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Title

Understanding the Grassroots NGOs Advocacy in Non-western Settings: Empirical Evidence from China

Abstract

The study finds that the participation of the grassroots citizen in the decision process and the relationship with other NGOs impact the advocacy most in China. However, the registration and relationship with government do not have statistic significant. The number of NGOs in China has increased dramatically, so many scholars believe that this represents the development of civil society (Ying, 2016). However, other findings show that the intensity of advocacy activities in China's nonprofit organizations is relatively weak, and its impact on reactive governments is rather limited (Hu, Guo, & Bies, 2016). China's nonprofit organizations have not been able to effectively integrate and respond to citizens' rights and aspirations within the organization before they advocate citizens' rights in political and social systems (Zhang & Guo, 2012). In Western countries, some research finding indicates that nonprofit advocacy is mainly dependent on the resources and the network (Casey, 2004). However, the study on nonprofit advocacy in authoritarian regimes is limited. This study fills this gap by a quantitative research. Besides the factors (the number of volunteers, organization size) that have been discussed a lot by Western scholars, what other factors influence the advocacy activities of NGOs? Does the involvement of grassroots citizens in service or decision process influence the advocacy? Does the relationship with outside resources (government and other NGOs) have an impact on the advocacy activity? Does the registration (special factor in authoritarian regimes) of NGOs also have influence?

The data was collected in 2015. It includes 110 disabled persons’ self-help organizations (DPOs), which includes most DPOs (including unregistered) in China. The study uses the correlation and logistic regression to analyze the data. We find that the participation of grassroots citizens in service doesn’t influence the advocacy activities significantly. In contrast, the participation of
citizens in decision process does have a positive influence holding organization size, establishing time, founding resource constant. Registration or not doesn’t have an impact on advocacy activities. The relationship with the government doesn’t have statistically significant but the relationship with other NGOs have. We believe that this study will not only let us know more about the advocacy in an authoritarian country but also shed lights on the sophisticated relationship between government and NGOs in developing civil society.

**Keyword**

Nonprofit Advocacy; Grassroots Citizens; China; DPOs