civilization brings to the daily life and values of traditional Chinese people are manifested in three aspects. Firstly, the cultivation of agriculture and its harvest are mainly related to climate and seasonal changes. It is the most important concept for Chinese survival to rely on. At the same time, this concept will inevitably cause Chinese people to think in the culture. In addition, thinking, in addition, the foundation of the agricultural power has become the basis for ancient Chinese thinkers to explore the relationship between man and nature and to construct their social ideological theory. Secondly, the land cannot move, and the agricultural labor is repeated, resulting in the Chinese people living in the same place for generations. The kinship and geopolitical relationship are the main social relations of the Chinese people, and the rural folks who look down and see is the first need in their social relations. The problem is to maintain harmony and stability between each other. Thirdly, China's traditional farming methods are the production units with the smallest family. The peasants are not organized but condensed in the clan ancestors. The Chinese people's recognition of the country is more cultural, but not geographical. Confucianism was formally established in this ideology of production and lifestyle. It is superior to other ancient Chinese thoughts. The priority is that it provides a set of doctrines that can enhance the harmony, order and stability of the acquaintance's social circle. The core idea of this doctrine is the inheritance of “ritual” and the interpretation and implementation of “benevolence”. From today's point of view, the discussion of Chinese-style relations is generally within the scope of philosophical ontology. It is precisely this kind of connection that Confucianism began to sort out the five most common social relationships of individuals in real life, namely the so-called “five lords”: father and son, monarchs and courtiers, couples, brothers, friends. Many scholars have already seen that among these five relationships, that only the membership in the family accounts for three kinds, and the relationship between the monarch and courtiers is only derived from the relationship between the father and the son and the brother. (Fei Zhengqing 1999) From what we can deduce to the logical starting point of the influence of Confucianism on Chinese-style relations, it is family membership. So Liang Shu simply used the “ethical standard” to summarize the fundamental nature of Chinese social relations.(Liang Shuming 2003).



The emergence and development of China's "relationship" is mainly determined by China's cultural genes. China's "relationship" is mainly derived from the "harmony thought" in the Chinese civilization. As a quintessence of Chinese excellent traditional culture, the harmonious thought has a long history and profound connotation, and it has strong cohesiveness and affinity. The concept of harmony is an important clue to the traditional Chinese cultural ideology. The theory of harmony and harmony is explained in the hundreds of schools in the pre-Qin period. For example, Confucianism is more expensive and "sin" and advocates "the road of the road, the world is the public." "The use of rituals, harmony is expensive, the way of the first king, the beauty of the sage", the concept of harmony is promoted to the highest standard of governing the country. Taoist thought emphasizes the harmonious symbiosis between man and nature, that "everything is yin and yang", put forward the idea of yin and yang harmony, such as "Tao rules nature" and "Heaven and Man are one system". Mohist advocates both love, non-attack, etc.. Such classic quotes are endless, and they all converge on the idea of harmony. China's "relationship" is a further development of the traditional Chinese "harmony thought".

In the modern times, China's relationship society has been a hot topic. In the academic world, "relationship" is a Chinese concept that has emerged in social sciences since the late 1970s. Many Chinese scholars attach great importance to this and have done a lot of researches, such as Yan Xuewei's "Chinese relationship", Relationship has been accepted by the social science community recently. The first study of Chinese "face" phenomenon was Arthur Smith, the American missionary who came to China in 1894 and wrote *The Character of the Chinese*. Since then, Lu Xun, Lin Yutang, Fei Xiaotong, Fei Zhengqing and other writers and societies Scientists have captured the deep image of Chinese culture contained within it from their unique perspective. Many mainland, Hong Kong and Taiwan psychologists have done lots of researches and formed unique theories which integrated Chinese-style relationship research materials and related theories in various psychological directions, blended Confucianism and psychological science, and conducted extensive research on Chinese-style relations among Chinese people, such as: Yan Xuewei's *Humanity, Face and Power Reproduction*; Huang Guangguo's *People and Face: Chinese Power Game*; Yang Guoshu's *Chinese Psychology and Behavior: Localization Research*.

This is especially true in practice. Chinese people like "pull strings". when entering school, finding jobs and so on, most Chinese must give themselves a trust relationship. If you can find a relationship, especially person who has "face" gives a recommendation, things will be much easier to handle; when there is a conflict and resort to violence, Chinese do not have the concept of "Fair Duel", when they quarrel and both sides lose their self-control. If an older elder or a person with a certain prestige in public persuades and quit them, they will stop quarreling. These are represented by China in Eastern countries at the level of relations.



3.2. Institutionalism Analysis under the Concept of Western Conflict

The rise of Western civilization in modern times relies mainly on legal supremacy, and put the system into the compulsory of law in order to supervise the selfish and individualistic behavior of Western cultural genes. In Western history, the first person to elaborate on the social function of law is Plato. Plato believes that the institutional binding force of law is supreme, and specifically explains the necessity of the rule and the measures of the rule of law system. His specific theory of the rule of law is embodied in his monograph, *The Law*. Plato explains that it is the duty of the legislator to make laws and regulations. The law set by the legislators aims to achieve the greatest goodness of society. The greatness of the country is not a hegemonic war of expanding territory, nor is it a civil war for power struggle. It is to guide the people to be good. It also demonstrates from the three aspects of morality, divinity and rationality, and draws the result of the dialectical unity and mutual confirmation between the three.

In Plato's legal thought, Plato believes that the kingship must be divided in order to effectively limit the kingship. This is Plato's analysis of the policies of the Persian dynasty. He believes that the reason for the political corruption of the Persian dynasty is that the transition of the ruler deprives the nationals of freedom and is committed to creating totalitarian politics, so that everything in the Persian Empire is made. Friendship and common spirit are gone. Justice is an important part of Plato's legal thought. He believes that law is an important guarantee for the maintenance of justice. In the *Legal*, in response to the axiom "justice is the right of the strong", Plato derives the criteria for distinguishing between justice and injustice. He believes that this secular theory is wrong, and its essence is privilege. The law of class interests, which is formulated according to this erroneous theory, is wrong and unconscionable. Such a law is only in line with the interests of the party and is absolutely inconsistent with the national interest.

From the perspective of political practice, the construction of Western institutions mainly stems from the deep crisis in the practice of representative democracy and the political conflicts and turbulence in some developing countries. The traditional concept of Chinese law mainly focuses on "criminal". Traditionally, Chinese people are used to equating punishment, criminal, and law, and consider that law refers to the criminal. The purpose of Western monarchy legislation is mainly to control the society and maintain its own rule. The development of law in the West is bottom-up, the social contract that the ruler was forced to make in order to alleviate the contradiction between citizens and rulers, and this kind of contract is more about maintaining "personal rights". Chinese and Western laws are different between the public and the private. China is to maintain its feudal autocratic



rule, while the West is the supremacy of individual rights, and it is increasingly strengthening human rights in its development. It is a private legal system. Fairness and justice are the most basic foundation of the rule of law system, and the most important value. This is also an important reason why the rule of law system can become the “bottom line consensus” of the contemporary international society and the strategy of modern western countries. The correct system is based on a fair and positive basis.

What is the inherent logic of the system? This issue is really rash, because the logic of the system is formed from different angles, different logical standards of the system, different logical starting points, different deductive principles, and different logical understanding of the Western institutional ideas. For example, if people take the basic moral needs as a starting point, they will conclude that the rule of law system which is based on the moral logic of maintaining and pursuing moral values. The author tends to proceed from the theory of sexual evil, and the whole development process of the rule of law is attributed to the process of continuous prevention and compensation for human defects. The logic of the system is summarized as follows: Firstly, the starting point is the evil of human nature, and the rule of virtue is its malpractice. Secondly, drawback is that the pursuit of evil is evil, and the rule of law is used to restrict people’s behavior. Thirdly, the development of the system is that the demand for authority in law which must evolve into the supremacy of law. Fourthly, the end point is to use the three powers. The principle of separation is to limit the unreasonable expansion of legislation and the judiciary.

Aristotle once said that human nature is greedy and selfish, and it needs to be bound by the rule of law. The nature of the person who controls power is more likely to expose sin, so power must be restricted by power. The western rule of law idea is initiated on the assumption of human evil. After the birth of Christianity, its Original Sin Theory made Westerners firmly believe in human nature and need to use external power to do so. In fact, the introduction of sexual evil is conducive to the implementation of the rule of law. This is reflected in two aspects: First, the theory of sexual evil makes the rule of law conform to the logic of people’s thinking, and it is reasonable to let people recognize that it is reasonable to use laws to curb people’s desires. Second, the theory of sexual evil starts from the evil of human nature, advocates the use of power to restrict power, the use of the Constitution to control state power, and the expansion of administrative power. People’s recognition of the rule of law is actually a denial of the rule of man. The relationship and the system’s answers are very different, and the two are incompatible with each other. Any idea that wants to combine relationships and institutions is extremely challenging. Therefore, some scholars pointed out that this is two products that interfere with each other in terms of utility from the perspective of economics. The greater the factor of a social person-management relationship, the more difficult it is to implement institutional social security.



3.3. New institutionalism Analysis in the new era

From another point of view, the new institutionalism in political science has largely been developed since the 1980s on the basis of rethinking behaviorist politics. After the emergence of political science as an independent discipline, the study and analysis of institutions was once the core of the whole discipline. From the perspective of the history of political theory, the institutional tradition in the study of political science is older. Aristotle's study of the city-state system opened the way for the study of political science system. Until the 19th century and the early 20th century, institutional analysis has always occupied the mainstream position in the western politics. The behaviorist revolution in the 1950s changed the institutional tradition in the study of political science, and the political system became less and less important and only became the stage for political behavior.

Since the 1970s, although the new institutionalism politics is produced on the basis of criticizing behaviorism politics, the economic sociology and organization theory and even the whole social science, pay attention to the system again. It is also an important source of the rise of new institutionalism politics. Especially the great success of the new institutional economics has a great impact on the revival of institutionalism in political science. After reintroducing the system into the perspective of analysis, the new institutionalists in political science, although they noticed the huge difference between economic life and political life, still borrowed basic conceptual terms and methodology from institutional economics when constructing the theoretical framework. Therefore, the emergence of new institutionalist politics is not only a criticism of the neglect of institutional research by behaviorist politics, but also a response to the focus on institutions in economics and other social sciences. Therefore, on the basis of criticizing behaviorism and inheriting traditional institutional studies, and absorbing and transforming the basic terms of new institutional economics, the institutional analysis paradigm started from Aristotle finally rose to the theoretical height at this time, forming a new school of new institutional politics in political science.

New institutionalism in political science touches on a series of key theoretical and empirical problems in political science. What is the relationship between institutions and human behavior? Does social context, culture and norms matter? What can institutions do? Can they determine behavior or trigger certain course of action steps? Whether they are tools for pursuing the common good or self-interested groups and individuals. The systematic answers to these questions in the politics of new institutionalism have greatly improved our understanding of the political world. New institutionalism rediscovered the importance of institutions, and looked at political life from the perspective of institutions, making it the center of political science research.



Unlike traditional political science, new institutionalism does not only focus on the state and its formal institutions, but believes that institutions include not only formal structures, but also informal structural practices and concepts, which greatly expands the research space of institutions. While emphasizing the importance of institutions, new institutionalism adds the analysis of individual preferences and behaviors, believing that institutions influence or even change individual preferences, and that individual behaviors are inseparable from the responsibilities and obligations stipulated by institutions. This makes the study of political institutions more explanatory because it establishes a powerful explanatory model for the relationship between institutional individuals' preference for political outcomes. It has paved the way for the inclusion of environmental factors in the selection process, although it believes that the individual should be the main actor in the social science interpretation. Institutions play an important role in decision-making because they define the parameters of choice. They do not determine choice, but influence it by setting limits. They provide certainty in uncertain situations and thus help foster repetitive behaviour.

However, the new institutionalism in political science has some serious defects while promoting people to recognize the value of institutional research and combine it with the study of political behavior, trying to realize the combination of institutional research and behavior research. **Firstly**, there is no consensus on some basic issues among the various schools of new institutionalism politics. For example, historical institutionalism emphasizes that institution is connected with rules and conventions, it is a decisive factor for political actors to choose preferences and goals, and institutional change is path-dependent. Rational choice institutionalism defines institutions as rules, and individual preferences are born out of the system, so people can design the system. Sociological institutionalism believes that institutions and culture are synonyms, and preference for resource allocation and rules are endogenous to institutions. The differences of views on these basic issues indicate that the internal integration of new institutionalism politics has not been completed yet, and a mature political science theory needs to reach consensus on some basic issues, so that political science theory can deeply analyze political phenomena and improve its interpretation power. **Secondly**, the various visions provided by the new institutionalism politics for the political world are not completely consistent, and each school shows its own unique advantages but also exposes its corresponding shortcomings. Thirdly, the analysis of the connotation of institutional efficiency in the politics of new institutionalism is based on theoretical analysis rather than empirical facts, so it is vague and has not established an appropriate method to measure the connotation of the efficiency of a system. **Fourthly**, the new institutionalism in political science thought system reduces the transaction cost, to reach an agreement between political actors, and so the system is the effective method to solve the problem of collective action. However, this view system approach, not only denied the possibility of unexpected results appear, but avoid about political power can be used to create and maintain the system



the important questions. **Fifthly**, the new institutionalism politics has learned a lot of basic concepts from economics, sociology, history and organization theory, which makes it an interdisciplinary research field. However, a lot of reference and use of other disciplines, especially the conceptual terms and theories of economics, will inevitably ignore the characteristics of the political system itself.

But, any theory is exposed in the development process of the defects of the new institutionalism political science shows that there is a considerable space for the development of political system analysis in the future, but whether the real achievements in the construction of the theoretical system will depend on other aspects. **Firstly**, whether the politics of new institutionalism can be thoroughly integrated, transcend the limitations of various schools, and draw on each other's strengths and complementary advantages. **Secondly**, whether the new institutionalist politics can dig typical cases from history and reality to enrich its theoretical model and strengthen the basic concepts needed to construct its theoretical system. **Thirdly**, whether the new institutionalism political science can enrich its theoretical analysis tools with an open mind by referring to the methods and theories of system theory, information theory, cybernetics and empirical analysis.

4. CONCLUSION

Geographical, historical and cultural differences have created many different concepts and behaviors between the East and the West, and formed two contrasting cultures. Whether it is a question of human nature or a thought of diverging relationships and institutions, it is a mapping of continental civilization and marine civilization. In view of the self-recognition, people who grow up in the Western individualistic culture pay more attention to the system, while people in the oriental collectivist culture are more interdependent. In the Western cognition system, the relationship between people is often the relationship between "I and you", based on a single independent individual to see interpersonal relationships; in the oriental concept, the relationship between people is usually "We are a collective concept". From the perspective of the personality traits, the Orientals prefer the spiritual feelings, while the Westerners pay attention to the practicality; the Chinese pay attention to the form, while the Westerners pay attention to the content and are relatively utilitarian; the Orientals focus on morality and affection, while the Westerners emphasize the importance. Exploring and understanding the relationship between the East and the West, the author finds that grasping the cultural differences and cultural factors plays an extremely important role in understanding international relations and dealing with political relations between countries.



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