

On the Triple Connections between Morality¹ and Politics: An Inquiry of Western and Chinese Political Philosophy

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Morality determines the stability of political order in three aspects: first, moral theory is the basis for justifying political order. In Chinese and Western political philosophy, scholars of different schools try to justify political order in different ways. In western political philosophy, the most important are social contract theory and utilitarianism. In Chinese political philosophy, the most typical is the Confucian theory of “benevolent government”. Secondly, whether the words and deeds of political leaders conform to the moral principles is a sign of the legitimacy of the relevant political order. It is for this reason that the Chinese political thought emphasized “rule of morality” at the beginning of its birth, especially the Confucian doctrine, which has become the official ideology in two thousand years, and developed the thought of “internal saints and external kings” after repeated writings of several generations of Confucian scholars. Thirdly, the people within the political regime must have some civic virtues for them to maintain the political order. Of course, morality is not the whole of politics. Politics must be based on the monopoly of force to maintain stable order.

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Introduction

What is the relation between morality and politics? Does politics need morality? If we want to research on these questions, we have to start from the substance of politics. The so-called “politics” refers to the long-term stability of human society, in which a set of institutional rules is admitted by people, so that most people voluntarily respect these rules. Generally speaking, there are two ways to encourage people to follow a set of rules. First, relying on people’s self-discipline and reasoning, if people agree with a set of rules, they will follow them. The second is to rely on heteronomy, based on mandatory violence agencies, to punish those who do not comply with relevant rules. Therefore, politics encompasses two aspects: “authority” and “power”. Authority convinces and guides people to voluntarily obedience; while “power” makes people afraid and forces them to obey. Authority and power are like the two legs of a giant Leviathan, pushing society forward in an orderly manner. Based on this understanding, how

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¹In Chinese, morality and virtue are the same meaning, which use the words of 美德, 道德, etc. In this article, I discuss morality and virtue generally, and use morality or virtue in different contexts.

to establish political authority becomes the key to the success of a political order. Morality plays a crucial role in this aspect.

This article focuses on the most important western and Chinese political theory and tries to conclude the similarities of between them. In these two traditions, politics is deeply connected with morality. Moral theory and related arguments help to consolidate the authority of political order in three aspects: first, moral theory is the basis for justifying political order. Secondly, whether the words and actions of political leaders comply with moral principles is a signification of the legitimacy of the political order. Thirdly, people in the political order need to have certain civic virtues, so that they will follow the political order voluntarily. Of course, morality is not all about politics. As Comrade Mao Zedong once said, “political power emerges from the barrel of a gun”. In addition to the justification given by moral philosophy, politics must also be built on the basis of monopolistic violence in order to build a stable order. Morality and law are the two wings of politics.

Morality is the Foundation of Political Legitimacy

Any political order that can maintain long-term stability originates from the politics of reasoning, rather than the politics of power. Might may be effective for a while, but it cannot be effective forever. Although humans have various desires, fears, and passions, they are after all rational beings. If a mandatory institutional system is logically unreasonable and cannot be recognized by people, its governance cost will be extremely high. Moreover, the crucial thing is that the violent organs that constitute its mandatory basis are also composed of people with rational thinking abilities. If these people do not agree with the relevant institutional arrangements, the ruling foundation will be shaken. Of course, considering the rapid development of artificial intelligence, we can envision a dictator who possesses a large number of robot policemen and enslaves most of the people. But even so, the dictator has to control these robots through scientists, and there is also a risk of scientists’ rebelling against the dictator. Anyway, politics needs to be justified and the majority of people in a society have to be convinced by the justification. Otherwise, the stability of political order cannot be guaranteed. In Chinese and Western political philosophy, scholars from different schools are committed to provide justification for political order. In western political philosophy, the most famous are social contract theory and utilitarianism. In Chinese political philosophy, the most important one is Confucian “benevolent governance” theory.

First, the logic of the social contract theory is as follows: as a mandatory institutional system, a political order will inevitably pose a threat to people’s natural rights. So, under what circumstances is this compulsion not contradictory to individual rights? It can only be done when people voluntarily relinquish a portion of their freedom. Therefore, the theory of social contract takes “voluntarily agreement” as the basis for proving the legitimacy of mandatory order. Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, and other traditional social contract theorists have all conceived

the scenarios where people enter into social contracts from a natural state. For example, Hobbes argues that: “This is more than consent, or concord; it is a real unity of them all, in one and the same person, made by convent of everyman **I authorize and give up my right of governing myself to this man, or to this assembly of men, on this condition, that thou give up thy right to him, and authorize all his actions in like manner.** This done, the multitude so united in one person is called a Commonwealth, in Latin Civitas. This is the generation of that great Leviathan” (Hobbes 1651, 2.17). In Hobbes’ view, people agree to relinquish a portion of their rights due to fear of violent death caused by wars between them, and hand over this right to a neutral third party for arbitration. This third party is the sovereign, the state. Due to the fact that authorization to a sovereign is granted by everyone, all actions of that sovereign have legitimacy. And when it exercises its power and makes mandatory institutional arrangements, it does not infringe on people’s rights and freedoms, because these “rights” are voluntarily handed over by people.

The justification of social contract theory may be clever, but it also has fatal weaknesses. The crucial problem is that there is no historical record of the contracting process in the natural state. Which means both natural state and social contract are probably hypothetical. The question is: how can a hypothetical contract justify people’s obligation of obedience? If a person has never signed any contract, how can we require him to execute the contract content? Hume once satirized social contract theorists: “Were you to ask the far greatest part of the nation, whether they had ever consented to the authority of their rulers, or promised to obey them, they would be inclined to think very strangely of you.” (Hume 1739, Book 3, Part 2.8) Therefore, another important task of contract theorists is to demonstrate how a “hypothetical contract” can provide legitimacy for a mandatory institutional system. Locke and Kant provided two different answers to this question. Locke proposed the concept of “tacit agreement”. Locke believed that if a person lives in a certain political order, enjoying various benefits provided by this order, and has never expressed a clear objection to it; then he actually admits this order. Locke argued, “that every Man, that hath any Possession, or Enjoyment, of any part of the Dominions of any Government, doth thereby give his *tacit Consent*, and is as far forth obliged to Obedience to the Laws of that Government, during such Enjoyment, as anyone under it” (Locke 1960, p. 348). Kant’s answer to this question was even more brilliant. Kant believed that consent that can provide legitimacy for political order is not an actual consent, but should be the consent in a normative sense (Kant 2012, p. 37). Kant’s argument may seem absurd at first, but as long as it is connected with reality, it suddenly becomes clear. There are many unjust behaviors in human society which are based on “actual consent”. Such as money and power trading, power and sex trading, and all the exchanges those contradict to people’s moral intuitions. This type of trading is profitable for both parties involved, and is carried out with the consent of both parties, but the transaction itself is illegal. In addition, in situations of coercion, inducement, and bullying, people may also agree under pressure. But such consents cannot justify anything. It is precisely for this reason that in international relations, people have no obligation to fulfill any “unequal treaties”, because the

treaty itself is illegitimate. Therefore, actual consent cannot justify the contract itself. Only in a hypothetical state, contracts signed by free and equal people voluntarily, can justify the contract. And such consent must be “hypothetical consent”. As contemporary contract theorist John Rawls once said, “The principles of justice for the basic structure of society are the object of the original agreement. They are the principles that free and rational persons concerned to further their own interests would accept in an initial position of equality as defining the fundamental terms of their association” (Rawls 1999, p. 11).

Secondly, another school of western political philosophers - utilitarians - are extremely dissatisfied with the metaphysical tendency of social contract theory. They believed that the concepts of natural state, natural rights, and hypothetical contracts that social contract theorists refer to are too abstract and far from people’s actual lives. For example, Jeremy Bentham, the founder of utilitarianism, once laughed at what social contract theorists said about natural rights as “nonsense on stilts” (Bentham 2002, p. 331). In the view of utilitarians, the legitimacy of political order originates from the reality of the life itself. For everyone, although they may have different life plans and goals, they are all “pursuing pleasures and avoiding pains”, pursuing the maximization of happiness. Therefore, utilitarians believe that the legitimacy of political order lies in the fact that it can maximize the happiness of as many people as possible, which is called “greatest happiness of the greatest number” by Bentham. That is to say, if a set of institutional systems can maximize the happiness of everyone and, from an overall perspective, maximize the total happiness of all, then this political order is good and should be followed.

There is a difficulty in the justification provided by utilitarianism, which is the relationship between the interest of individual person and the common interest. As a branch of western political philosophy, utilitarianism has the characteristics of “individualism”². Based on the position of individualism, utilitarianism does not believe that individuals can be aggregated into any new entity - family, community, country, etc. Therefore, the so-called common interests are not any new interests that are independent of individual interests, but rather the sum of all individual interests. If we write one person’s utility as U_i , the overall social interest can be written as $\sum U_i$. Utilitarian judges whether a social order is a good order by whether or not $\sum U_i$ reaches the maximum. In other words, utilitarians agree with all institutional designs that can increase $\sum U_i$, and oppose any institutional design that reduces it. From this point of view, as a moral theory, utilitarianism provides a justification for the corresponding institutional system. The logic of this justification is that any system that can increase the total amount of individual interests is legitimate, which people should support and obey. The theory of utilitarianism is closely related to economics because it is easy to calculate. In the simplified calculation of economics, the concept of overall social interest ($\sum U_i$) evolves into a calculation of GDP or GNP in many cases. From the perspective of

²For the fundamental characteristics of Western culture, see Samuel Huntington’s statement: “Westerners and non-Westerners have repeatedly regarded individualism as the main distinguishing mark of the West.” (Huntington 2010, p. 51).

utilitarianism, whether GDP or GNP continues to grow is an important sign of the legitimacy of a set of institutional systems. And this is also an important reason why politicians in many countries nowadays attach so much importance to whether their GDP continues to grow.

Thirdly, traditional Chinese political ideology also contains profound moral doctrines that provide legitimacy for political order. The ancient Chinese understood political legitimacy as “the mandate of heaven”. And the political power that conforms to the mandate of heaven is legitimate, while the opposite is not. As Tingyang said, “Political legitimacy is the ‘the mandate of heaven’. If one political power contradicts with the the mandate of heaven, it shifts to a new political power, and a successful revolution proves the new political legitimacy. This is so-called ‘restoration of one’s destiny’” (Tingyang 2009, p. 95). How to perceive “the mandate of heaven”? Many classics of early Chinese political thought linked “the mandate of heaven” with “the will of people”. For example, *The Book of Changes* says, “Heaven will follow the will of the people” “Heaven sees as the people see; Heaven hears as the people hear”. *The Book of Mencius* says: “Why did Jie and Zhou lose their political power, because they lost their people. They acted against the will of the people”. Tingyang believes that the political ideology of the Zhou Dynasty began to emphasize the political legitimacy of “the mandate of heaven and the will of people”. This is because the Zhou Dynasty replaced the Shang Dynasty, which is weakness defeats strength. This signifies human relations change from natural jungle into true “politics” - “achieving stable and credible governance and management through intellectually designed systems” (Tingyang 2009, p. 97). In this stable political system, proof of political legitimacy is particularly important. Zhou discovered the so-called rule of morality, which grounded political legitimacy (Tingyang 2009, p. 97). The “rule of morality” refers to the rule that conforms to the will of the people. Therefore, conforming to the will of the people is the essence of political legitimacy.

However, “the will of people” is still a very ambiguous concept. There are many people in the state, and they are divided into small groups. Whose opinion is “public opinion”, which can represent “the will of people”? According to Tingyang’s interpretation, Zhou Dynasty’s ideology of “the mandate of heaven” understands political legitimacy from an economic perspective. As stated in *Liu Tao*: “Those who can benefit the people will be welcomed by the world; Those who cause harm to people, the whole world will oppose them; Who ensures the survival and reproduction of lives in the world, everyone will be grateful to him; Whoever causes slaughter to the people, the world will all hate him; Those who can make the path of life smooth, will be supported by everyone in the world; He who makes the world helpless will be hated by all; He who makes the people of the world live and work in peace will have obedience; What causes harm to the people of the world will be regarded as a disaster star. The world doesn’t belong to one person; only virtuous individuals can occupy the throne and govern the world.” From this discourse, it can be seen that the so-called world is the world of all, and the politics that can make people prosperous are good politics, while the institutions that can promote the interests of all are good institutions. From this perspective, there are many similarities within the proof of political legitimacy

between ancient Chinese political thought, which is based on “the will of people”, and the proof of Western political philosophy. If we consider the proof of social contract theory appeals to “people’s will” (voluntary agreement), and the proof of utilitarianism appeals to “people’s interests” (the greatest happiness of the greatest number of people), then the traditional Chinese moral theory often combines these two. “The will of people” refers to “people’s interests”, and to follow people’s will is to enhance people’s interests. The politics of “seeking the welfare of the people” is good politics, which leads to the emergence of good government and stable political power. In fact, until today, “the will of people” and “people’s interests” are still the substantive content of political legitimacy.

The Morality of Political Leaders is a Manifestation of Political Legitimacy

The second significance of morality in politics lies in the fact that those who hold political power possess corresponding moralities and virtues. As mentioned above, politics refers to the stability of a set of institutions. This stability relies on a monopolistic coercive power. As the owner of this power, the sovereign or actual ruler, whether their (his or her) words and actions conform to people’s moral conceptions is an important factor that affects whether the entire institutional system can be admitted and obeyed by people. Especially in the traditional monarchy country, as the ruler in power, the words and deeds of the monarch are closely related to the political legitimacy of relevant policies and decrees. It is precisely for this reason that Chinese political ideology emphasized the concept of “the rule of morality” at its inception, especially the Confucian doctrine which became the official ideology in almost two thousand years. After several generations of repeated writings by Confucian scholars, it developed into the theory of “inner sage and outer king”.

The phrase “inner sage and outer king” originated from *Zhuang Zi*, but it has been continuously interpreted by Confucians and ultimately holds an important position as “orthodoxy” in Confucian tradition. In fact, in the eyes of many ancient Chinese academic researchers, “inner sage and outer king” is the ultimate goal of all traditional Chinese political thoughts. As Youlan said, “In Chinese philosophy, no matter which school or doctrine, they all think that they are saints inside and kings outside” (Youlan 2000, p. 7). Taking the Confucian classic *The Analects of Confucius* as an example, the first chapter “Xue Er” emphasizes the importance of learning. What is the content of learning always raises the debates among researchers. Some scholars believe that it refers to learning to be a gentleman (Yuanbiao 2015). Other scholars believe that learning is conducted for the purpose of governing and restoring etiquette (Ruilai 2008). As it stated in *Lun Yu*: “Confucius said, ‘A gentleman does not pursue fullness in his food; he does not pursue comfort in his residence; he is diligent and agile in his work, but cautious in his speech; he approaches a moral and knowledgeable person and learns from him, correcting his own shortcomings, and can be called good at learning’”. Based on this discourse, it can be seen that the content of learning is “Tao”, which is the way of inner sages and outer kings. In other words, the purpose of learning is to

improve personal moral cultivation and constrain one's behavior through self-discipline and internal laws. "Cultivating one's moral character, regulating one's family, governing the country, and pacifying the world" (*Book of Rites·Great Learning*) is the Confucian ideal of life, and only by achieving internal sainthood (cultivating one's moral character, regulating one's family) can one achieve external monarchy (governing the country, and pacifying the world). As *The Doctrine of the Mean* says: "If you enjoy learning, you approach wisdom; if you work hard, you approach benevolence; if you know shame, you approach courage. Knowing these three things, one knows how to govern people; knowing how to govern people, one knows how to govern the country and the world."

Another reason for traditional Chinese political ideology places so much emphasis on the "rule of morality" is that the real "rule of law" has not yet been established. Confucianism advocates that "The formulation of etiquette and righteousness does not apply downwards to ordinary people, and the execution of punishment (corporal punishment) is not imposed upwards on nobles." (*Dai Sheng Li Ji*). That is to say, those who hold high and powerful positions are not bound by punishment, but of course they are bound by rules of etiquette. However, compared to punishment, the effectiveness and intensity of rules of etiquette are greatly reduced. Even for legalists who promote strict law and punishment, the law is nothing more than a weapon in the hands of the monarch to govern the country. On the one hand, Legalists emphasize "rule the state by law" and everyone is equal before the law. As it stated in *Han Feizi · Youdu*: "The law does not favor the noble, and the criminal law applies to everyone equally". On the other hand, Legalists also emphasize that the law is the law of the monarch and conveys the will of the monarch, as stated in Guanzi·Renfa: "It is the monarch who made the law". If the law is merely a weapon in the hands of the monarch, then such a law cannot restrict the monarch's own actions. Therefore, from both Confucian and Legalist perspectives, monarchs are not bound by the law, which may pose a huge political threat to the state. Once a tyrant appears, the people will suffer and the political order of the country may collapse. Therefore, the only thing that can constrain the monarchy's power is moral precepts. This is the fundamental reason why Confucianism emphasizes the morality of monarchs so much. The basic concept of Confucian moral theory is "benevolence", which means "love". This "altruistic" motivation is the starting point of all moral behaviors. Confucianism hopes that everyone cares about others while considering oneself. Especially when the monarch uses the power in his hands, he should practice "benevolence" to control the excessive expansion of desire and avoid the abuse of power. Mencius gave a profound explanation of "benevolent governance". Mencius believed that everyone is inherently kind, with a heart of compassion, shame, modest, and knowing right or wrong. Monarchy should start from the nature of kindness, govern the country with virtue, and practice "benevolent governance" in order to achieve political success. *Mencius·Gongsunchou* says: "Everyone has a heart of compassion. The ancient sages first had a heart of compassion and sympathy for the people, which led to policies and politics of compassion. By implementing a political system that sympathizes with people, it will be as easy for the ruler to govern the state as playing with things in his palm".

“The superiors’ virtue is the wind, The inferiors’ virtue is grass. Wherever the wind blows, grass bends.” (*Lunyu·Yanyuan*) Political leaders are the owners and executors of political power, and whether their words and actions conform to moral principles represents whether the application of political power conforms to public opinion and moral norms. The ancient Chinese were well versed in this path, particularly emphasizing the morality of monarchs. We can find some similarities between China and the West on this point. In Western world, the time of ancient Greece was an era of virtues, and the virtues of both ordinary people and rulers were important. Ordinary people should possess civic virtues, while rulers are the embodiment of wisdom and virtue. Aristotle believed that rulers should be more virtuous than ordinary citizens: “When we talk about a good governance, we call him a good person, a person who is wise and upright, and also say that as a politician, he should be wise and upright” (Pol. 1277a10-15). The most famous theory which emphasizes the virtues of rulers is Plato’s “Philosophical King” theory. In Plato’s view, philosophers are the most rational person, and only philosophers can understand the world of ideas, especially the idea of “goodness”. Therefore, only philosophers who simultaneously become rulers can lead the city-state to pursue the highest “goodness” (Plato, 501d-502b). Aristotle, Cicero, and Augustine continued Plato’s emphasis on the virtues of rulers. Even Machiavelli, who separated morality from politics, did not completely ignore the significance of rulers’ morality in politics. Machiavelli advised the monarch in his *Il Principe* to be primarily “hypocritical”. When discussing whether the monarch should keep his words, he argued: “Many contracts and many promises are invalidated and invalid due to the monarch’s lack of faith, and those who know how to be foxes achieve the greatest success. However, the monarch must know how to conceal this animal nature. He must also be a great disguiser and hypocrite; Sovereigns do not need to truly possess the virtue of ‘keeping faith and righteousness’. However, monarchs still need to pretend to possess such virtues” (Machiavelli 1532). Why does a monarch need to pretend to be moral? This is because the stability of political order is closely related to the morality of the monarch. From this perspective, Machiavelli was also aware of the importance of morality for political order. For this reason, Machiavelli bluntly taught the monarch how to be hypocritical: “I even dare to say that if you possess all these qualities and often wait for them to form, it is harmful. However, if you appear to possess all these qualities, it is beneficial. You should appear compassionate, faithful, humane, honest in politics, devout in God, and also do so. But at the same time, you should be mentally prepared to make arrangements: when you need to change your course, you should be able to and know how to do a transformation of 180 degrees” (Machiavelli 1532).

From above analysis, we can see that both Chinese and Western political ideologies place great emphasis on the moralities of rulers. How do people wield power? Are they bound by moral rules? This relates to the legitimacy of the entire political order and also decides whether the political order can be acknowledged by people.

Citizen Virtue is the Guarantee of Institutional Stability

The third relationship between morality and politics is reflected in the role of civic virtues in political success. As mentioned above, the stability of the political system cannot rely solely on mandatory monopoly power, and it also requires people's voluntary obedience. Even if a political order has obtained political legitimacy and the power holders in it possess the expected virtues, the success of the institutional system still depends on whether people are willing to follow the institutional requirements. It depends on whether people are willing to bear the burdens imposed by the system while enjoying various conveniences it brings. As a result, those "free riders" who are only willing to enjoy benefits and are unwilling to take responsibility have become the main culprits hindering the success of the political system. Political thinkers from ancient times to the present have realized the importance of civic virtues in political communities for political stability. Below, I will elaborate on this viewpoint from two aspects: Aristotle's discourse on civic virtues and Rawls' construction of the concept of 'sense of justice'.

Aristotle raised a question in his book *Politics*: Are the virtues of good people the same as those of good citizens? (Pol. 1276b15-20) From this, we can see that Aristotle believed that as legitimate members of the political community, citizens should possess some specific virtues. Citizens do not necessarily have to be "good people" (such as those who are prudential, just, brave, and moderate as required by the "Greek Four Virtues"), but citizens must possess certain virtues to ensure the normal operation of the political community. Aristotle believed that different forms of government require different civic virtues. In the ideal city-state of in-turn governance, citizens are both rulers and ruled, so citizens must be able to rule as well as be ruled. Aristotle argued that although the virtues of rulers and ruled are different, a good citizen must rest on these two aspects. "He should know how to govern free people as a ruler, and as one of the free people, he must know how to accept the rule of others - this is the character of a good citizen" (Aristotle 2008, p. 127, Pol. 1277b 10-15).

Contemporary political philosopher John Rawls discussed more specifically on what kind of virtues citizens should possess. Rawls believed that the stability of the political system depends on the citizens' sense of justice. The so-called "sense of justice" refers to "an effective desire to apply and to act from the principles of justice and so from the point of view of justice" (Rawls 1999, p. 497). Rawls believed that "sense of justice" is a moral emotion gradually acquired by people in family relationships, community activities, and social cooperation. First, in family, children gradually develop "love" ability under the care of their parents and form attachment relationships with their loved ones. In this intimate relationship, children who violate their parents' teachings will feel guilty, which marking the initial formation of morality. Rawls referred to the morality formed during this stage as Morality of Authority, which is a morality formed based on an intimate relationship with authority. Secondly, the attachment relationship in the family gives people the emotional ability to form friendly relationships with different roles in the community. In a just social arrangement, this friendly emotion

transforms into trust and goodwill towards other members of the community, a goodwill that hopes that friends can be treated fairly. Rawls referred to it as the Morality of Association, which is a morality that relies on friendly relationships within the community. Thirdly, in a social system known as just, trust and friendly feelings towards fellow citizens transform into a sense of justice. At this point, a moral emotion of interacting with strangers is a cooperative concept of “reciprocity”. Rawls referred to it as Morality of Principle, which is a moral emotion that hopes that the principles of justice can be consistently enforced (Rawls 1999, pp. 429-30). Rawls argues that a sense of justice “The basic idea is one of reciprocity, a tendency to answer in kind. Now this tendency is a deep psychological fact. Without it our nature would be very different and fruitful social cooperation fragile if not possible” (Rawls 1999, p. 433).

Rawls believed that if a person with a sense of justice considers an institutional arrangement as just, he (she) will take his (her) own actions to uphold it. When someone violates the rules, he (she) will feel “resentment”. For example, when getting on a bus, most people honestly queue up. If someone wants to jump the queue, it will cause public indignation. Queuing up to get on the bus is an arrangement of Procedural justice. People with the sense of justice will try to maintain the just regulations. In Rawls’ view, a sense of justice is a key factor in maintaining stability in a just system, because a sense of justice can effectively eliminate isolation and establish trust. The so-called “isolation” refers to everyone making choices in isolation, who wants to maximize self-interest. The ultimate result of their choices is often against their wishes - everyone’s interests are harmed. This is like in a natural state where everyone only considers oneself, but each person cannot determine the other person’s intentions and actions. Therefore, everyone is constantly under the threat of violent death. In Rawls’ view, a sense of justice is the key to “eliminating isolation”. People with a sense of justice, even among strangers, can follow the rules of justice and promote “personal interests” while also promoting “public interests”. On the other hand, a sense of justice can also establish “trust” among strangers, allowing people to believe that while following the rules of order, others will also do it. Rawls believed that the premise for someone to follow rules is that others will also follow rules; otherwise it would be irrational to follow rules oneself. Taking queuing as an example, if people do not believe that others will also queue honestly; then queuing honestly on their own is stupid. Therefore, in an institutional environment, only when people have a sense of justice and a desire to actively follow the requirements of the system can everyone be sure that others will also follow corresponding rules, and the system can maintain stability.

From this perspective, the morality of citizens is crucial for the success of political order. On the contrary, if in a system of institutions, people have to violate their own moral intuitions in order to continue to comply with the requirements of the institutional system, then the system is not far from collapse. For example, under Hitler’s totalitarian rule, people at that time had to violate their moral intuition in order to carry out cruel persecution of Jews. Oscar Schindler was originally a Nazi party member, but his conscience did not allow him to coexist with Nazi Germany. Schindler risked his life and spend a lot of money to protect

Jews. The “Schindler’s List” is a manifesto to human conscience and a moral resistance to politics³. This example tells us that if a political order goes against people’s moral intuition, conflicts with people’s moral conceptions, and creates a huge tension between morality and politics; then, this tension will ultimately tear apart the system itself, leading to political turmoil.

What is the relationship between morality and politics? This is an old political philosophy issue. This issue is particularly important in ancient societies where the rule of law has not been established. At that time, morality and religion became the main norms that constrained rulers. In modern society, due to the gradual development and maturity of relevant systems such as the Constitution and representative democracy, moral constraints on rulers no longer have crucial significance. In the eyes of some historians of political thought, Machiavelli is at a time of transition between the ancient and modern eras, and his political ideas are of great significance for the construction of the discipline of politics. Machiavelli attempted to separate politics from morality and religion (Skinner 1978, Pocock 1975). In his view, the political sphere has its own operational logic, and the pursuit of political value can also become the ultimate end of human society. For a state, the highest political purpose is to maintain “power”. Rulers can use morality and religion as tools to achieve political goals. Politics has its own operating mechanism, and when morality and religion contribute to achieving political goals, they can be relied on. On the contrary, when morality or religion is not conducive to achieving political goals, morality and religion should be abandoned without hesitation. Especially the core of political power - rulers (monarchs) - should not be tangled by moral or religious precepts. In many people’s opinion, Machiavelli’s greatest achievement was to separate politics from moral philosophy and give it a higher status than moral philosophy. As contemporary scholar Harvey Mansfield once said, “In his view, politics is not constrained by things higher than it, but is often seen as something outside of politics - belonging to ‘given’ in any political context - to a much higher degree than politicians, the people, and philosophers have always imagined” (Mansfield 1998). However, politics cannot justify itself. The so-called “pure theory of politics” can only be about the issues such as the acquisition and application of political power, the design of political systems, how to maintain stability, etc. Such a theory cannot prove innocence by itself. Because even if people can design a perfect system which monopolize power through politics, there is still a need for another theory to tell people why they should follow this system? What is the advantage of this system? What moral principles have been followed? So called “pure theory of politics” cannot prove its own legitimacy, and the legitimacy of political order and regime can only be proven by non-political theories, leaving room for moral philosophy to question politics.

³Of course, there were also many people chose to betray their own conscience and obey Hitler’s orders. Cf. (Roland 2010).

Conclusion

To sum up, the purpose of politics is order and long-term stability. To achieve this goal, on the one hand, relying on morality; On the other hand, relying on force. It is precisely for this reason that since the Han Dynasty, the concept of “external Confucianism and internal Legalists” has become the governance philosophy of Chinese monarchs: Confucianism provides political legitimacy for political order, while Legalism consolidates the violent foundation of the country through decisive decisions of rewards and punishments, which plays a decisive role in the actual political order. The thought that emphasizes the positive role of moral argumentation and moral education in people’s adherence to rules is political idealism. On the contrary, the thought that emphasizes the normative role of strict punishment in people’s behavior, and emphasizes the political stability guaranteed by the basis of violence, is political realism. Truth is neither pure idealism nor pure realism, but in between. Sometimes it leans towards ideals, sometimes it leans towards reality. Reforming reality according to ideals and realizing ideals in reality, there’s a mutually reinforcing relationship between morality and politics. Moral theory help to consolidate the authority of political order in three aspects: first, moral theory is the basis for justifying political order. Secondly, whether the words and actions of political leaders comply with moral principles is a signification of the legitimacy of the political order. Thirdly, people in the political order need to have certain civic virtues, so that they will follow the political order voluntarily.

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