

# A Comparative Study of Chinese and Western Power Supervision Systems from the Perspective of Traditional Political Culture

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## Abstract

Power is a sharp weapon for the benefit of the country and the people, as well as a scourge to the country and the people. Supervising and restraining power is the common goal of modern state governance. All countries in the world have their own power supervision systems, among which the power supervision systems of western countries, led by Europe and the United States, are unique and relatively mature. The Communist Party of China has successfully explored a set of power supervision system with Chinese characteristics. To continue to improve China's power supervision system, we should not only learn from historical experience, but also learn from the successful experience of western countries. From the perspective of traditional political culture, this paper compares the operating mechanism, objectives, power restraint methods, interest strata and power supervision culture of Chinese and Western power supervision systems, and analyzes the differences between Chinese and Western power supervision.

## Keywords

Power, Monitoring System, Western, Political Traditions

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## 1. Introduction

“Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, the Party Central Committee with Comrade Xi Jinping at its core has focused on the long-term stability of the Party and the country, promoted the reform of the supervision system from a political and overall perspective, and initially formed the overall framework of the Party and state supervision system” (Yang, 2019). China's power monitoring system is maturing, and the fight against corruption

has won an overwhelming victory. Behind the decisive victory in the anti-corruption struggle is the improvement of the power supervision system. To further improve the power supervision system, we need to learn not only from the wisdom of traditional political culture, but also from the successful experience of the construction of the power supervision system in Western countries<sup>1</sup>. At present, there are more than 190 countries and regions in the world, and the political systems are diverse. But only a few models of political institutions dominate. The model of socialism with Chinese characteristics and the “democratic model” of Western countries led by the United States and Britain are two typical political models in today’s world. No political system is a castle in the air, it comes from a unique civilization and is influenced by traditional political culture. China is the largest socialist country in the world, with a history and civilization of 5000 years, going through five stages of primitive society, slave society, feudal society, capitalist society and socialist society. For the vast majority of the time, China’s regime was a centralized model. China with a centralized model was a world leader for most of ancient times, leaving a rich traditional political culture to future generations. Traditional political culture refers to the political concepts and value orientations that have developed in ancient society for thousands of years, born in the past, continue to influence people’s thoughts and concepts, and still play an important role in political life. Western countries also have a traditional political culture characterized by living alone, and traditional political culture has been influencing the development of Western political systems. The historical evolution of Western countries, unlike China, can be divided into two stages. The first is from ancient Greco-Roman society to Western European feudal society, in the stage of evolution to the “center of Western Europe” of modern capitalist society. The second stage was the global colonization of capitalism, which finally led to the integration of Western Europe and North America. Western countries are historically interconnected and culturally connected. “Although the political culture of various countries is very different after development, their political and cultural traditions are homologous and heterogeneous, and they all derive from the ancient Greek slave city-state culture” (Engels & Karl, 1972). Traditional political culture is also a traditional culture, which can not only enhance the self-confidence of the country and the people, but also further promote the development of modern civilized society. In response to the problem of the positioning of traditional political culture, as early as 1987, Mr. Zhu Riyao pointed out: “When we understand traditional Chinese political culture, we should not focus on recognizing the culture that has disappeared in history, but on studying the traditional culture accumulated in the current era” (Zhu, 1987). Therefore, to improve China’s power supervision system, it is necessary to study and explore the traditional culture that still affects the country’s economic and social development. From the perspective of traditional political culture, this paper compares the Chinese and Western power su-

<sup>1</sup>The western countries, this article refers to the developed capitalist countries headed by the United Kingdom and the United States, whose culture and system are very different from China.

pervision systems in five aspects, such as power supervision mode, starting point, focus, service target and supervision culture, spanning thousands of years of historical dimensions, examining the differences between Chinese and Western power supervision and comparing the different paths of the development of Chinese and Western power supervision systems.

## **2. The Types of Power Supervision between China and the West Are Different**

The supervision system arose with the emergence of the state and was constantly improved with the improvement of the bureaucratic system. The power supervision system can play a role, which is inseparable from its own reasonable operating mechanism. For most of ancient China, it was a unified multi-ethnic state, and the political situation was an emperor system under centralized power. The West experienced the city-state society of the ancient Greek period, the ancient Roman society (the senate period, the imperial period), the feudal society of Western Europe, and the capitalist democratic society. Affected by different national systems and differences in political trust and traditional culture, the types of power supervision between China and the West are different. According to the source of power and the subject of power supervision, power supervision can be modeled into vertical supervision and horizontal supervision. Although no country in the world has adopted a single supervision model since ancient times, under the influence of traditional political culture, Chinese and Western power supervision has presented different types.

### **2.1. China's Power Supervision System Is Mainly Vertical Supervision**

Although public opinion began to influence state power as early as the pre-Qin period, throughout the history of China's five thousand years, the main body of power supervision in the feudal era, which accounted for the main body of history, belonged to the type of vertical supervision, and power supervision was mainly vertical supervision. The State of Qin destroyed the Six Kingdoms, established a unified centralized feudal empire, formally established the emperor system, and opened the prelude to China's feudal society that had dominated the world for more than 2000 years. In feudal times, the emperor was the supreme holder of power. Officials at all levels, under the authority of the emperor, exercised power and administered the state on behalf of the emperor. In order to ensure the continuity of the family, the state has set up a supervision system to supervise the operation of power. The state supervision system was the core force of power supervision in the feudal era. The power supervision system in the feudal era was centered on the imperial power and directly served the imperial power, which was the most important feature of power supervision in ancient China. Although it is divided into a central supervision system and a county local supervision system, the power supervision system is a vertical management model that directly inserts from the central government to the

county level. Although in the feudal era, local governments also had the responsibility of power supervision, but the leading power of power supervision was in the center. The supervisory power also belonged to the emperor alone, and the bureaucracy supervised other officials under the emperor's authorization. In order to strengthen the management and control of the officials of the imperial court, the emperor would regularly exclude the supervision ministers from visiting the localities and strengthen the supervision of local power. For example, in order to strengthen the centralization of power, strengthen the power supervision of local officials, and increase the concentration of supervision power, Emperor Wudi of Han divided the country into 13 historical departments, and sent henchmen ministers to be responsible for local power supervision affairs. During the Ming and Qing dynasties, the Inspectorate was responsible for national supervision affairs at the central level, implemented the reform of integrating science and technology, and stationed in the imperial history to supervise the six ministries and localities, and the completeness of the power supervision system reached the peak of a feudal society. It is worth noting that in ancient times, especially in the feudal era, the power of supervision belonged only to the emperor, and other bureaucrats were not allowed to interfere. In the early Qin and early Han dynasties, the prime minister was responsible for some of the supervisory powers. Subsequently, the Prime Minister was stripped of his supervisory powers. As the highest official in the supervision system, Yushi Dafu was responsible for the supervision of state power on behalf of the emperor. In ancient China, especially in the feudal era, most of the time the state (imperial court) did not encourage private participation in power supervision. For example, the "Great Qing Statutes and Litigation" states, "All military and civilian lawsuits must be filed from the bottom up, and if they exceed their own control of the lawsuit, they will be punished with 50 lashes if they go to their superiors to sue them." "In the absence of a higher level of litigation, the bureaucracy is both the defendant and the referee. However, under the influence of social relations such as clans, classmates, and the same year in the feudal era, a nationwide network of officials and officials has been formed, and the path for ordinary people to participate in power supervision has been basically blocked.

The historical tradition of power supervision in the feudal era provides reference and enlightenment for the construction of the state power supervision system in modern China. After the founding of New China, under the leadership of the Communist Party of China, the socialist system with Chinese characteristics strengthened the construction of the state supervision system. Since the 18<sup>th</sup> National Congress of the Communist Party of China, a people-centered, centralized, unified, authoritative and efficient socialist state supervision system with Chinese characteristics has been established. The power supervision system has been improved day by day, power has been locked up in the cage of the system, and the construction of political civilization has achieved remarkable success. Since the 18<sup>th</sup> National Congress of the Communist Party of China, the state has continued to improve the modernization of the state power supervision system

and promote the reform of the state supervision system. Through the establishment of the State Supervision Commission, improving the supervisory function of the people's congress, promoting the institutionalization of inner-party inspections, improving state and intra-party supervision laws and regulations, and strengthening media supervision, we will promote the modernization of the power supervision system and supervision capacity. At present, China has achieved full coverage of supervision of all public officials exercising public power, and the ability to supervise power has reached a new historical height.

## **2.2. The Western Power Supervision System Is Dominated by Horizontal Supervision**

Western countries have not experienced more than 2000 years of feudal autocratic rule like China. The Western power supervision system is generally a horizontal supervision type. The type of horizontal supervision refers to the horizontal decentralization and checks and balances of power subjects, that is, the power is divided into several different components and delegated to different political subjects to exercise. Each political subject is independent and equal in status, and checks and balances power by mutual supervision. During the political period of ancient Greek city-states, multiculturalism entered the political arena. Among them, Aristotle divided the function of state activity into legislative functions, judicial functions and administrative functions, and state power was exercised by citizens' assemblies, councils and trial courts, which was the basis of Western theory of separation of powers. The mechanism of separation of powers and checks in ancient Rome was not clear, but there was already a sense of power constraints. The pluralistic political culture of ancient Greece and Rome laid the multicultural orientation and democratic value orientation of Western political culture, and laid the imprint of historical tradition for the Western power supervision system. "The state is a public will reached by individuals to renounce one or all of their rights for the protection of private property and life, it belongs to the common association of citizens, it is essentially public, does not belong to any individual or minority, and the ruler only administers the state according to the public will" (Lin & Wang, 2019). The political tradition of Western countries is that the state is a common power of citizens, that is, public power. In order to ensure that public power was not abused, after the British bourgeois revolution, the theory of checks and balances between the legislative and executive powers represented by Locke was once again produced. Montesquieu, a French Enlightenment thinker and jurist, pointed out more than two hundred years ago: "It is an eternal experience that all those who have power are prone to abuse power." The people who have power use their power until they meet a boundary (Montesquieu, 2019). In Montesquieu's view, even in a democratic political state, once power is too centralized beyond the control of the people, the state power derived from the masses of the people will be transformed into an authoritarian rule that oppresses the people. The lessons of the history of dark despotic rule in the Middle Ages have made Western thinkers

very deeply aware of power. “Power without supervision and restraint is a poison, and the greater the power, the more toxic and the greater the harm.” Power must serve the public under supervision and restraint, and all absolute power must be eliminated.

In order to check and balance the abuse of power, Montesquieu formally put forward the principle of separation of powers between the legislative, executive, and judicial powers and judicial independence in “On the Spirit of Law”. Most of the power supervision systems in Western countries are constructed with the idea of separation of powers. Western countries divide state power into three parts: legislative power, executive power, and judicial power, and different political powers are exercised by the legislature, executive and judicial organs. The three powers check and balance each other and supervise each other. Taking the United States as an example, Congress, the president, and the courts respectively exercise three powers, check and supervise each other, and prevent the emergence of unsupervised absolute power. The U.S. Congress and the Supreme Court have the power to veto presidential proposals and decisions. In addition, Western countries have adopted bills such as the Freedom of Information Act to encourage social organizations, news media, and citizens to participate in power supervision. Looking at the governance practices of many countries in the world, we find that this horizontal supervision model of power that has succeeded in Western countries has indeed lost its due role after being forcibly transplanted to some Asian, African and Latin American countries. Digging deep into the reasons behind the failure, it is not difficult to find that no matter what kind of power supervision, there must be a traditional political and cultural soil suitable for its role.

### **3. The Starting Point of Establishing a Power Supervision System in China and the West Is Different**

Comparing the differences between Chinese and Western power supervision systems, it is necessary to explore the “original intention” of the Chinese and Western power supervision systems, the starting point of the state’s exercise of power supervision. Whether Chinese or Western, the core issue of power supervision is the abuse of power (mainly referring to administrative power). Different traditional political cultures and differences in state systems have led to different starting points for setting up and exercising power supervision in China and the West.

#### **3.1. The Starting Point of China’s Power Supervision Is to Ensure That Power Does “Good Deeds”**

The idea of the source of power in ancient China evolved from the divine right of kings in the Xia Shang period to the “herdsmen of Chengtian” in the early Western Zhou Dynasty, and finally evolved to the “immediate acquisition of the world” in the Qin and Han periods. The Qin Dynasty began the armed seizure of supreme power, creating a precedent for the legitimacy of state rule to come

from conquest by force. For more than 2,000 years of feudal autocratic rule, the legitimacy of rule has always relied on military conquest, and the emperor has become the controller of absolute power. The establishment and operation of the power supervision system must serve the imperial power, maintain the authority of the emperor, and implement the implementation of the emperor's edicts. The ultimate goal of power supervision in feudal society is to ensure that power acts in accordance with the will of the emperor, to maintain the authority of imperial power, and to ensure the stability of the social order of the country. Therefore, in ancient China, especially in feudal society, the starting point for establishing and perfecting power supervision was to ensure that power did "good deeds", that is, on the basis of safeguarding imperial power, to stop local tyranny, prevent rebellion by local forces, and ensure the stability of the state and social order and the people living and working in peace and contentment. In a feudal society where "the people suffer and the people suffer", although the core purpose of the power supervision system is to maintain imperial power, it is also maintaining the stability of state power and social order, and is doing "good deeds".

After the founding of the Communist Party of China, it led and united the people of all ethnic groups throughout the country to overthrow the three mountains of "imperialism, bureaucratism and feudalism" that weighed on the heads of the Chinese people and establish a socialist new China. The power of a socialist state serves the people, and the starting point of power supervision is to seek happiness for the people. Since the 18<sup>th</sup> National Congress of the Communist Party of China, the national supervision mechanism and supervision system have been continuously improved. Compared with Western countries, the biggest advantage of China's socialist system is that under the leadership of the Party, it concentrates its efforts on major affairs, and the Chinese government is a promising government. General Secretary Xi Jinping pointed out: "Our party has no special interests of its own, and the party puts the interests of the masses first at all times. This is the distinctive mark that distinguishes our party from other political parties as a Marxist party (Zhang, 2020). The Communist Party of China represents the interests of the broadest masses of the Chinese people, and the starting point of all work is to achieve, safeguard, and develop the fundamental interests of the broadest masses of the people. The starting point of establishing and improving the power supervision system is to ensure that power is not abused, to prevent laziness and neglect of government, and to ensure that power does "good deeds" conducive to promoting the development of the socialist cause and seeking happiness for the Chinese people.

### **3.2. The Starting Point of Western Power Supervision Is to Ensure That Power Does Not Do "Evil Things"**

Western countries were influenced by the pluralistic political culture of ancient Greek democratic thought, and the enthusiasm of citizens for political participation was high, and the consciousness of democracy awakened earlier. In ancient Rome, the republic provided a platform for the powerful to participate in the af-



fairs of the state, and the sense of citizenship began to germinate. With the rise of the Roman Empire, the dictatorship harmed the interests of the public, and the public developed a sense of supervision and restraint of power. The dark reign of the Middle Ages left a terrible impression of dictatorship in the public memory of Western countries. The Renaissance brought about an awakening of democratic consciousness to Western democracy, and the bitter lessons of the British bourgeois revolution and the French Revolution alerted the Western public ideologically. The public's concept of the state in Western countries has gradually matured, from the theological view of the state → the view of the city-state → the view of nationalism → the view of civic nationalism. In the concept of the citizen state, state power is a kind of public power and the embodiment of the will of citizens. State power does not belong to any one individual or collective, but is the "public instrument of the world". The starting point of the Western state power supervision system is to prevent state power from bringing dictatorship and corruption, to prevent a few people from using power to carry out authoritarian dictatorship, and the majority from using absolute power to implement tyranny. In the national system, the separation of powers between legislative, judicial and executive powers should be implemented to prevent excessive concentration of power. The executive power is the focus of power supervision because it has the most administrative resources. "The power of the consul is not a natural power, but a citizen, and when it rises independently, it should be regarded as an appropriation and despotism of civil rights." Use judicial and legislative powers to restrict and balance executive power, use press freedom to supervise state power, encourage citizens and social organizations to participate in the operation of state power, and take a variety of measures to ensure that administrators exercise state power in accordance with citizens' wishes, and prevent the occurrence of "tyranny" such as authoritarian regimes and personal dictatorships.

#### **4. The Focus of the Power Supervision System in China and the West Is Different**

Due to the different historical development trajectories, Chinese and Western power supervision have evolved a set of power supervision systems in line with national conditions in the long historical process. The Chinese and Western power supervision systems are influenced by traditional political culture and state institutional arrangements, and the focus of power supervision is different.

##### **4.1. China's Power Supervision System Focuses on Supervision**

The ancient Chinese supervision system has undergone thousands of years of perfection, and in the last years of the Qing Dynasty, a relatively complete supervision system for power was formed. China's feudal society, with its vast territory, large population, diverse religious and cultural diversity, and complex social conditions, posed challenges to the feudal rulers in national governance. Af-



ter the establishment of each dynasty, the first problem faced was whether the emperor's decrees could be unimpeded throughout the country, and whether the local officials could govern the localities well. Each dynasty paid attention to the selection of officials, selecting loyal and talented people to enrich the local bureaucracy and replace the emperor in governing the region. Faced with a complex social situation and an extremely backward productive force, both the private sector and the court look forward to a promising government. As early as the Spring and Autumn Warring States period, "Xunzi Lai Gong" pointed out layer by layer: "The monarch, Zhou Ye; The water is also; The water carries the boat, and the water overturns the boat. "After the establishment of the new dynasty, it is necessary to take into account the suffering of the common people, liberate the productive forces and develop the economy. Only by alleviating the suffering of the people and easing class contradictions through development can we maintain the smooth transition of state power and social stability, resolve the crisis of legitimacy and further consolidate imperial power. The ultimate purpose of the power supervision system is to supervise the officials to act in accordance with the will of the emperor, maintain the imperial power, and ensure the stability of the country and society. For example, during the chaotic period of the Southern and Northern Dynasties, in order to strengthen the power supervision of local tyrants and local high-ranking bureaucrats, the imperial court set up low-level officials to supervise the exercise of local power. In the Ming Dynasty, Emperor Zhu Yuanzhang set up Jinyiwei to supervise and supervise hundreds of officials to ensure that the emperor's will was implemented. After the founding of the People's Republic of China, the national supervision system borrowed the advantages of the ancient supervision system and supervised the power entrusted to officials by the people under the model of active government. Since the 18<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Communist Party of China, the State Supervision Commission has further expanded the scope of supervision, strengthened the supervision of power, and improved the power supervision system day by day. On October 27, 2016, the Sixth Plenary Session of the 18<sup>th</sup> Central Committee of the Communist Party of China adopted the Regulations on Intra-Party Supervision of the Communist Party of China, further strengthening party building and strengthening power supervision. In March 2021, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China issued opinions on strengthening the supervision of the "number one" and the leading body, and strengthened the supervision of the "number one" and the leading body. Improve the power supervision of key groups, grasp the core issues of power supervision, and make China's power supervision system reach a new height.

#### **4.2. The Western Power Supervision System Focuses on Decentralization of Checks and Balances**

The public in Western countries was influenced by the pluralistic political culture of ancient Greece, which sowed the seeds of democracy in society. However, after the long-term oppression of the upper class of Guizhou such as the Holy

See and the feudal lords, after the bourgeois revolution, the separation of powers and checks and balances became the core of the state power structure. Especially during the British Defence War, Cromwell's personal dictatorship undermined democracy, implemented dictatorship and oppressed the public, and staged the historical memory of tyranny brought by absolute power for the public in Western countries. The ideas of checks and balances by thinkers such as Locke and Montesquieu were accepted by the public in Western countries after the French Revolution. In modern Western countries, the supervision of power in Western countries is based on the principle of separation of powers and checks and balances, using legislative power and judicial power to restrict the executive power, establishing a parliament to restrain the supreme ruling party, and using the opposition parties to restrain the ruling party. Through the separation of powers and checks and balances, the electoral system, and media supervision, the Western power supervision system has formed a set of supervision systems that conform to Western traditional political culture and social habits. In the United States, for example, according to the provisions of the US Constitution, the president is the supreme ruler and the supreme commander of the armed forces, and is the head of state. There is a well-known saying in the United States: "The president is unreliable." The president's power must be checked and balanced, and power must not be exercised according to the will of the public, and personal dictatorship must be put to an end. The US president's launching of a troop war, the imposition of a state of emergency in the country, and the appointment of important officials all require the approval of the Senate (House of Representatives) before it can take effect.

## **5. The Interests of Chinese and Western Power Supervision Systems Are Different**

China and the West have different historical civilizations, and there are huge differences in political systems, societies and cultures. At present, China is a socialist system, Western countries are capitalist systems, and the interests of Chinese and Western power supervision systems are different. From the perspective of political tradition, analyzing the class interests safeguarded by the power supervision system can directly compare the essential differences between the two sides.

### **5.1. China's Power Supervision System Ultimately Safeguards the Interests of the People**

From the day of its inception, the ancient Chinese supervision system was centered on imperial power, responsible only to the emperor alone, maintaining the emperor's authority, and consolidating the imperial rule. In the feudal era, the ultimate purpose of power supervision was to safeguard the interests of the emperor. When the interests of the imperial power and the people conflict, the power supervision system will activate and exercise the supervision power according to the will of the emperor to eliminate the hidden factors that threaten

the imperial power. According to the records of the “Zizhi Tongjian”, in the first year of Emperor Yuankang of Han Xuan, Jingzhao Yin Zhao Guanghan was framed by the prime minister for handling the case of the prime minister’s wife privately executing his maidservant, and was imprisoned by the court captain of Emperor Han Xuan, and beheaded in the city, and the people all mourned. Zhao Guanghan’s outstanding ability and political achievements were prominent, and he was very loved by the people.<sup>2</sup> Only when the imperial power and the interests of the common people are combined, will the power supervision system safeguard the interests of the people. For example, in the 46<sup>th</sup> year of Qianlong of the Qing Dynasty (1781), a major case of local officials conspiring to cheat and wantonly embezzle corruption occurred in Gansu Province, involving 113 people from the governor to the county official, recovering more than 2.81 million taels of stolen silver, and the corruption spanned seven years. During this period, the power supervision system in the entire province of Gansu Province did not play a supervisory role. It was only after the introduction of the anti-Qing uprising of the Salar tribe Su 43 in the Xunhua Hall that it attracted the attention of the imperial court, and the major case was completely exposed. It can be seen that only when the peasant uprising threatens the stability of state power and directly threatens the imperial power, the feudal power supervision system plays a role, fighting corruption and safeguarding the interests of the people. In short, in ancient times, especially in the feudal era, the power supervision system served the imperial power and was a sharp blade to safeguard the interests of the emperor.

After the founding of New China, the power supervision system under the leadership of the Communist Party of China has achieved a fundamental change, and the power supervision system has become a sharp sword to safeguard the interests of the people. The ultimate purpose of the state’s establishment of the power supervision system is to safeguard the interests of the broadest masses of the people. The power supervision system began to “say no” to the persistent problem of rent-seeking in power that has lasted for thousands of years, and promoted the modernization of the power supervision system and supervision capacity through legislation, reform of the supervision mechanism, strengthening the supervisory function of the people’s congress, and improving the inspection system. Since the 18<sup>th</sup> National Congress of the Communist Party of China, the supervision system of state power has achieved historic results, and the national anti-corruption struggle has won a phased victory. According to data released by the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection and the State Supervision Commission of the Communist Party of China: “Under the leadership of the Party Central Committee, since the 18<sup>th</sup> National Congress of the Communist Party of China, discipline inspection and supervision organs across the country have filed and examined 3.805 million cases, investigated and dealt with 4.089 million people, and imposed 3.742 million party discipline and govern-

<sup>2</sup>[Northern Song Dynasty] Sima, G. (2015). *Zizhi Tongjian* (Vol2, pp. 179-202). Guangming Daily Press.

ment sanctions.” Throughout the 5000-year history of China, no dynasty has been as bold as the Communist Party of China in its self-revolution, launched a large-scale anti-corruption struggle, and adopted various means to safeguard the vital interests of the people at any cost.

## 5.2. The Western Supervision System Protects the Interests of “Small Groups”

Compared with China, Western power supervision systems have also undergone a process of continuous development and improvement. With the rise of Western capitalism, the concept of democratic politics began to take root in the hearts of the people, and the power supervision system began to receive public attention. After the rise of the bourgeoisie, the British Parliament set up two chambers to restrain royal power and safeguard the interests of the bourgeoisie. European immigrants colonized North America, experienced the War of Independence, and defeated Britain to gain the right to establish an independent state. Washington, Jefferson and others in the New World established a federal state with separation of powers, the United States, according to the ideas of Montesquieu and other thinkers. In the course of his investigation of the United States, the benchmark of Western countries, Tocqueville discovered the unique aspects of American society. “A keen insight into the distinctive and refreshing political ethos of this society founded by the English Puritans.” “All towns and counties in America are founded on the belief that each person is the only and best referee in his or her own interests” (Tocqueville, 2017). The United States is a representative of Western democracies, with a relatively short history of founding and adhering to the essence of traditional Western political culture. Taking the United States as an example to analyze the objects of interest maintained by the power supervision system, it is a typical representative. In the United States, individual interests are protected by the state, which may not interfere with the actions of individuals without authorization unless the individual has infringed the public interest. The federal government is established to safeguard the interests of individuals, and the power of government comes from the public, and it must be subordinate to the public and subject to supervision. The US power supervision system is mainly composed of power checks and balances such as separation of powers, multi-party system, and media supervision. Although the power monitoring system was originally established to protect the interests of every citizen, because the United States is a democratic society, the government is often influenced by voters. In the United States, there are a large number of social organizations involved in political life. For example, social organizations control and influence the media and allow them to disseminate public opinion for the benefit of the organization. In addition, large social organizations have set up lobby groups to benefit the organization. The lobby group has a high influence in Congress (state legislatures) and can influence the introduction of national (state) policies. It can be said that the US power supervision system ostensibly protects the interests of every citizen, but it can often only protect the interests

of a small number of voters who have the right to speak, and in fact, it forms a dilemma of small groups profiting.

## **6. Chinese and Western Power Supervision Cultures Have Their Own Characteristics**

In the long historical process, both China and the West have undergone dynastic changes and political system changes, but some good practices in the process of power supervision have been preserved, forming a unique power supervision culture. In China's traditional power supervision culture, there is both the "foolish culture" mystified by imperial power and the "Qingtian culture" that has been sung by the people through the ages. In contrast, the traditional Western power supervision culture has both a "moral culture" with unique Western characteristics of power supervision and a "contract spirit" that has continued to develop in the Western power supervision system. In order to compare the differences between Chinese and Western power supervision cultures, "Qingtian Culture" and "Contract Spirit" are specially selected for analysis.

### **6.1. The "Qingtian Culture" in China's Traditional Power Supervision Culture**

In feudal society, power supervision centered on imperial power, implemented the emperor's will, and safeguarded the emperor's interests. Universal harmony and political clarity are the ideal pursuits of successive generations of Chinese scholars and ordinary people. Ordinary people hope that the country's politics will be clear, and that the power supervision system will protect the interests of the people from arbitrary and illegal infringement. When the interests of the common people are violated, the common people lack the means to protect their legitimate interests, and can only pin their hopes on the supreme ruler, hoping that the emperor will send honest and impartial officials to save them. In the end, the desire of the common people at the bottom of society for Qingming politics was transformed into the worship of Qingguan, hoping that Qingguan would be the master of the people. In Chinese history, there have been famous honest and upright officials such as Di Renjie, Bao Zheng, Hai Rui, Yuan Keli, Yu Chenglong, etc., and behind the honest and upright officials are actually hidden Chinese thousand years of "Qingtian culture". The honest and upright official complex and Qingtian culture are the idealized expectations of the people for the power supervision system in the feudal era, and they are also a kind of disappointment with the feudal power supervision system. The Communist Party of China conforms to the development of history, responds to the concerns of the people, implements the rule of law, promotes the modernization of the state supervision system, constantly improves the system of restraint and supervision of the operation of power, and allows the people to supervise power and let power operate under the sun. At present, China's power supervision system is improving day by day, and the interests of the broadest masses of the people are effectively safeguarded.

## 6.2. The “Spirit of Contract” in Western Power Supervision Culture

The spirit of Western contracts comes from the ancient Roman period and is closely related to the Roman Law. Roman law is the most complete legal system reflecting the ancient slave commodity economy, and its contract system has a profound impact on Western countries. As Lord Main of England said: “It is indeed amazing that Roman law, especially Roman contract law, has contributed to all kinds of sciences in every way of thought, by means of reasoning, and in a specialized language” (Ma & Chen, 1995). Although the Roman Empire perished in foreign invasions, the spirit of contract was preserved and influenced throughout the West. Western countries are influenced by thinkers such as Locke, Montesquieu, Rousseau, etc., and the public regards state power as a kind of public power derived from the public, which is granted to the state by the public according to the contract. The power of the State is limited and cannot infringe upon private interests at will. The power comes from the public contract, and the important content of power supervision is whether the grantee of power exercises power in accordance with the “agreement”, whether the power is abused, and whether the power is illegal or non-public interests infringe on the interests of individuals. Western power supervision culture pays attention to the spirit of contract and the rule of law, and all the use of power must comply with the provisions of the contract, the law. The separation of powers and checks and balances is also a contract, and the legislative, judicial, and executive powers must be exercised in accordance with the laws made by the public. Citizens, social organizations, and the news media must also monitor their powers within the scope of the law. In short, the Western power supervision system supervises and does everything according to the contract (law).

## 7. Summary

Due to the inheritance of culture, the power supervision system of any country will be affected by the culture and system of the past. Modern Western countries belong to ancient Greek and Roman civilizations culturally, and China is the only uninterrupted successor of Chinese civilization in the world. The Western power supervision system is mainly based on Western theory and Western traditional political culture, emphasizing power restraint, and cannot be blindly copied to China. Drawing on and absorbing the essence of traditional political culture and giving play to the advantages of the socialist system, China has established a power supervision system with unique Chinese characteristics that “pays attention to supervision and takes into account constraints”. Through the comparative study of Chinese and Western power supervision systems, the differences between Chinese and Western power supervision are analyzed, and the different paths of Chinese and Western power supervision development are further clarified.

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