Research Article

On environmental influencing factors of political socialization of university students

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ABSTRACT

With economic diversification and facing globalization of political culture, all sorts of people from all social stratums must undertake their own political socialization process, where, political socialization issues of university students as the backbone of the future society attracts more and more attention. This paper took empirical study via questionnaire with 486 students from 10 universities and colleges in Xi'an City and discussion on the environmental influencing factors of political socialization of university and college students, based on which, giving some suggestions to offer reference in improving political socialization level of university students.

Key words: University Students, Political Socialization, Political Cognition, Political Identity, Polity Participation
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INTRODUCTION

With continued economic globalization, political globalization kept on development. Reform movement symbolized by democratization led the political globalization in the late twentieth century. Due to the leading position of the West in economy and military and other aspects, international neoliberalism political socialization with the Western political culture as the contents had been shapes[1]   Presently, facing the influence of international neoliberalism political socialization, magnificent reforms had made extraordinary changes in China. Accompanying economic diversification, cultural diversification, idea diversification and value diversification had been colorful and meaningful. China must face up the political cultural globalization when China is experiencing the value change and Chinese must make their own choices and find their own way from the value fission[2]. Among the Chinese and Western cultural fusion and the Ancient and modern cultural impact, we shall shape present socialism core value and must experience our own political socialization process according to our group and social stratum, where, political socialization of university students have attracting the most attention and worries [3].

Chinese study on political socialization, especially study on political socialization of university students, starts very late without much to show in achievements. There are more introduction and evaluation than analysis and study on political socialization theory, especially rare study combined with the real condition of China and taking university students as a whole under a specific environmental condition. The urgent tasks to be solved in current universities and colleges span study on the current situation of political socialization of university students, analysis of problems on political socialization of university students, discussion and guide of political socialization theory and mechanism of university students, solution of problems incurred in the process of political socialization of university students, as well as proposal of measures and approaches of optimizing political socialization of university students. Aiming at the situation of political socialization of university students, this paper studied the situation of political socialization of university students in Xi'an from three aspects involving political cognition degree, political identity degree and political participation situation, tried to describe the situation of political socialization of university students as well as discuss the problems existing in the process so as to offer theoretical references for improving the political socialization level of university students, the political qualify of university students and ability to corruption

resistance, and accordingly improve Chinese political stabilization, political civilization development and all-round social progress.

EXPERIMENTAL SECTION

Study sample
This study adopted ransom sampling from 10 universities and colleges in Xi'an City, with full-time undergraduates as the examinees for 500 questionnaires distributed and 486 ones recovered actually, a recover rate of 97.2%. The researcher screened the samples according to the sample screening standard, and eliminated 31 samples, so only 455 effective samples from the collected 486 samples left after the screening, namely the efficient of total samples was 91%, including 45.9% made by male students and 54.1% by female. There were more female examinees than male examinees, but the sex ratio was basically 1:1. In view of age distribution, 121 examinees at the age of 18 or 19 took up 26.6%, 258 ones at the age of 20 or 21 took up 56.7%; 76 ones at the age of 22 took up 16.7%; the examinees at 20 or 21 made the largest contribution, as a matter of fact, examinees at 18~22 were the normal undergraduates. In view of grade, 128 freshmen took up 28.1%; 159 sophomores for 34.9%; 106 juniors for 23.9%; and 62 seniors for 13.6%, the students were distributed evenly in terms of grade.

Study tool
This study adopted the questionnaire method, the most common method in social investigation, in the survey of political socialization of university students. Based on the previous scale study on political socialization, the study developed a study scale improved after two trial surveys. The study scale was improved via two circles of sampling and analysis together with the seminar participated by examinees and related experts, and the final version of formal scale for survey was done. Study scale can take survey of political socialization degree of university students from three important aspects including political cognition degree, political identity degree and political participation situation.

Study process
The data for analysis of this paper were collected from questionnaires taken in ten colleges and university in May and June, 2012. Two specific sampling methods were adopted, one is cluster sampling, and the other is scatter sampling. In order to ensure good recovery rate, the questionnaires adopting the two sampling methods were distributed in-site and were immediately submitted to the gather at the first time of completing the questionnaires. Data obtained from the survey were analyzed and processed by SPSS 13.0 software.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study has not only surveyed political socialization of university students in view of political cognition, political identity and political participation but also measured political cognition, identity and participation situation of individual university student in the process of questionnaire survey. It aimed to display the process of political socialization of university students in the method of empirical study of latent variable causal analysis.

Source of survey scale
According to the contents of the theoretical research, the study divided political socialization of university students into three parts spanning political cognition, political identity and political participation, and measured the senses for the above aspects of individual university student with study scale while surveying the real situation of the three parts of political socialization of university students.

As to measure of political cognition, the study has learned from Xue Fengping and Wang Yi [4] in terms of measure scale for political cognition level. Furthermore, it has revised the scale in the process of developing the scale, studied the cognition and evaluation of university students on political systems, political powers, political norms and political functions and measured political cognition level of individual university student. There were six items in the scale, 7-point Likert scale, with the scores ranging from 1 to 7, symbolic of strongly disagree to strongly agree.

As to measure of political identity, the study has been revised based on Tao Yunfang and Ye Jinfu [5] in terms of classification method of political identity and from Zhang Yanjie and Tang Xiangjun [6] in terms of classification method of measure of political identity. Furthermore, combining the previous study classifications, it has divided political identity into four dimensions, namely, identity for CPC and China, for political systems, for policy making and establishment and for political belief and value, with each dimension adopting five items in the scale, 7-point Likert scale, with the scores ranging from 1 to 7, symbolic of strongly in-conform to strongly conform.

As to measure of political participation, the study has learned from Huang Zhenhui [7] and from Mondak et al. [8] in terms of measure for political participation. Furthermore, combining the features of political life of university students, it has divided political participation into two dimensions, namely, representative participation and exchanging ideas, with each dimension adopting five items in the scale, 7-point Likert scale, with the scores ranging from 1 to 7, symbolic of strongly in-conform to strongly conform.

Scale reliability and factor analysis
(1) Firstly took reliability analysis of political cognition scale and then factor analysis so as to test whether the revised scale is of good reliability and good internal consistence. The study hold KMO test for political cognition scale, with KMO result being 0.862 (p<0.01), so factor analysis is applicable. Now we took reliability analysis and factor analysis accompanying varimax rotation and got the test results as follows in Table 1.

Table 1: Reliability and factor loading of political cognition scale

Political cognition (reliability coefficient α=0.89)	Factor loading
Item 1	0.834
Item 2	0.761
Item 3	0.895
Item 4	0.789
Item 5	0.839
Item 6	0.783

Hermeneutic variance of the factor was 66.891%. Seen from the above test, political cognition scale is of good reliability and good internal item consistence.

(2) Took reliability analysis of political identity scale and then factor analysis so as to test whether the revised scale is of good reliability and good internal consistence. The study hold KMO test for political identity scale, with KMO result being 0.923 (p<0.01), so factor analysis is applicable. Now we took reliability analysis and factor analysis accompanying varimax rotation and got the test results as follows in Table 2.

Table 2 Reliability and factor loading of political identity scale

Variables	Items	Factor loading			
		CPC and China Identity	Political System Identity	Policy Identity	Political Belief Identity
Reliability coefficient α		0.82	0.87	0.88	0.91
Political Identity	Item 1	0.765			
	Item 2	0.723			
	Item 3	0.710			
	Item 4	0.688			
	Item 5	0.604			
	Item 6		0.792		
	Item 7		0.797		
	Item 8		0.792		
	Item 9		0.579		
	Item10		0.766		
	Item11			0.618	
	Item12			0.697	
	Item13			0.666	
	Item14			0.771	
	Item15			0.759	
	Item16				0.580
	Item17				0.659
	Item18				0.696
	Item19				0.848
	Item20				0.847

The independent variances of the four factors were 16.92%, 16.18%, 14.558% and 13.149 respectively, and hermeneutic variance of the factor was 60.81%. Seen from the above test, political identity scale is of good reliability and good internal item consistence.

(3) Took reliability analysis of political participation scale and then factor analysis so as to test whether the revised scale is of good reliability and good internal consistence. The study hold KMO test for political participation scale, with KMO result being 0.899 (p<0.01), so factor analysis is applicable. Now we took reliability analysis and factor analysis accompanying varimax rotation and got the test results as follows in Table 3.

Table 3: Reliability and factor loading of political participation scale

Variables	Items	Factor loading	
		Representative participation	Exchanging ideas
Reliability coefficient α		0.92	0.93
Political participation	Item 1	0.862	
	Item 2	0.866	
	Item 3	0.872	
	Item 4	0.879	
	Item 5	0.839	
	Item 6		0.872
	Item 7		0.880
	Item 8		0.875
	Item 9		0.887
	Item 10		0.864

The independent variances of the two factors were 39.32% and 38.27% respectively, and hermeneutic variance of the factor was 77.59%. Seen from the above test, political participation scale is of good reliability and good internal item consistence.

C. Correlation analysis

Factor correlation analysis is generally used to understand the correlation degree between the variables as an important method to analyze the close relationship degree between the variables. Generally speaking, correlation coefficient higher than 0.9 indicates very high correlation between the variables, the one between 0.7~0.9 indicates higher correlation between the variables, the one between 0.5~0.7 moderate correlation, the one between 0.3~0.5 proper correlation, and the one lower than 0.3 weak correlation.

The study has applied SPSS for analysis of the correlation coefficients between the variables spanning political cognition, identity for CPC and China, for political systems, for policy making and establishment and for political belief and value, representative participation and exchanging ideas, a total of 7 variables. Correlation coefficients resulted from the analysis refer to Table 7.

Table 7: Correlation coefficients between variables of the study

Variables	Means	Variances	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Political cognition	5.56	1.00	1.00						
2. CPC & China identity	5.61	0.97	.48**	1.00					
3. Political system identity	4.61	1.35	.37**	.37**	1.00				
4. Policy identity	5.17	1.10	.41**	.36**	.60**	1.00			
5. Policy belief identity	5.23	1.18	.41**	.40**	.63**	.63**	1.00		
6. Representative participation	5.08	1.22	.41**	.36**	.68**	.59**	.70**	1.00	
7. Exchanging ideas	5.43	1.10	.28**	.18**	.26**	.26**	.32**	.30**	1.00

It is known from Table 7 that the correlation coefficients of political cognition, CPC and China identity, political system identity, policy making and establishment identity and policy belief and value identity were between 0.37~0.48, and correlation degree is proper with $p < 0.01$, indicating the identity degree at the four individual aspects increases with the strong political cognition. Correlation coefficients between each dimension of political identity and the two dimensions of political participation-representative participation and exchanging ideas were between 0.18~0.70, and $p < 0.01$, indicating that although dimension correlation of political identity and political participation differs, all of them had positive correlation in a whole, and improvement of political identity can promote political participation.

d. Structural equation model validation

(1) Study model to be tested

Ellis's ABC Theory of Emotion thought that consequence resulted from individual behaviors was not caused by activating event via individual emotion directly, but by the belief one has of the meaning of the activating event. One can have his or her own cognition and evaluation on the event or outside information, and accordingly shape the corresponding belief and feeling, which can further guide the occurrence of individual behavior. Therefore, cognition one has taken indirect effect on individual behaviors, and feeling or belief one has in the process of cognition plays a role of bridge in the process. Political socialization of university students has the same three procedures, reception and cognition for political knowledge and related data guides and affects the belief and identity degree for political system, CPC and China, policy and political belief and so on, with identity degree is bound to affect individual political participation. Based on the above, this study holds the idea that political cognition affects political identity level, at the same time, political identity level affects activity of political participation in the process of political socialization of university students.

(2) Evaluation and path analysis of latent variable causal model
In order to test the model to be tested mentioned above, namely correlation among political cognition, political identity and political participation, this paper applied latent variable causal model of structural equation model to test the model to best tested based on the structural reliability test mentioned above.

Table 8: Fitting indexes of latent variable causal model

Analysis model	χ^2	df	χ^2/df	RMSEA	NNFI	CFI
Latent variable causal model	1229.22	452	2.719	0.066	0.98	0.98

1) Model evaluation
We can get χ^2=1229.22 and df=452 in the structural equation model from the fitting indexes referred to Table 8, thenχ^2/df=2.719, the proposed value between 2~3. Meanwhile, RMSEA=0.066, NNFI and CFI are 0.98, with all of fitting indexes among the good scope. Therefore, it is believed that model fitting is very good in a whole according to the standard of the structural equation model.

2) Path analysis
Test results in Fig. 5 show the relation between related factors of political socialization of university students set in the model to be tested in this study. Firstly, political cognition and the four dimensions of political identity have positive correlation, among which, the path loading coefficients between political cognition and CPC and China identity β=0.51, T is 8.57 and p<0.01; the one between political cognition and political system identity β=0.73, T is 11.46 and p<0.01; the one between political cognition and political belief identity β=0.86, T is 16.78 and p<0.01; seen from the above, political cognition can actively promote individual political identity level.

Secondly, different dimensions of political identity and the two dimensions of political participation have the different positive correlation. As for representative participation, the path loading coefficients of CPC and China identity β=0.12, T is 2.10 and p<0.05; the one of political system identity β=0.33, T is 4.89 and p<0.01; the one of policy identity β=0.17, T is 2.51 and p<0.05; the one of political belief identity β=0.33, T is 4.36 and p<0.01;

As for exchanging ideas, the path loading coefficients of CPC and China identity β=0.05, T is 1.24 and p>0.05; the one of political system identity β=0.38, T is 7.71 and p<0.01; the one of policy identity β=0.11, T is 2.31and p<0.05; the one of political belief identity β=0.45, T is 7.92 and p<0.01; thus, political identity can actively promote political participation, the higher political identity level one has, the more active to participate in political activities.

Furthermore, political identity plays a role of bridge in the impact of political cognition on political participation in terms of the effect of political identity. Indirect impact of political cognition on representative participation via CPC and China identity is 0.061; the ones on representative participation and exchanging ideas via political system identity are 0.261and 0.300 respectively; the ones via policy identity are 0.124 and 0.08 respectively; the ones via political belief are 0.284 and 0.387 respectively.

CONCLUSION

To sum up the above test results, the three important factors including political cognition, political identity and political participation are influenced mutually in the process of political socialization of university students. As to a university student, political life is a process deeply integrated and participated in a gradual way, so is political socialization of university students. It is known from the above correlation model that political cognition refers to understanding about political life at all aspects, cognition of political knowledge, information on political systems and other aspects and perception on political life of a university student. Only deep understanding and comprehension can get a clear idea about superiorities of political system and other aspects in China as well as the political position and political rights in detail, and accordingly identify with CPC and China, political system, national policies issued and establishment of policies as well as political belief and value, hold his or her own belief of CPC, political system and other aspects, which can guide the university student more actively participate in political life, exert representative voting-right and take part in the election of various representatives, at the same time, join in various activities of associations or party organizations. In addition, we can express our own political appeals and political ideas correctly and actively and make our own contribution to construction of CPC and China as well as integration of political life. Thus, political cognition is an important part and plays an important role in the process of political socialization of university students. Political socialization of university students can be influenced significantly if we know how to use and transmit political knowledge and political information. We shall strengthen political cognition in terms of political socialization of university students.

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