The Review and Mechanism of China’s Urban Social Support after 1949

Huang Guan
Department of Law, TanKahKee College, Xiamen University, Xiamen City, Fujian Province, China, Huangguan@xujc.com

Abstract - Chinese urban social support system needs comparative and empirical study. In this study, you can find a short literature review on existing studies on Chinese case. After defined the variables of this study, I figure out the essential developmental process of Chinese urban social support. Then, I use an empirical way to support my hypothesis that, in China’s authoritarian society, the government choose to adopt a social support system that correspond with the demands of the alliance composed by the ruling party and its allied classes, which would reflect the change of its regime legitimacy. Moreover, I also challenge the Kasza’s theory in this study.

Index Terms - Urban Social Support, CCP’s Regime Legitimacy, Cross-class alliances, Chinese Political System

1. Introduction

The most unevenly distributed social support systems has been adopted in China even since the beginning of PRC. In nowadays China, the urban-rural dualism is still significant [13]. This dualism in social support system is more severe. In other words, the development of social support in rural area has been lagged a lot, and the structure is also different from the urban system [2]. This study focuses on the urban social support, since it composes the main body of Chinese social support system (In this essay, when I mention the Chinese social support system, it means the Chinese urban social support system).

After establishment of national control of CCP(China Communist Part)'s government, social support programs were adopted in urban areas. However, the developments of those programs were not successional. Their developmental processes have been interrupted by economy reform. During economy reform, Chinese social support system has been fundamentally redesigned. Unlike other social programs, the provision of social support is constant, thought sometime fluctuates [4]. Accompany the dramatical development of Chinese economy, its social support also developed.

2. Literature Review on Existing Studies on Chinese Social Support System

The study of Chinese social support is never on the frontier border, compare with the studies of Chinese economy and politic. “Chinese characteristics social support system” has been used as an excuse by Chinese official to avoid international comparison. Meanwhile, foreign scholars, have been lagged by Chinese language, have to rely on second-hand data. That weakens their studies. To date, the existing studies have not done enough investigation on Chinese case. And the efficiency of general theories is also in question, when they have been applied to Chinese case. For example, Kasza [6] demonstrated that the expenditure on social support has positive relation with the amount of GDP Per Capita. In this essay, you will find Kasza’s theory has to be modified, when it has been tested by Chinese case. Beyond that, this essay intend to give Chinese answers to the three basic questions’ on social support study.

3. Variables of This Study

A. Social Support

Since social security and welfare have always been merged in studies and statistics, in this essay I use the term ‘social support’ to represent them both together. Recently, two approaches are used to define social support system, though some differences also exist within the same approach class [4]. For example, Shogo Takegawa [8] definiance social support system as a mixture of national goal, support provider, and social regulator, but the broad approaches that have been used by Esping-Andersen [4] to define social support are different. The social support, defined by broad way, does not only include the social amelioration, like pension, health care, and survival benefits, but also relates to employment, wages, and overall macro-economic steering and usually frames the social support in term of the political economy. Though scholars have defined the social support in different terms and from different perspectives, they all magnify the re-distribution part. It is inevitable that the broad approach will include relatively less concerned programs in the investigation of social support. That makes the comparisons between different scholars’ studies are difficult.

In contrast, the narrow approach highlights the function of realizing social equality, when it defines social support. To extend the efficient of this study, I will use a narrow and testable approach to define Chinese social support. As SOCX defines the range of public programs to include nine sub-fields: old-age, survivors, incapacity, health, family, unemployment, housing, active labor market policies, and other welfare[1] and makes them testable. In this essay, I alsddefine Chinesesocial support follow the SOCXApproach, and sets its arrange: old-age, incapacity, health, unemployment, maternity, housing, military support and others. Since Chinese government officially promotes the so-call ‘five insurances’ (pension,
health, unemployment, work-related injury and maternity), its data is relatively abundant.

B. CCP’s Regime Legitimacy

The foundation of CCP government is its control of military, and that control has never been challenged. Above the foundation, the CCP’s regime legitimacy is changing. Since China is transferring from totalitarianism to authoritarianism, its regime legitimacy also correspond the transform [9]. The regime legitimacy of CCP significantly changed after economy reform. Before economy reform, China was a typical totalitarianism, its regime legitimacy come from Chairman Mao’s chrisma [14]. Since the beginning of economy reform, the CCP’s regime Legitimacy have been gradually transferred to economy development [12]. In this study the CCP’s regime legitimacy is the independent variable, its change would decide the changes of other variables.

C. Alliance Composed by CCP and Its Allied Classes

This is the intermediate variable of this study. According to the classical cross-class alliance theory, the change of cross-class alliances would impact the outcome of social support [7]. Unlike other countries, in China it is easy to calculate the change of cross-class alliances. In China, when CCP’s government allows any social classes to register their associations, it means CCP wants to share political power with those classes, since Chinese associations are semi-governmental. Thanks to the strick control of association registration, it makes the change after economy reform very significant. Before economy reform, labour union was the only nationwide association [10]. Ever since economy reform, the amount of associations increases so quick, and the most of those associations are economy related. The number of associations is use to calculate the alliance composed by CCP and its allied classes.

D. Socialist Democracy with Chinese Characteristics

This the conditional variable of this study. The record of this variable can be generally divided to two periods by economy reform. Before economy reform, Chinese political system is a typical totalitarian one; and it has been transferring to authoritarian since economy reform. In detail, though those two periods, there exist some generalized characters: First, the Chinese Constitution has confirmed the leadership of the CCP. CCP is the main controller of political power in China. Second, CCP would share political power with the classes which are important to its domination. Third, an intra-CCP political system exists, and that is more important and decisive than the official national system.

4. The Main Hypothesis, Research Logic and Methodology of This Study

The main hypothesis of this study is: Given China’s authoritarian society, the government choose to adopt a social support system that correspond with the demands of the alliance composed by the ruling party and its allied classes, which would reflect the change of its regime legitimacy. Dixon [3] has already sufficiently discussed the philosophy ‘Productivity’ of CCP in designing and establishing its social support system. In this essay, I adopt and strengthen his argument. The Chinese high Gini-coefficient is my alliance to support my judgment that Chinese urban social support is less advanced. To clear portray the real face of Chinese social support system, I adopt a two step method. In the first step, I review the development of the urban social support in the wake of economy reform; in the second step, I review the record of the urban social support 1949-1978. Then, by both comparative and empirical ways, I value the development of Chinese social support, challenge Kasza’s theory and demonstrate my hypothesis. In brief, my review clears the the urban social support’s extending process: First, the cadres of the CCP had been unquestionably covered. Second, the traditional revolutionary bases and the newly surrounded ethnically autonomous areas had been included, to reward or gain loyalty. Third, all of the important social members, workers and staff who had close relations with the CCP government had been covered in order to strengthen their loyalty. Forth, social members who were important for development, such as college students, were then included to guarantee their loyalty. Lastly, international friends and less important retired workers were included in order to eliminate potential dissatisfaction.

TABLE 1. The Bivariate Analysis between the Important Economic Factors and the Expenditure of Social Support 1952-1978

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Pearson Correlation</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
<th>Sum of Squares and Cross-products</th>
<th>Covariance</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GDP</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>-0.452</td>
<td>0.018</td>
<td>33.310</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDPPC</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>-0.492</td>
<td>0.010</td>
<td>33.945</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

We find the minus relation between economy factors and expenditure on social support in table 1 is not as significant as in table 2, and that relation has been reverse in table 3. That means the economy factors are not the decisive factors in the development of social support in China. Meanwhile, the most important change between the two periods is CCP’s regime legitimacy transfers from political leaders chrisma to economy development. Furthermore, the most important difference between periods 1952-1978 and 1961-1970 is the level of political impact (during 1961-1970, China experienced the climax of Great Chinese Famine and Culture Revolution). Besides above, the change of the number of cross-class associations also corresponds my hypothesis. During 1978-2011, the number of business-oriented associations increased from 0 to 245,000, and the number of guilds increased from less than 20,000 to more than 60,000. As the intermediate variable, it change also corresponds the trend of the change of independent and dependent variables. Those support my hypothesis that the change of CCP’s regime legitimacy decisively impacts the development of Chinese urban social support system.

**References**


