

China's Rural Governance Process and Future Prospects Facing the World*

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Abstract—Rural social governance is an important part of the Chinese government's strategy of governing the country with Xi Jinping as the core. Chinese rural social governance has significant stage characteristics that vary from time to time. In the era of collectivized economy and planned economy, rural grassroots society practices a highly centralized control model. After the reform and opening up, the household contract responsibility system is established, and farmers' autonomy can be achieved. In the past, the grassroots autonomy has been highlighted. After the 1990s, the rural economy has developed into a diversified business. The demand for urban-rural integration has become larger and larger. The strategy of urban-rural integration has finally been established. Chinese rural society is constantly undergoing reforms. The more open it is, the more it integrates into the global process of agricultural governance, laying a solid foundation for the future realization of modernized rural social governance in the world.

Keywords—Chinese rural; social governance; facing the world; prospects

I. INTRODUCTION

The 3rd Plenary Session of the 18th CPC Central Committee listed promoting the modernization of the national governance system and governance capacity as one of the important goals of comprehensive deepening reform. The reform and innovation of rural social governance in China is imperative. It is of great theoretical and practical significance to sort out the ideological and practical evolution process of rural grassroots social governance in China, and for China to play the role in the current and future realization of global agricultural governance.

II. EVOLUTION OF CHINA'S RURAL SOCIAL GOVERNANCE THOUGHTS

After the founding of the People's Republic of China, the tides of land reform, cooperative movement, and the people's commune movement were swept up one after another. The rural grassroots governance was carried out under the guidance of the "class struggle as the key link" and basically belonged to the dictatorship-type and regulatory-type governance model. The land reform broke the original social

order in rural areas across China. The original family, sectarian, geopolitical and other social relations standards were replaced by class components. The class struggle was further deepened during the period of cooperation. Mao Zedong clearly stated at the time that the peasant cooperation movement itself was a serious ideological struggle and political struggle. In the end, the expansion of class struggle reached its peak during the "Cultural Revolution" period, subversively affecting the ideology and daily production and life of the broad masses of Chinese peasants. From the beginning of liberation to the reform and opening up, the governance of China's grassroots society can be said to be completed in a high-pressure movement. This kind of governance thought has its historical context and limitations, and cannot be completely negated in the same words.

After the reform and opening up, the implementation of the household contract responsibility system has made the rural grassroots social governance a feature of village self-government. In 1982, the Communist Party of China convened the Twelfth Congress, which first proposed the topic of mass autonomy in grassroots social life and created a new situation in China's grassroots social governance. After that, the central leadership group with Jiang Zemin as the core took the "ruling the country according to law" as a breakthrough point, and consolidated the household contract responsibility system with legal forms, and raised the grassroots social governance to a historical height. After the 16th Congress of the Communist Party of China, the Chinese government with Hu Jintao as the general secretary established a governance model of adhering to the party's leadership, the people being the masters of the country and the rule of law. The 17th Congress of the Communist Party of China further advanced the grassroots. The autonomy of the people is listed as one of the basic political systems of China. China's grassroots social governance has achieved a historical link between the past and the future. The Chinese government leadership group with Hu Jintao as the general secretary put forward the era strategy of building a new socialist countryside. The new rural construction is guided by the implementation of the scientific development concept, the overall planning of urban and rural development, and the promotion of a comprehensive well-off society in rural areas, with production development, ample life, civilized civilization, clean village, and democratic management as the overall requirements, as well as adhering to the basic principles of rural work in China since the reform and

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opening up, that is, respecting the wishes of farmers and strengthen the main position of farmers.

The concept of rural grassroots social work established after the 16th Congress of the Communist Party of China was extended with deepening in the new era of the guiding ideology of governing the country established by the new generation of Chinese leaders led by Xi Jinping after the 18th Congress of the Communist Party of China. Its core philosophy has always been people-oriented. In November 2012, after Xi Jinping was elected general secretary of the Communist Party of China, he gave a wonderful speech to Chinese and foreign journalists. The theme was to serve the nation, to serve the people, to serve the party, and to put the people at the top position. All of these have determined that the Chinese Communist Party with Xi Jinping as its core must adhere to the people-centered fundamental value orientation in various specific areas such as economic development and social governance. For this reason, the 18th Congress of the Communist Party of China proposed to place safeguards and improve people's livelihood in a more prominent position, and strengthen and innovate social management. At this point, the value of the grassroots governance of the Chinese Communist Party has been established, and the dual governance of the rule of law and the rule of the people has become clearer.

People's livelihood is not only an economic issue or a social issue. Its essence is a matter of rights. To protect and improve people's livelihood, it is necessary to effectively protect farmers' basic rights so that they can have education, have the harvest, have a doctor, have a person to raise them, and have a place to live. This is the basic value concept of grassroots governance in the new era. Focusing on the basic values, the grassroots social governance work at this stage has been expanded in the following aspects. First, ensuring the participation rights, decision-making power, right to know, and supervision of the peasant masses has become a new starting point for grassroots social governance in the new era. Second, the core role of the leadership of grassroots party organizations is still the strong organizational guarantee of grassroots social governance. Third, the construction of people's livelihood with the core of "five hases" is the core content of grassroots social governance. Fourth, the rule of law and standardization are normal grassroots social governance systems on the basis of the operation.

III. EVOLUTION OF RURAL GRASSROOTS SOCIAL GOVERNANCE PRACTICE BASED ON TOWNSHIP SYSTEM

China's township construction has been a system tool for a long time. Townships pay more attention to agronomy, towns, and more attention to industry and commerce. After the founding of New China, the township system has undergone several major adjustments along with the development of the political and economic situation, but it has always been the basic framework for China's grassroots governance. Based on the practice of grassroots social governance in township construction, it has experienced a process from the package-based control in the planned economy era to the bar-style decentralization management

that began in the 1980s and the modernization process of management and service in the new era.

In the early days of the founding of the People's Republic of China, in order to consolidate the people's democratic political power, the State Council promulgated the directive documents to complete the land reform and narrow the administrative divisions in order to close the contact between the grassroots government and the people. After the agricultural cooperation was vigorously carried out in 1955, some agricultural production cooperatives broke through the original administrative divisions, and the State Council timely carried out the merger and adjustment of the grassroots administrative divisions. After 1958, the people's commune organizations were widely established throughout the country, and gradually developed into a unit system with the form of political power at the grassroots level. A people's commune was generally formed by the merger of several former townships, and the party, government, military, business, industry and agriculture were all integrated. It played a considerable role in the construction of China's transportation, water conservancy and other infrastructure at that time. John King Fairbank even thought that the people's commune was the most effective rural social governance method in modern China. During the period of the People's Commune, the township system temporarily withdrew from the historical stage, but the township system continued. Under the spirit of Chairman Mao Zedong's industry must serve agriculture, the township system was in a state of compression for a long time. After the 3rd Plenary Session of the 17th Central Committee in 1978, the township system gradually increased. After the introduction of the new constitution in 1982, the country was removed from the society and the township was established. China's township system was on the right track.

The basic framework for the governance of townships and towns has continued to this day, but the governance functions of grassroots governments are different in different periods. In the era of planned economy, the grassroots government is both an administrative agency and a collective economic organization, and allocates resources through planning. In the era of marketing economy, the grassroots political organizations based on the household contract responsibility system were rebuilt, and the self-management of the village-level organizations was carried out. The township government obtained the decentralized management right of the division and separated the township enterprise management functions.

The township government is a department directly facing the broad masses of peasants. Under the promotion of the people-oriented administrative concept in recent years, the service-oriented grassroots government construction has become the theme of the times. Providing rich and convenient public goods and public services for the peasants has become the core of the governance of township governments in the new era. In the ideological system of Xi Jinping's governance of the country, the grassroots governance based on the township system has always been one of the important contents. "The focus of social governance must be carried out into the urban and rural

communities, and if the community service and management capabilities are strong the foundation of social governance will be concrete"; "It is necessary to put resources, services, and management at the grassroots level as far as possible, so that the grassroots have the right have the power and have the condition to better provide accurate and effective services and management for the masses." Thesis and other statements reflect General Secretary Xi Jinping paying attention to the work of grassroots governance. The practice of grassroots governance in the new era emphasizes the unity of service and management. It is wrong to only talk about services without talking about management. Integrating management into service is focus on the management. Management and services cannot be neglected. The government should not only manage the right things, but also manage to be good. That is, the shift of government management functions to "service type" does not mean that management functions are reduced. The fifth meeting of the 12th National People's Congress was held in March 2017. Premier Li Keqiang made a government work report. The report pointed out that an innovative government should be established to promote comprehensive innovation in the fields of enterprise, society and science and technology. The local government promotes the government's streamlining administration and delegating power, but it must take responsibility in protecting key areas such as people's livelihood, ecological construction, and initiative. "Innovation" and "responsibility" have become the main theme of the grassroots government's various tasks in the new era. The practice of rural grassroots social governance in China will continue to deepen in the main road of institutional innovation and responsibility implementation.

IV. RURAL SOCIAL GOVERNANCE UNDER THE STRATEGY OF URBAN AND RURAL INTEGRATION IN THE NEW ERA

On the one hand, there are a large number of peasant societies engaged in agriculture in rural areas. On the other hand, they are the cities and towns where the landlords, literati, and merchants gathered. This is the image of John King Fairbank's conclusion of the urban and rural areas of the early Chinese society. At the end of the Qing Dynasty, some foreign modern industries were embedded in the land of China. Rapid urbanization occurred in many places such as Harbin in Heilongjiang, Lushun in Liaoning, Qingdao and Yantai in Shandong, and Shijiazhuang in Hebei. Imperialism and comprador capitalism controlled these cities, and the countryside fell into raw materials plundered by foreign capital. After the founding of the People's Republic of China, in order to gather national power, it is necessary to accelerate the industrialization. The situation of serious urban-rural confrontation has not been solved in a short period of time. The urban-rural relationship left over from history has continued to be unbalanced under the influence of the planned economic system after the founding of the People's Republic.

But the opposition between cities and villages is a stage in the historical development process, being not permanent, and the modern history is rural urbanization. Both rural and urban areas have inherent shortcomings. As long as "the big

industry is as balanced as possible across the country", the country and the city have the basic conditions for integration. This is a brilliant summary from Marxist classic writers of the relationship between urban and rural, and provides a theoretical source for China's urban-rural integration strategy.

After the 3rd Plenary Session of the 17th Central Committee in 1978, the reform and opening up was in full swing. Although the development of urban industry and rural agriculture still existed, the contradictions of interdependence were becoming more and more prominent. These deep-seated contradictions can only be achieved and effectively solved through the coordinated urban and rural development. In the face of the tremendous changes in Chinese society and the further development of urban industry and rural agriculture, the 16th Congress of the Communist Party of China in 2002 finally proposed a strategic decision to coordinate urban and rural economic and social development and achieve urban-rural integration. The inevitable requirement of the new stage of China's reform and development is the fundamental way to solve the problems of agriculture, rural areas and peasants under the new situation, and is the new driving force for realizing agricultural modernization with Chinese characteristics. Coordinating urban and rural development has become a new historical starting point for the transition of urban-rural relations in China. In 2007, the 17th Congress of the Communist Party of China proposed to establish a long-term mechanism for promoting agriculture through industry and taking cities and towns to form a new pattern of urban and rural economic and social integration. So far, China has achieved a major breakthrough in the institutional setting of urban-rural relations. The urban-rural integration has officially become the focus of the new round of reform from both the theoretical and practical perspectives.

After years of hard work in exploration and practice, urban-rural integration has been promoted in many parts of the country, and the issue of "agriculture, rural areas and farmers" has been alleviated. In order to continue to expand the reform results, the central leadership of China, with Xi Jinping as the core, determined the new theme is comprehensive and deepening reforms in 2013. Since then, General Secretary Xi Jinping has made "promoting the development of urban and rural integration on different occasions. It must be sustained and unwavering for a long time." "Urbanization should be developed; agricultural modernization and new rural construction should also be developed." "Urban and rural integration must be ruled first", "Land circulation needs research", "Building beautiful villages should not be smeared with grease", "Developing the equalization of urban and rural public services" and other important instructions, it is clearer and more complete on the problems of how to solve various aspects of rural society in the urban-rural integration strategy. In this process, China's rural areas are becoming more and more open, the agricultural industry is increasingly moving toward the international market, and international cooperation in agriculture is constantly pushing deeper.

V. THE FUTURE PROSPECT OF CHINA'S RURAL AGRICULTURE FOR GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT

In the continuous reform of China's rural society, it has become more and more open, gradually integrating into the global process of agricultural governance, and laying a solid foundation for the realization of modernization of rural social governance. The continuous reform of rural social governance in China has brought about the continuous improvement of the level of agricultural production, the increasing ability of agricultural industrialization, the continuous reduction of the rural poor, and the continuous improvement of rural social vitality. In 2014 and 2015, China was awarded the United Nations Millennium Development Goals Hunger Reduction Target Certificate and the World Food Summit Hunger Reduction Target Certificate by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, reflecting the United Nations' recognition of China's rural social governance and effectiveness.

Since the 18th Congress of the Communist Party of China, Chinese President Xi Jinping has repeatedly mentioned the issue of international exchanges and cooperation in China's agriculture when he visited or met with foreign heads of state and government leaders. China and Europe, China and the United States, China and Pakistan, China and South Korea continue to reach international cooperation intentions and specific issues such as agricultural trade, agricultural investment, and agricultural technology cooperation. In the construction of the "One Belt One Road", agricultural cooperation has become the common vision and action of many countries. In 2014, APEC's Third Ministerial Conference on Agriculture and Food was held. The meeting adopted the APEC Beijing Declaration on Food Security, which made agricultural cooperation a clear focus area and direction for the "One Belt One Road". Since then, China and ASEAN countries have reached cooperation in the fields of crop demonstration, capacity building, agricultural investment and trade, and signed cooperation agreements on agriculture, animal husbandry and fisheries with Southeast Asia, Central Asia, West Asia and Eastern European countries. The Ministry of Agriculture of China has signed 101 cooperation agreements with 48 countries along the "One Belt One Road".

The remarkable results of rural agricultural governance have made China more and more confident to participate in international food and agricultural governance. At the International Conference on Important Agriculture under the Changing Frameworks of APEC, BRICS, SCO, and G20, China has put forward theoretical proposals and specific cooperation issues that can withstand practice and have obtained positive response of many countries. In recent years, China has been more actively involved in the international food and agricultural governance action, actively connecting many international food security governance institutions and discussing cooperation matters which reflect China's responsibilities and obligations in solving the world food crisis and assisting poor countries.

The governance process of rural society in China is also the process of agricultural modernization. In the process of

the release of rural social vitality, the market mechanism has become more and more in-depth and perfected in rural areas. The level of agricultural technology has been continuously stimulated by market factors and small and medium-sized enterprises in rural society continue to grow and develop. The World Bank's survey of poverty alleviation effects in the 10 most important countries in the past 16 years shows that China has made great progress in the consideration of 34 indicators. China is the largest contribution to the world's poverty alleviation among the 10 economies. In the long-term practice of combining poverty alleviation and aiding wisdom, more and more poor people in China have become new-type farmers with modern production capacity, market-oriented management capabilities, and international strategic skills. The continuous transformation and upgrading of human resources will inevitably bring about the modernization transformation of China's rural agricultural development, lay a wisdom foundation for the further development of China's agriculture for the whole world, and open up an increasingly broad road for China's rural areas to expand and open up to the world.

VI. CONCLUSION

In summary, China's rural social governance highlights the distinctive features of different historical periods. In the process of accumulating the fruits of reform and opening up, China's rural society is no longer at a glance, but is increasingly opening up and exploring more diversified paths to integrate into the global governance of agriculture. In 2017, the 19th Congress of the Communist Party of China summarized the historical achievements of China's reform and opening up and socialist modernization, and expressed its determination and confidence to be more capable of realizing the great rejuvenation goal of the Chinese nation than at any time in history. In the future development phase of the meeting, rural, agricultural, and farmers are still the central issues of constant change, and the "rural revitalization" strategy has become an important part of China's modern economic system. China's rural society will surely achieve the historical mission of the prosperity and development of agriculture and rural areas in the deepening reform and expanding opening up, and finally realize the modernization of rural social governance facing the world.

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