

Political Ecology Evaluation for Second-level Colleges of Colleges and Universities

-- System Building and Measurement Evaluation

Song Li

Commission for Discipline Inspection of the Party Committee, Nanjing Normal University,
Nanjing, Jiangsu, 210023, China

Abstract

Political ecology evaluation is the practice turn in political ecology studies. A set of quantifiable evaluation index system can intuitively demonstrate the states and trends of political ecology development. Currently, there are practical difficulties to varying degrees in conducting political ecology evaluation for Second-level colleges by colleges and universities, for example, poor visibility of building standards and integration of linkage mechanism, as well as weak differentiation in result application, et al. Focusing on the fundamental task of fostering integrity and educating people, this paper conducts documentary assessment and quantitative evaluation for political ecology of Second-level colleges of colleges and universities through establishing a political ecology evaluation index system composed of five first-level indexes including politics, ideology, organization, Party conduct and political integrity and work effectiveness, and one additional index of comprehensive factors, totaling 50 Second-level indexes, expecting to constantly optimize and restructure the political ecology of Second-level colleges.

Keywords

Colleges and Universities; Second-level Colleges; Political Ecology; Evaluation System.

1. Introduction

The political ecology evaluation index system for Second-level colleges of colleges and universities is an important yardstick to test their work in full and strict governance over the Party. Its evaluation quality and effectiveness are directly related to the political orientation of running and governing schools and the realization of the fundamental task of fostering integrity and educating people. There are few documents of directly discussing political ecology evaluation index system for colleges and universities in the theoretical circles. In practice, this work has just been started in colleges and universities and there lacks of relatively mature experiences that can be learned from. In view of this, on the basis of systematically interpreting the connotations of political ecology, this paper clarifies the difficulties of political ecology evaluation, explores the building of a set of index system that is quantifiable, evaluable and highly operational, studies the correlation among the indexes, predicts possible ecological obstacles and masters the future development trends and states [1] to provide references for the academic circles in studying political ecology evaluation index system and promote the tangible, standardized and scientific political ecology building of Second-level colleges of colleges and universities.

2. Discussions on the Connotations and its Evaluation Index System for Political Ecology

2.1. Basic Connotations of Political Ecology

According to the explanation of political science, politics means that people transfer their rights and entrust public institutions and their staff to exercise them on their behalf. David Easton applied the systematic analysis method to study the human behavior in the political process, "Political life is a behavior system. It exists in such an environment by which it is influenced and on which it reacts." [2] Under the framework of system theory analysis, the internal factors of political system are closely related to the external development environment. Ecology refers to exploring the state of existence and development of organisms and their interlocking relationship with the environment from the perspective of biology. In 1866, Ernst Heinrich Philipp August Haeckel, the German bio-scientist, proposed that "ecology is the science of studying the relationship between organisms and their environment" for the first time. However, at that time the concept of "ecology" was still in the realm of natural ecology; Arne Naess, the Norwegian philosopher, shifted ecological study to social ecology with his *Deep Ecology* and F.W. Riggs extended this research logic. In 1961, he explored the interactive relationship between the administrative system and external environment from the perspective of executive environment in his *Administrative Ecology*. As a compound word of politics and ecology, political ecology combines the theories, viewpoints and methods of ecology to study the socio-political phenomena and their environment relationship. In the broad sense, it reflected the overall state demonstrated in the process of maintaining benign operation of the entire system by the internal elements of the political system, as well as the state shown in the process of ecological interaction between the internal system as a whole and the external environment. [3] In the narrow sense, it refers to the political environment and working styles.

2.2. Political Ecology Evaluation Index System

Political ecology evaluation index system can reflect the hierarchy and complexity of political ecology and leaves enough space for the practical testing and improvement of political ecology. Whether the reference points of the evaluation system are objective or not directly determines whether the evaluation is scientific or not. In a broader sense, the logical elements of political ecology evaluation system are essentially the intrinsic elements of the generation logic of political ecology. The endogenous logic of the index system should be reflected through the following aspects: first, the data should be true, objective and easily available. Surrogate data or calculated data should be avoided as much as possible, unless this index is indispensable and the surrogate data or calculated data can withstand doubts. [4] Second, attention should be paid to the practical differentiation between index values. The selection of indexes should be centered on the core objectives of political ecology and avoid the appearance of repeated correlations or similar indexes. Third, the confusion of process indexes and result indexes should be avoided. As the "construction drawing" of evaluation and research and judgement, the political ecology evaluation system has the dual functions of dynamic monitoring and early warning and research and judgement. The issues that it focuses on are the overall system, the impact on environment by its behaviors and the political influence by environmental changes. Therefore, four questions should be considered in terms of indexes reflecting the status of political ecology development: who should conduct the evaluation? what should be evaluated? how to evaluate? how to apply the results?

3. Practical Consideration of Establishing Political Ecology Evaluation Index System for Second-level Colleges of Colleges and Universities

Colleges and universities are situated at the frontier position of cultivating talents. The effects of their work in full and strict governance over the Party directly determine the implementation of the fundamental task of fostering integrity and educating people. As the political centers of colleges and universities, Second-level colleges are the integration of the teaching, management and risk subjects. Their political ecology building status is the comprehensive reflection of the working styles of the Party and the administration, the school spirits and the academic styles, which concerns the fulfillment of the political responsibilities of managing and governing the Party and running and governing schools, as well as the effectiveness of implementing the “Two Responsibilities” by Party Committees of colleges and universities, and directly influences the value orientation and behavioral orientation of Party cadres. In recent years, political ecology problems frequently occur in Second-level colleges. From the analysis of common problems reflected by the on-campus inspection that has been implemented in 29 colleges and universities under the jurisdiction of the central government and one university of Jiangsu Province and collectively disclosed by the Central Inspection Teams in 2017, it is mainly manifested in five aspects of alienation: first, the alienation of collective leadership. The implementation of centralized democracy and major decisions and arrangements of higher Party organizations is inadequate, especially in the areas of “Three Majors and One Large”; second, alienation of unity. The “Two Responsibilities” are not fulfilled effectively. The implementation of the “Dual Responsibilities for One Post” is inadequate. Some are even engaged in “what I say goes” and “paternalism”; third, alienation of criticism. The education and supervision over Party cadres are not implemented effectively. The implementation of ideological work responsibility system is inadequate; fourth, alienation of organizational forms. The Party building work responsibility system is not implemented effectively. The “Three Meetings and One Class” and joint meetings between the Party and administration are irregular. The role of Professor Committees are not fully played in supervision and constraint; five, alienation of equality. Some are engaged in nepotism within the circles of academic teams. Problems in the areas of education and teaching, academic researches, et al occur frequently.

In terms of the current management system of colleges and universities, the two-tier management system of universities and Second-level colleges is reformed through devolution to regulate the relationship of responsibilities, powers and benefits between universities and Second-level colleges. While constantly expanding the scope of power of Second-level colleges and enhancing their levels and benefits in running schools, it increases the ranges and difficulties of school management as well. Especially, with the supervision empowerment, the scope of supervision is expanded and the supervision ratio keeps increasing. As the specialized supervisory organ of the university, it is difficult for discipline inspection and supervision institutions to achieve real-time supervision over all affairs. While most discipline inspection committee members of Second-level colleges of colleges and universities work part-time and have not truly played the role of “probes” in supervision, resulting in the weakening of supervision and management over Second-level colleges by universities and an increase of supervision gaps consequently. In addition, colleges and universities are a typical “acquaintance society” with intricate and complicated connections, which causes high resistance to supervision and difficulties of in-depth supervision. For a long time, the universities have been faced with an awkward situation of being “invisible”, “inaudible” and “unspeakable” in supervising the political ecology of Second-level colleges. While previously the responsibilities and authority involving political ecology evaluation are scattered across multiple departments including discipline inspection and supervision, organization and

personnel, finance and audit, et al. Statistics from different departments have caused data disconnection and the comprehensive benefits of evaluation have not been developed.

4. Establishment of Political Ecology Evaluation Index System for Second-level Colleges of Colleges and Universities

Political ecology evaluation is an effective approach of strengthening daily supervision. The selection of index system and setting of weights should be focused on the weak points of full and strict governance over the Party, risk points of power operation and blank spots in supervision and management. It should highlight the characteristics and essential requirements of political ecology itself, and also reflect the management characteristics and practical requirements of governance modernization of Second-level colleges of colleges and universities, so as to guide the positive development. Based on the internal composition of the Party’s political ecosystem, this paper proposes to establish a political ecology evaluation index system composed of five first-level indexes including politics, ideology, organization, Party conduct and political integrity and work effectiveness and one additional index of comprehensive factors, totaling 50 Second-level indexes.

Table 1. Political Ecology Evaluation Index System for Second-level Colleges of Colleges and Universities

First-level Indexes	Second-level Indexes	Third-level Indexes	Scores
I. Political building (30 scores)	(1) Ideals and convictions and political orientation	1. Strengthen lofty ideals and convictions.	4
		2. Adhere to the correct direction of running schools.	
	(2) Political rules and political discipline	3. Strictly hold the Party Constitution and regulations in great reverence.	10
		4. Achieve “Two Maintenances”.	
		5. Regulate intra-Party political life.	
		6. Strictly abide by the political rules of the Party.	
		7. Strictly enforce the organizational discipline of the Party.	
	(3) Political responsibilities and political missions	8. Effectively fulfill the political responsibility of managing and governing the Party.	8
		9. Adhere to political loyalty and strengthen political missions.	
		10. Carry forward fighting spirit and enhance fighting skills.	
		11. Emphasize the inspection work.	
	(4) Implementation and performance	12. Resolutely implement the spirits of documents.	8
		13. Promote high-quality development of undertakings of the unit.	
		14. Strictly implement and execute the decisions and systems.	
		15. Strictly implement audit rectification work responsibility.	
II. Ideological building	(5) Political theory study	16. Insist on systematic political theory study.	3

(20 scores)	(6) Political culture building	17. Insist on carrying forward advanced socialist culture.	4
		18. Take a clear stand against bad political culture.	
	(7) Ideological building	19. Build a strong ideological work responsibility system.	8
		20. Firmly master the focus of publicity and ideological work.	
		21. Implement and practice the requirements of “Education with Three Alls”.	
		22. Advance the building of “integrating ideological and political courses with other courses”.	
	(8) Teachers’ ethics and style building	23. Pay high attention to the building of teachers’ ethics and styles.	5
		24. Do well in the assessment of teachers’ ethics and styles.	
III. Organizational building (15 scores)	(9) Execution of the Party’s organizational systems	25. Implement and execute the democratic centralism.	4
		26. Strictly execute all basic systems.	
	(10) Setting of the primary-level Party organizations and responsibility fulfillment	27. Give full play to the role of primary-level Party organizations.	5
		28. Select and assign excellent cadres for primary-level Party organizations.	
		29. Improve development, education and management of Party members.	
	(11) Cadre and talent team building	30. Insist on the principle of the Party managing cadres and talents.	6
		31. Regulate daily supervision over Party cadres.	
		32. Regulate cadre assessment and evaluation work.	
	IV. Party conduct and political integrity building (15 scores)	(12) Consolidate and implement the spirit of “eight-point decision on improving Party and government conduct”	33. Strictly implement the spirit of “eight-point decision on improving Party and government conduct” issued by the Central Committee.
34. Strictly abide by regulations of Code of Conduct on Moral Integrity and Self-Discipline of the Communist Party of China.			
(13) Correct the “Four Conducts” and change working styles		35. Resolutely oppose formalism and bureaucracy.	4
		36. Resolutely oppose hedonism and extravagance.	
(14) Strengthen responsibility implementation		37. Strengthen the primary responsibility of the Party conduct building.	3
		38. Advance the systematic building of Party conduct and political integrity.	
(15) Political integrity risk		39. Strengthen political integrity risk prevention and control building.	2

	prevention and control building		
	(16) Emphasize daily education	40. Emphasize regular building of Party conduct and political integrity.	2
		41. Emphasize Party conduct and political integrity responsibility system assessment.	
V. Work effectiveness (20 scores)	(17) Execution of resolutions and decisions and implementation of work plans	42. Execution of resolutions made at meetings of the Standing Committee of the Party Committee.	8
		43. Execution of decisions made at executive meetings of the university.	
		44. Implementation of the annual work plan.	
	(18) Assessment of implementing high-quality development	45. Implementation of comprehensive assessment.	12
		46. Implementation of annual assessment of faculty.	
		47. Implementation of assessment of primary-level Party building.	
VI. Comprehensive factors	(19) Evaluation by higher-level authorities	48. Two extra scores shall be added per person in case of receiving awards or commendations from authorities at the provincial level or above in areas of Party building, teachers' ethics and styles, et al.	
	(20) Handling of events of public opinions	49. In case events of public opinions are triggered by internal conflicts or inadequate management of the unit and are not properly handled, two scores shall be deducted for each case.	
		50. In case mass incidents or negative events of public opinions occur and are not properly handled, causing relatively large impact on the reputation of the university, three scores shall be deducted for each case.	

The weight grade method is adopted in political ecology evaluation. After the evaluation indexes and assessment and evaluation points are determined, the base values and corresponding weights of each index are determined term by term. Values shall be assigned according to their importance, with a total value of 100 scores. Five grades including excellent, good, average, poor, very poor are set for the evaluation results based on total scores obtained. If the score is <60, it indicates that the intra-Party political ecology in this area is very poor and there is a huge risk of deterioration; if the score is between 60-70, it indicates that the intra-Party political ecology in this area is poor; if the score is between 70-80, it indicates that the intra-Party political ecology in this area is average. There are still potential risks which require sufficient attention and should be actively solved; if the score is between 80-90, it indicates that the intra-Party political ecology in this area is good; if the score is above 90, the political ecology is excellent and it is the ideal ecological scenario. In order to highlight the political evaluation, the "one-vote veto system" is introduced. For example, Second-level colleges under evaluation shall not be rated as good or above grade for the following reasons: its faculty, students and staff receive the Party disciplinary and administrative sanctions for this year; events of public opinions are not properly handled, causing significant impact on the reputation of the university.

5. Measurement Evaluation of Political Ecology of Second-level Colleges of Colleges and Universities

The purpose of conducting political ecology evaluation is not about evaluation itself, but to find out the crux of development through effective evaluation. On the basis of insisting on “data orientation and problem orientation” and through horizontal, vertical and other multi-dimensional comparisons, it strengthens application of results and realizes organic interaction between building, evaluation and rectification.

5.1. Vertical Comparison

The so-called vertical comparison refers to measuring and calculating the different sequential variations presented by political ecology of Second-level colleges of colleges and universities in different years so as to extrapolate the development trend of political ecology. For example, at the end of each year, besides releasing the feedback report on political ecology evaluation, the comprehensive scores of political ecology evaluation for each Second-level college over the past three years shall be sorted and compared as well, which intuitively reflects the development direction of political ecology of this college and its major problems. In addition, five indexes with the lowest scores of each Second-level college over the past three years can be listed to conduct vertical comparisons between key indexes. If the score of an index is less than a half of the full score or the scores of similar issues are deducted for three or above consecutive times, representatives of middle-level cadres, faculty and students should be selected for a research, who will be encouraged to offer objective and fair evaluations to find out the tendentious problem domain, which will serve as the main basis by the Party Committee of the university to fulfill the responsibility of managing and governing the Party, and Party conduct and political integrity building, as well as the specific field of daily supervision determined by the discipline inspection and supervision organ of the university based on political ecology evaluation results.

5.2. Horizontal Comparison

Horizontal comparison means that through conducting horizontal comparison between Second-level colleges, the differences of development between them can be derived. First, we sort the scores of comprehensive evaluation for political ecology, release the ranking of comprehensive scores and publish the evaluation results on line; submit feedback of each evaluation result to the Party Committee of the university in time. For the last three Second-level colleges in the ranking at the end of the year, their Party and administration leaders shall be summoned for a meeting by the university. Second, we analyze the first-level indexes to acquire the ranges of mean value of each index, measure and calculate the distribution range of each college under the same index, identify the differences of development between colleges based on standards, and effectively play the role of objectives in guidance. Finally, according to the results of horizontal comparison, the university will conduct high-level peer reviews on key indexes that can reflect the development potential of colleges, such as social influence, academic status, et al in due time, and play the guiding and promoting role of political ecology evaluation. For prominent problems in key areas and critical links including teachers’ ethics and styles, scientific researches, selecting and employing talents, et al, specialized supervision shall be conducted in due course to urge the implementation of problem rectification.

5.3. Development Evaluation

On the basis of horizontal and vertical comparisons, the Leading Group of Political Ecology Evaluation Work should study and judge common problems of the development of political ecology at regular intervals to find out the roots of those problems and put forward early warning suggestions in time. The Party Committee of the university should establish two-tier power and responsibility lists of the university and Second-level colleges and take the results

of political ecology evaluation as an important basis for the university's performance assessment of Party conduct and political integrity building, as well as the selection, appointment, rewards and punishment of cadres. The political ecology accountability mechanism should be established and improved and attention should be paid to the implementation of problem rectification. For those who lack of attention or do not rectify as required, discipline inspection or supervisory suggestions shall be issued as appropriate. Meanwhile, for individual problems of the college, the development evaluation report of the college should be taken into consideration. Via "one notice, one form, one report", that is, the early warning notice, evaluation feedback form and political ecology evaluation report, a "diagnosis letter" shall be issued to require the college to submit a written explanation and put forward improvement measures accordingly.

6. Conclusion

Based on the understanding of the connotations of political ecology of Second-level Party organizations of colleges and universities, this paper establishes a political ecology evaluation index system composed of five first-level indexes including politics, ideology, organization, Party conduct and political integrity and work effectiveness and one additional index of comprehensive factors, totaling 50 indexes, expecting to provide certain references for the academic circles to study this kind of issues. But since currently the studies on political ecology evaluation by the academic circles are still at the exploratory stage and there are no mature experiences to learn from, all kinds of practical difficulties such as adaptability may be encountered during the process of evaluation. It needs researchers to conduct in-depth studies and practice innovation by combing the practical situation of colleges and universities from different perspectives.

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