

The Relationship between Political Participation and Rural Grassroots Units in China

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Abstract: Most of the researches hold that political participation has enhanced social supervision to reduce the corruption and raised recognition of people for the political system. In this paper we have choose three issues in “Statistics from the Ministry of Civil Affairs³” to do the multiple regression analysis. Finally, we found that the degree of villagers participation in the village’s affair and openness of administrative have an obviously affect on the degrees of approval to village officials of the villagers. As a result, we think the political participation have a magnificent influence on the valuation of political system.

Key words: Political Participation; Rural Administration; Valuation of Political System

In 1988 villagers had begun directly to use their political rights to elect village's cadre democratically by the implementation of “ORGANIC LAW OF THE VILLAGERS COMMITTEE OF THE PEOPLES REPUBLIC OF CHINA” meanwhile the government authority become less powerful in the rural grassroots units. In 2009, General Office of the Communist Party of China and General Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China had printed and distributed the notice named “Enhance improvement of election of the villager committee. In this notice we have reviewed for many years experience and raised new requirement: 1) fully realized the importance of strengthen and improvement the election of the villagers’ committee.2) strengthen the preparation work before the election.3) regular the process of election. 4) Pay attention to follow-up work of election. 5) Investigate and prosecute illegal act during the election. The Grassroots-unit election system has been paid high attention and protected by upper level at present.

With the development of the research, academics found that the traditional totalitarian and one-aspect mode of the administration of the village of the committee can not fit the new situation.

The village cadre power sources "from top to bottom" has changed to "from bottom to up"⁴enable villagers began to ask for more political participation rights. At the same time economic development has led the villagers to improve the quality of primary education and enthusiasm of political participation. Some researches shows that the political participation of villagers have a magnificent influence on the valuation of political system.

Although we know political participation of villagers have a magnificent influence on the valuation of political system there are still some questions. 1) We lack of the clear definition of the political participation.

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³ Statistics from the Ministry of Civil Affairs in 2005

⁴ By this "bottom" and "top" refers to the village cadre power sources and from the election of villagers instead of the upper government.

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2) We do not know at what extent the political participation can affect the administrative system of the grass-root level unit. So we have choose three issues in “Statistics from the Ministry of Civil Affairs” to solve the problems.

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Political participation is the concept of modern politics and it is an important symbol of democratization. As common sense goes, political participation is that citizens directly or indirectly in any way make influence on political activities related to their interests. The purpose of political participation is to get maximum benefit.

We can regard the political participation as the interactive acts, therefore, not only the positive activities is belong to political participation. In my point of view, there are two kinds of political: positive and negative. The positive political participation means actively, directly involved in political activities and make effort on the political activities. On the other hand, the negative political participation means the different and focuses on the feedback of the political system. However, the negative political participation does not affect the political system directly it still significant in the political activities.

Research shows there are important relationship between the economic level and political participation. Richer people always have higher status in education and society, so they can influence political (e.g. donations and advertisements). They participate in politics activities purposely in order to maintain advanced status in society and other benefits. However, people in poor condition of economics always lack of influence to the politics, and they have lower political external and internal efficacy⁵ than richer people. Compare to the year before 1978, after reforming and opening-up policy, the high-speed develop of the economics promote the increasing of the rural income. That absolutely led to more need of political participation.

The researchers think that when people are willing to gather in a same political system⁶, enable them to communicate political willingness, show their vested benefits and superior the regulation and the law. That will cultivate the democratic spirit of the participants and enhance the stability and validity of the political system. As known to all, the policy based on self-participation or largely agreement is easy to be accepted. That means higher degree of the political participation will lead to higher recognition therefore, the administration of rural root grass will get more satisfied valuation.

THE SITUATION OF ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEM OF THE GRASS-ROOT LEVEL UNIT

In china the village committee once worked as the extension of the rural basic level governments and set up administration's control mode to the farmers at economic and politics and even every aspects . That made the operational mechanism of the inflexible and there are lots of conflicts between the village committee and the villagers. After the reforming and opening-up policy, especially for the execution of the “ORGANIC LAW OF THE VILLAGERS COMMITTEE OF THE PEOPLES REPUBLIC OF CHINA”, the political system in village began to reform, and the village committee was elected by the villagers. Important decisions made by the villager’s meeting have changed the rigid mechanism, expanding political participation and reviving the conflicts.

Village committee which work as the root- grass autonomous organization has large and widely function and power, some of them which are more important goes like:1) according to relevant law ,manage the land and other property owned collectively by the villagers; educate the villagers to utilize the nature sources reasonable protect and improve the ecological environment. 2) Organize and support the villagers to develop of various forms of co-operative economy legally, make the villagers to serve for their own country

⁵ Political efficacy is a term used primarily in political theory and discussion to refer to the amount of faith and impact citizens feel or believe they have upon their government.

⁶ A political system is a system of politics and government. It is usually compared to the legal system, economic system, cultural system, and other social systems

promotes rural production and the development of socialistic market economy. 3) Respect the autonomy rights to carry out legally economic activities of the collective economic organizations, maintain the household contract responsibility system work as the foundation and use the policy of two-tier management system that integrates unified with separate management in order to protecting the legally property rights and profit of the villagers and rural contractual operation households.⁷ The above three function and power almost include the economical profit of the villagers in their country. Economic factors play an important role in the political participation. Therefore, utilizing the three functions and power can decide the recognition for the villager committee of the villagers in a large extent.

CONCRETE MEASUREMENT

In order to match the three important function and power of village committee and the hypothesis that can influence the economy obviously. I have choose Q40 and Q55 (Statistics from the Ministry of Civil Affairs) which reflect the economic situation in the village of rural grass-roots governance. Q40: in recent three years, how to deal with the flowing issues in your village? This question reflects the situation of villagers positive participate in political activities so can be viewed as the positive political participation. Q55: in recent three year, how did the village committee public the following issues to the villagers.

This question reflects the situation of the openness of administrative so can be viewed as negative political participation.

There are 7 sub-questions in Q44 and Q55 which have covered the way village committee carry on the 3 important function and power.

Q44: in recent three years, how to deal with the flowing issues in your village?

The sub-questions go as follow:

- a) The collection and utilization of the fees for city and countryside overall plan and village reserve.
- b) The number of people enjoys the compensation for labor delay and the standard of the compensation.
- c) Utilize the profit got by the collective economy in the village.
- d) Proposal of financing for village schools roads and other public welfare.
- e) The construction program of establishment of project for village collective economy, proposal of contracting and village public welfare.
- f) The proposal of land contractual management
- g) The proposal of utilizing cartilage

In the valuation system 1 means decided by plenary meeting or representative meeting. From my angle, 1 stands for most democratic and highest degree of participation. 2 means decided by representative meeting, indirectly representative, medium degree of participation. 3 means decided by Village cadres, lowest degree of participation. 8 (means unknown) and 9 (means no answer) are viewed as missing value.

Using factor analysis showed as the following figure, we can find that from A to G has high correlation so we can add them to a comprehensive index: degree of participation village affair.

⁷ According to Organic Law of Urban Residents Committee of the People's Republic of China

Table 1
The result of Factor Analysis⁸

| | Component 1 |
|---|----------------|
| C. Utilize the profit got by the collective economy in the village. | .975 |
| A. The collection and utilization of the fees for city and countryside overall plan and village reserve. | .975 |
| B. The number of people enjoys the compensation for labor delay and the standard of the compensation. | .969 |
| D. Proposal of financing for village schools roads and other public welfare. | .950 |
| E. The construction program of establishment of project for village collective economy, proposal of contracting and village public welfare. | .940 |
| G. the proposal of utilizing curtilage | .934 |
| F. the proposal of land contractual management | .864 |

Q55: in recent three year, how did the village committee public the following issues to the villagers?

The sub-questions go as follow:

- A. The collection and utilization of the fees for city and countryside overall plan and village reserve.
- B. The number of people gets the compensation for labor delay and distribution of compensation.
- C. The situation of using village collective profit
- D. The construction program of establishment of project for village collective economy, proposal of contracting and village public welfare.
- E. The situation of land contractual management
- F. The situation of using, examination and approval cartilage.
- G. The execution of family planning
- H. The distribution of stuff and funding for disaster and social relief
- I. The collection and utilization of the fees paid for water and electricity.
- J. The situation of village collective creditor's rights and debt obligation,
- K. The execution of direct allowance for the foodstuff growing and Grain for Green Project

In the valuation system 1 means using tuba to public. From my angle, 1 stands for highest degree of cause there is no limitation for time and space every can get the message. 2 mean using village affair column to public higher degree of openness. 3 means public by villagers meeting, lower degree of publication. 4 (means do not public)stand for lowest degree of openness .5 (using other method to public) are viewed as missing value.

Using factor analysis showed as the following figure, we can find that from A to K has high correlation so we can add them to a comprehensive index: degree of publication village affair.

⁸ The component shows the result of the factor analysis, range from 0.000 to 1.000, the higher value means the higher correlation ship and can be merged into a comprehensive standard.

Table 2

The Result of Factor Analysis

| | Component 1 |
|--|----------------|
| C. The situation of using village collective profit | .866 |
| K. The execution of direct allowance for the foodstuff growing and Grain for Green Project | .848 |
| A. The collection and utilization of the fees for city and countryside overall plan and village reserve | .834 |
| D. The construction program of establishment of project for village collective economy, proposal of contracting and village public welfare | .825 |
| B. The number of people gets the compensation for labor delay and distribution of compensation | .823 |
| J. The situation of village collective creditor's rights and debt obligation | .803 |
| E. The situation of land contractual management | .792 |
| I. The distribution of stuff and funding for disaster and social relief | .776 |
| F. The situation of using, examination and approval cartilage | .756 |
| H. The distribution of stuff and funding for disaster and social relief | .701 |
| G. The execution of family planning | .666 |

According to the hypothesis, we are going to process a multiple regression model: higher participation and openness of village affairs will lead to higher recognition for the village official. This model could demonstrate that political participation will improve the valuation of the political system.

We regard the valuation of the political system as the satisfaction and the recognition of the administrator; therefore, we have chosen Q42: How do you think of the present village officials when they deal with the village affairs (Statistics from the Ministry of Civil Affairs)?

The options go like:

1: very fair 2: relative fair 3: not very fair 4: lack of justice 8: unknown 9: no answer. 8 and 9 work as missing value in the model. That could conclude as the satisfaction and the recognition of the administrator.

Table 3
The result of multiple regressions

| | satisfaction and the recognition of the administrator | | |
|--|---|------|------|
| Independent variable | B | s.e | beta |
| degree of participation village affair | .066 * | .008 | .361 |
| degree of publication village affair | .023* | .004 | .250 |
| constant | .383 * | .146 | |
| R square: | | .243 | |
| adjust R square: | | .024 | |

B is non-standard regression coefficient, beta is standard regression coefficient, s.e. is standard error. *: p<0.01

First of all, from the table we can infer the degree of participation and publication of village affair has a positive effect on the satisfaction and the recognition of the administrator. In other words, in the village, higher political participation will lead to a more advanced valuation of political system.

Secondly, we conclude that degree of participation has a larger impact on the satisfaction and the recognition of the administrator than that of publication. That means positive political participation affect the valuation of political system more obviously than the negative one.

CONCLUSION

In the paper, we have elaborated the identification of political participation. Furthermore, via the Statistics from the Ministry of Civil Affairs, we come to the conclusion that widely political participation has a positive and obviously impact on the valuation of political system. Positive political participation affects the valuation of political system more obviously than the negative one.

At the national perspective, the reforming of politics and the development of law and regulation has played a important role in the grassroots governance since the execution of reforming and opening-up policy. At individual angel, with the development of economy now people have higher level of education awareness of politics. At present people prefer to participate in political system positively instead of accepting negatively. That is significant to the establishment of root-grass autonomous organization.

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