

Analysis of the Village Cadres' Action Logic in Rural Governance

Yuandong Liu

College of Humanities and Development Studies, China Agricultural University, Beijing 100083

43967125@163.com

Keywords: The village governance, Village cadres, Action logic

Abstract. Comparing with the government-commune policy in collective economic period, under the circumstances of the shrink of national administrative authority boundaries and the expand of the power of grassroots villager autonomy, village cadres as an intermediary to connect the national and grassroots is undoubtedly in a very complex position and they can take multiple strategies to both national and grassroots. It is the key to understand and grasp the status of village governance in contemporary China that a comprehensive study of influential factors and reality basics of village cadres' action logic and the strategy choices of the realization of village governance.

Research background

Currently, under the environment of comprehensive construction of socialism harmonious society and new socialist countryside, village party branch and village committee made up of village cadres are bridges connecting government and grassroots farmers, and lie in the terminal segment of the implement of government policy and the feedback of the grassroots sentiment. With the establishment of market economy system and the modern transformation of rural society, various rural public affairs expanding rapidly thus put forward higher requirements for the development and improvement of rural governance, giving a more important mission and responsibility. Compared with the actual needs of the management of rural public affairs, the current system and mechanism of rural governance in our country still existence vacuum and blind angles, lacking of effective decision-making mechanism, the villagers' beneficial coordination mechanism and monitoring mechanism, lacking of legal authority and policy effectiveness which should have. The manager deal with rural affairs mostly relies on their own interpersonal relationship and social resources which made rural governance walks on the edge of the rule of law and the rule of man.

In order to understand china's unique model of national governance, it is necessary to learn the formation and evolution of the current rural public order and the key is the nature of grassroots political power and the action logic of rural governance. Rural grassroots organization and its action logic occupied an important position in the rural governance and always gain the academic attention which became the foundation of the development of various descriptions of those rural public elite characters and theoretical induction of action logics and rural governance models adapted to those studies. Action logic refers to the central of consideration, the way of thinking and the strategy of action the village committee and village cadres made under various situations. This paper focuses on the analysis of the environment of the national governance modernization, the strategy selection of village cadres when pursuing of rural governance and potential influential factors, try to summarize the current rural grassroots governance and enrich its study cases and local experiences and make foundation for the abstraction of general theoretical explanation.

Major Factors Affecting Rural Governance

Rural society is undergoing the transformation of society, many factors like tradition and modern, economic, political, cultural and environment interweave and influence people's behavior and choices diversely and complicatedly, and the rural governance of village committee also influenced by various complicated social factors and presents different characteristics and the diversification of rural conditions.

Economic Level. The research finds that in the influential factors of rural governance, the economic level is the primary factor affecting the participation degree and social governance of various rural groups and in a considerable extent determines their different views and behaviors. Generally speaking, a village with a relatively high level of economic development and its social governance level, the passion and motivation of participate of various groups are also relatively high; similarly, those groups with better status of economic level and resources are more likely to exhibit a stronger enthusiasm of participate in rural governance and their capacity of participating in and discussing of the social affairs is higher and have more expectations on the rural governance.

Important Factors of Production such as Land. Land and other important production factors exhibits different importance in those affecting factors of rural governance but do not reflect the importance of proper. Because of geographical and cultural factors, it is hard to benefit by using traditional method to making agricultural production and the more investment in manpower the fewer marginal incomes will get. Thus more and more arable land became uncultivated, worthless land often exchanged optionally among farmers. Land requisition is chance of change for those residents, who bounded by the land many years and expected to break away from land; to persuade themselves completely abandon the association with land with the economic benefits of compensation.

The value of land is often reflected in the alteration and was quantified in the exchange. In the event relates to land dividing or exchange, village committee did not encounter much difficulty to solve it. In the eyes of villagers, land seems no important and can be exchanged easily. Meanwhile, it is hard for villagers and village committee to obtain development fund to rely on the benefit of land. Comparing with the rural in plains, the land pressures of hilly area are relatively small.

Clan, Religious and Traditional Culture. The basic unit of modern legal system is individual, coupled with the wash and reshape of social relationship of individual by the reform and opening, clan became less important. In china's vast rural areas, except to some ethnic minority villages, the religious forces have not yet penetrated and did not have enough influences. Although the sense of clan and religious was weaken, the influence of traditional mingling beliefs of Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism plus with the worship of ancestor is still strong. For village cadres, the weak of village autonomy power is very important for them to successfully carry out works and finish politic tasks. If there exists autonomous organizations like clan or religious groups, village committee's status as the only governance center in the village will disappeared, and the coordination with other autonomous organizations also increases the system costs.

Rural governance is universally influenced by inertia of social traditional factors, at the national trend of comprehensively promote of the rule of law; the law of social acquaintances is still prevalent. In the current of our country, most villages primarily relies on traditional practices to maintaining the status quo, resolving disputes, and modern legal system still has a strong heterogeneity and need to facing villager's query and alienation and receives a relatively strong rejection. Although modern Chinese law has already largely blended with the tradition of mediation in ancient law, in actual use, modern law is trend to "standardization" and could not perfectly to handle "endless variety" rural affairs. Modern law is undoubtedly the development direction to promote modernization, but in the transition of tradition to modern, the steady of society requires traditional culture continues to maintain its considerable influences.

Knowledge, Occupation and Other Personal Factors. Knowledge changes fate, villagers expected their children to read more and change their inborn identities. But when these young people finished their tough professional education, attain the capacity to leave countryside, they often do not want go back nor interested in entering the village committee to become a rural manager. Only at the level of grassroots, can we find the incompatible between intellectuals and bureaucracy, the former discontent with bureaucrats lack of expertise knowledge but maintains power; despised with the culture of officialdom; and conflict to the suggestion to participate in politics.

Occupation is an important part of the identity of people, in the rural society of acquaintances, the power and resources inherent in occupation will more depend on their operations. Usually, kids

have no better way will choose to go to the army where could join to the party and when the demobilized soldier back to the village they will have an excellent opportunity to enter the village committee.

The Reality Basis of Village Cadres' Action Logic

The main factors affecting village cadres' action logic is multifaceted, and the institution design in rural governance in the actual village social life, the basic conditions of the construction of village cadres and the policy environment they are facing became the reality basis for the village cadres to achieve rural governance, and is the key to understanding their action logic.

Village Manager's Multiple Identities. At present, village cadres are mainly in charge of public affairs in villages, meantime, there possibly still retains several staffs that may influence the decision-making on public affairs like the old village head or the old secretary who have their own business but still undertake the management of rural daily affairs and as the terminal segment of national policy implementation and keeping touch with villagers directly. As decision-maker of rural governance and its direct promoter, village cadres' different in subjective targets, their sense of responsibility, performance goals and personal interests, etc all affecting their governance strategy choices.^[2]

Multiple Sources of Legitimacy in Rural Governance. From the practical point of view, the legitimacy of village cadres is mainly build upon their achievements in official career, and performance is a key indicator. From the point of view of government, the committee is able to complete their governance task can be eligible, of course, most judgment relies on the bureaucratic standards while for villagers, only be able to benefit villagers can be recognized and each villager has right to definite it based on personal needs. [3]

The Relative Lack of Effective Supervision of Rural Governance. In the trend of modernization, the rural economy is activated and brings unprecedented economic and power resources to village. In the absence of effective supervision system, village managers can easily to grab public resources for personal benefit. The using of many flexible and informal powers can degenerate criminal acts. Those village cadres washed by modern market and break the restraints of traditional rural morals, will make benefits for their own or family without scruple in mind and action. Even worse, the collaboration of the entire village managers will result in collective corruption.

Village Manager's Lack of Management Experience. Village managers grew up in the countryside often lack of the opportunity to leave the village to enrich their experiences thus they are inadequate in knowledge and capacity, unable to hold national policy and to response to foreign capital and unable to solve problem in village well enough. Because of the behindhand of the management idea and capacity, it usually results in serious loss of collective assets. At present, countryside explored their own way of solution is to seek a balance between national policy and rural governance. There are two paths: one is regain the autonomous inherit of traditional rural governance; the other is to explore under the promotion of constructing the rule of law society. But once break away from the traditional heritage; village managers' lack of professional training and the fledgling exploration will enlarged the risk of governance.

The Village Cadres' Strategy Choices to Achieve Rural Governance

Under the binary analysis model "national-society", the role of village cadres played in the actual governance is considered to be biased, presented as country's "agents" or as "guardian" of grassroots village or "dual" identity or as "marginal man" being double marginalized. Through the analysis of the action exhibits by the social role of village-level organizations, we can understand its value orientation and behavior strategies behind which is also called action logic.^[4]

Management the Relationship with Grassroots Government: Make Full Use of Policy. Because of the special status of the village cadres in the connection of the grassroots government with the grassroots, the cognitive and imagination of their status will determine their actions and

their self-judgment also influenced by the resources of the village committee members. When village cadres have the ability to choose a policy, they will strive for national's policy support and financial assistance in the policy as much as possible.

Due to the leading role of policy in rural governance, in order to finish the construction, village cadres make decisions can only rely on policies and using every means to strive for higher government's project support. In the formal and informal use of policies, the foremost thing is the relationship between village cadres and grassroots government. In order to obtain the subsidy of national policy transfer payments, firstly, village committee needs necessary formal and informal resources to complete subsidy application. The former is resources in the range of policy regulation which can be subsidized while the later refers to human feelings and relationship which occurs under the guise of formal resources. Second, they must be able to fully understand the policy and to seize the details. It asked village cadres have channels to keep sustained attention on policies and maintains a relative close tie with the town government. When they are deficient of the above conditions, a negative state of keep waiting, keep relying and keep demanding will happened.

In the institution arrangements, the administrative power of the town has no conflict with the power of rural autonomy, it is out of the political sphere of village and is called "monitoring relationship". But in the reality system, village committees especially the authority of the secretary is mostly considered being derived from the background of party system, they have relatively more autonomy in dealing with daily affairs but not in the promotion of national policies which significantly restricted by the grassroots government.

Interact with the Villagers: Divide and Conquer. The action logic of village cadres largely depends on villagers' different identities. From the aspect of rural governance, each group controls necessary resources to achieve good governance, but under a laissez-faire environment they could not complete self-organization.^[5] In this case, the village cadres have to do something, adopting different strategies, policies and methods to fully mobilize the enthusiasm of the masses in the rural construction. But the structural inequalities based on the social relationship always restricting the relationship between villagers and the village cadres, village cadres are not equally treating different social groups and the positive and negative social impacts co-exist.

The first is common agricultural workers. Their most important economic interests and production and living relationships are all in rural areas. As the main stratum of rural society, they became the main participants and direct beneficiaries of rural governance and the most direct supporters, different person and hitch-riders in various situations. They are the immediate object in village cadres' daily work and influenced by them in the production and living life, resulting in a variety of interactive during the contact with the village cadres in all aspects. When their interests are threatened or invaded, they often adopt "weapons of the weak" to fight.

The second is migrant farmers. Migrant workers refers to a class no longer take part in agricultural labor, its production and living life basically out of the village, and the relationship with the land is relatively fragmented and willing to break away from the local but can not completely get rid of the rural relationship network. Homecoming people often have estrangement with village society, and more distance in the relationship but they have a broader social relationship network and sources of information thus became the main attention object of village cadres. In addition, migrant workers can accept the influence from the village and the city with similar intensity, often using an outsider's perspective to view rural public affairs and intended to adopt a non-rural point of view to describe and evaluate which enable them become the witness, observer and supervisor of rural governance.

The third is rich people. The rich people in village maintain a lot of economic resources and most of them are self-employed person or private entrepreneurs. They still take accounts of the relationship left in the village and want to show their economic status to obtain commensurate social status, thus they are natural willing to cooperate with village cadres. In the process of rural development, the funds is a most important factor the village lack of and the wealthy by investing in public infrastructure to achieve their return home desires and gain prestige and this is also consistent with Chinese traditional village structure and villagers' psychological characteristics.

The fourth is vulnerable groups. Vulnerable groups are mainly the elder, the disabled, the five-guarantees, the chronically ill, etc, whose voices are often ignored by various groups, but because of directly related to national welfare policies, their identities are focused by government and village committee and turned to tools for them to design. The right of distribution of the subsistence allowances in the hand of village cadres often became an important chips in rural governance and the subsistence allowances list will also disunion villagers.

Conclusion and Introspection

First, in the process of rural governance, the village cadres in order to achieve their goals, they not only need to take advantage of policies to management their relationship with grassroots government but also need to according on their governance objectives, considering of villagers' available resources and taking different strategies like collusion, compromise, confront, obedience, differentiation, etc in the interactive process.

Second, tradition as a stabilizing mechanism has built a relationship network centered by human interaction and matched with the modern market-oriented transformation by its conservative performance. In the current relatively clear segmented areas, comparing with the reliance on modern legal governance, the traditional governance can obviously reduce the costs.

Third, rural governance bears and reflects important social functions and practical values and its improvement and development is the necessary requirement of the new rural construction, the grassroots democracy construction and the development of rural social affairs and is a required course for our Chinese nation when facing the challenges of globalization. Currently, it is significant and far-reaching of the in-depth analysis of the main factors affecting village cadres' action logic in rural governance under the background of national governance modernization and the exploration of village cadres' strategies choices in their governance. is significant and far-reaching.

References

- [1] X.T. Fei. Rural China [M]. The Peking University Publishing House 2012: 59. (In Chinese)
- [2] S.F. Wang. Village Cadres' Marginal Status and Behavioral Analysis. Sociological Studies, 1991, Vol.: 49-53. (In Chinese)
- [3] J.Zhang. Grassroots Political Power: Rural System and other Problems. Shanghai People's Publishing House, 2007: 77. (In Chinese)
- [4] Y.Xu. Rural Governance and Chinese Politics. China Social Science Press, 2003:94. (In Chinese)
- [5] K.P.Yu. Governance and Good Governance. Social Science Academic Press, 2000:Y89. (In Chinese)