

Research on the Change of Family Planning Policy in China Based on the Theory of Multiple Streams

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Abstract: As a basic national policy of China, the family planning policy implemented in 1970s has made great contributions to the suppression of the rapid growth of population and promote the rapid development of the social economy. But with the increase of China's comprehensive national strength, the social structure of the population changes and citizen consciousness enhancement, the traditional family planning policy is not suitable for China's national conditions, and even brought some serious social problems. By the end of 2015, the state introduced the universal two-child policy, it's a substantial change in the traditional family planning policy. Researching on the policy change of family planning by the theory of multiple streams, to sort out the problem stream, policy stream and political stream, discovered the serious social problems brought by the traditional family planning policy, NPC deputies and experts' suggestions, citizens' strong emotions and the change of the ruling party's idea are the important forces to contribute to the change of family planning policy. The convergence of this three streams reached the changes of the family planning policy.

Keywords: Multiple Streams Theory, Family Planning Policy, Policy Changes

INTRODUCTION

China's family planning is a policy led by the Chinese Communist Party and the State to achieve the national prosperity and development, it is a macro control system of population [1]. In order to control the rapid growth of population, China began to implement the family planning policy in 1970s, and it is a basic national policy. Over the past thirty years, China's family planning policy has carried out different levels of reform in different stages. To a certain extent, this policy has inhibited the rapid growth of China's population and made great contributions to the development of the social economy, but at the same time, it also brought a series of negative effects, such as the trend of aging, the loss of family and other social problems. In December 2015, the CPC Central Committee decided to relax the existing family planning policy and implement the universal two-child policy, that means the state advocates each couple have two children, this is a substantial change of China's family planning policy [2].

At present, the academic circles have formed several influential theories of policy change, such as advocacy coalition theory, multiple streams theory and punctuated equilibrium theory. Multiple streams theory advocates to analyze the problem stream, policy stream and political stream, throw the opening of policy windows to promote the convergence of the three streams, so as to promote the policy change. It is a new

perspective of policy analysis and has great significance for us to understand the policy changes.

Throughout the process of China's family planning policy, the implementation of the universal two-child policy has profound significance and it has great theoretical and practical value to make a deep analysis of the changes of the family planning policy. How can the reform of family planning policy enter into the vision of policy makers? How different groups have played a role in promoting policy changes? What are the effects of different factors on policy change? This paper will be based on the multiple streams theory, analysis the problem stream, policy stream and political stream in policy change, so as to understand the history of the development of family planning in China and discuss the reasons and motivation in the change of family planning policy.

THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS OF CHINA'S FAMILY PLANNING POLICY

Since the reform and opening up, the family planning policy, as a basic national policy, has played an important role in promoting economic development and social progress. For more than thirty years, the family planning policy has been adjusted to different degrees with the different stages of social development. China's family planning policy is mainly formed and improved in the years between the beginning of reform and opening up. March 1978, adopted at the first session of the Fifth National People's Congress, the

fifty-third article of the constitution of the people's Republic of China stipulates that the State shall promote and carry out family planning, this is the first time that family planning is loaded in the form of law, In October, China put forward one couple give birth to one child at best, up to two and the spacing should more than three years' requirements. In June 1979, the government work report for the first time put forward: "to work out the feasible way to reward couples having only one child"; In September 1980, the CPC Central Committee issued "on the control of population growth caused by all the Communist Youth League of the open letter", advocating a couple having only one child; In February 1982, China put forward the requirement of a couple having only one child, accord with certain conditions of couple can bear the second children, but no matter what kind of situation can not have three children [3].

Entered in 90s, the party and the state continue to attach great importance to the development of family planning work, continue to strictly implement the policy of family planning [4]. Beginning in 1991, during the annual National People's Congress held a symposium of family planning work, established a responsibility system for family planning cadres across the country, and strictly implement the basic state policy of family planning [5].

In 2012, after the "Population and Family Planning Law" was promulgated, all over the country according to laws and regulations on family planning policy has been fine-tuning, but still maintains the basic policy of the only child. In November 2013, the third plenary session of the eighteenth made it clear that adhere to the basic state policy of family planning, to start the implementation of the one of the couple is the one-child can have two children, gradually adjust and improve fertility policies to promote long-term balanced population development. In December 2015, China transformed the family planning policy into the universal two-child policy.

THE THEORY OF MULTIPLE STREAMS OVERVIEW

"Agenda, Options and Public Policy", a book published by Kingdon in 1984 first proposed the theory of multiple streams. The theory attempts to explain why certain issues in the agenda draw the attention of policy makers, while others have been neglected [6]. The multiple streams theory describes the process of the policy agenda in the complex and ambiguous conditions and thinks completely rational analysis method can not be used to understand the reality of policy decisions. It also answers the three key questions of the policy agenda setting: The attention of policy makers is how to allocate? The specific question is how to form? How

and where did the finding and solution of the problem be carried out [7].

The multiple streams theory is proposed for the whole policy setting and program selection system, including the problem stream, policy stream and political stream. The problem stream is mainly refer to the problems that government needs to solve in the society. Kingdon thought the social environment "floating" various social problems, these problems can get the attention of decision makers and rising into the policy agenda, depending on the evaluation of existence and the importance of a series of indexes (such as budget situation, mortality, morbidity, cost of policy projects, etc.), focus events that are able to bring a topic to a prominent position on the policy agenda (such as the collapse of the bridge, the crash, the railway company bankruptcy and other crises and disasters), and the feedback information on current project operation [8]. Policy stream refers to the various parties put forward policy recommendations and policy program, policy entrepreneurs through depth analysis of the problems existing in the society, analysis the problems' origins, consequences and solutions, then put forward corresponding policy recommendations to the government, so as to enter the policy agenda smoothly. Political stream is independent of the problem stream and policy stream, it includes the national mood, the public opinion, the power distribution pattern, the interests of the group and other factors [9].

Problem stream, policy stream and political stream are three separate streams. At a critical point in time, the policy window will be open when these three streams converge, and at that time the problem will be put on the agenda. The opening of policy window depends on the urgency of the problem stream or the key events in the policy stream. The opening time of the policy window is not long, which requires policy entrepreneurs to seize the opportunity to open the policy window, to make efforts to solve the problem and promote their own policy recommendations to enter the policy agenda.

Through the multiple streams theory can be seen, not all of the social issues and policy recommendations can enter the policy agenda, it needs the coupling of problem stream, policy stream and political stream. Kingdon's multiple streams theory received wide attention and discussion in academia, it is applied in the study of sociology, political science, psychology and other disciplines, it provides a new perspective for the analysis of the current policy making and policy changes in China.

RESEARCH ON THE CHANGE OF CHINA'S FAMILY PLANNING POLICY UNDER THE THEORY OF MULTIPLE STREAMS THEORY

According to Kingdon's theory, the policy system is influenced by the problem stream, policy stream and political stream, and it's the best time to enter policy agenda when these three streams converged. China's family planning policy from the traditional strict "one child" into the "universal two-child", what's the reason for the change? Based on the above problem, using multiple streams theory to analyze the transformation of China's family planning policy.

(1) Problem stream

As mentioned earlier, a problem has been noted by policy entrepreneurs, and finally rose to the level of the policy agenda depends on the serious problems arising in society. On China's family planning policy, different regions, different groups of fertility policy slightly different, there are also certain deviation in the implementation process. Also with the improvement of China's economic and social development and people's living standards, the family planning policy in a certain extent is not suitable for the situation of China, even some social problems have been produced, which hinders the healthy development of China's social economy.

First, China's population age structure imbalance, the traditional one child policy has not adapted to China's current population situation. Now China's aging problem is serious, the 2000 census data show that China has begun to enter the old age society. China's economic development level is still in the lower level of the world, the degree of aging has entered the ranks of the developed countries, showing the "not rich first old" characteristics. Starting in 2000, China will enter a serious stage of aging; In 2050, China will enter the ranks of the super aging countries, and China's family planning policy is a shortage of young people, it's the direct cause of the elderly population surplus [10].

Secondly, China's population sex ratio imbalance. In China, the "patriarchal" thought has influenced some families especially the rural family's fertility concept, China's traditional family planning policy led to some female fetuses were aborted, the ratio of male to female is much higher than that of normal newborn, which leads to the imbalance of sex structure in China. National Bureau of statistics' population sampling survey data show that China since 2003, the sex ratio of men and women aged 0-19 has been maintained at more than 107, especially newborn sex ratio will remain at around 120, far higher than the 102-107 international standards. More demographers pointed out that actually since 1980, China's birth sex ratio started high and continue to rise, since the beginning of 1985, basically

maintained at more than 110 [11]. Too many men will lead to no marriage partners, family instability and a series of social problems, China need to adjust the traditional family planning policy.

Again, China's population policy objectives change. In the seventies and eighties of the 20th century, China's population growth ratio is too large, in the "population explosion" era, the main goal of the population policy in that time is to control population, advocate "late marriage, late childbearing, fewer and eugenics", and the most important is the "fewer". In recent years, with the enhancement of overall national strength, China needs a lot of people to support the modernization. The 18th CPC national congress report also pointed out that to improve the quality of China's birth population, and promote long-term balanced population development. This shift in population policy goals also means that the traditional family planning policy is no longer suitable for China's current social and economic development, it needs to be adjusted.

Finally, the one-child family is facing increasingly serious risks. In recent years, "lost child families" have become the focus of social attention, once their children due to force majeure or accidental death, it will bring a heavy blow to the family and will cause no one to support their parents when they are old. Under the condition of China's pension system is not yet perfect, the old people who don't have children will bring great burden to society.

(2) Policy stream

In the multiple stream framework model, the opinions "floating" around the "policy of the original soup" are generated in the policy community--A network contains bureaucracy, members of the congressional committee, academics and think tanks researchers, they focus on a common policy area [8]. For China's family planning policy, policy community members including NPC representatives, academics and the CPPCC members, they put forward reasonable policy recommendations based on the social reality of the situation, and these recommendations will be referred to the program under discussion, so that participants can reach a consensus.

In recent years, more and more experts and scholars, the NPC deputies and CPPCC members called for the relaxation of the original family planning policy. Ye Tingfang and other 28 members of the CPPCC jointly submitted a proposal to stop the implementation of the one-child policy as soon as possible. In the second half of 2013, China put forward the implementation of the "selective two-child policy", Lai Yongming, the member of National People's Congress

believes that the country should take a greater pace of reform of family planning [12].

In addition to the members of National People's Congress and the CPPCC, there are many experts and scholars put forward the policy recommendations to ease the family planning policy. Mu Guangzong, a professor at Peking University believes that open two-child policy could reduce the "risk families" generation and alleviate the youth labor shortage, aging and other serious problems caused by the family planning policy [13].

(3) Political stream

In the multiple stream framework model, the political stream include the national mood, the interests competition between the pressure groups, the change of the Congress's ideology, and the change of the government. The strong national mood and the change of the ruling party's idea constitute the political stream of the change of China's family planning policy.

Network information enhances the citizen's democratic consciousness and broaden the emotional expression channels, the family planning policy has been criticized by more and more public, experts and scholars for many years. At the same time, some areas exist violence enforcement, triggered a strong dissatisfaction of the public, when the citizen's discontent develops to a certain degree, it will attract the government's attention.

At the same time, China's ruling party has continuously deepened the implementation of the "people-oriented" policy, the 17th CPC National Congress proposed the people-centered scientific concept of development, the 18th CPC National Congress raise human rights should be effectively respected and protected. These ideas will let the government listen to the public and scholars in a greater degree, safeguard the people's legitimate rights and interests, satisfy people's reasonable demands, which in a certain extent promoted the reform of China's family planning policy.

(4) The three streams coupling

The problem stream, policy stream and political stream is accumulating, when the policy window opens, the three streams will meet and complete the setup process of policy agenda.

The multiple streams theory suggests that the policy changes should be opened by the policy window, which is mainly decided by the events in the problem stream and political stream. China's family planning policy brings certain negative effect to the society, especially the recent conflicts between the public and

the government caused by the violent law enforcement has made the government become more and more aware of the problems caused by the family planning policy, for example a seven months pregnant women in Shanxi province were forced labor. At the same time public policy to relax the birth is increasing and the Third Plenary Session of the 18th CPC Central Committee is being held, which give an opportunity to the coupling of the problem stream, policy stream and political stream, then the policy window opened.

The opening of policy window is short, policy entrepreneurs need to seize the opportunity to put forward policy recommendations. Policy entrepreneur is a person who changes the existing public resource allocation by the organization and the use of the collective power [14]. In terms of family planning policy, NPC deputies, CPPCC representatives, experts and the public at different times, on different occasions through proposal, academic works and petitions to express their opinions of relaxing the one-child policy, which formed pressure on the government to solve the problem, to promote the government to make adjustments to the original family planning policy.

Finally, in December 17, 2015, the Twelfth National People's Congress adopted the decision on Amending the population and family planning law of the people's Republic of China, decide to implement the universal two-child policy, advocate a pair of couple to have two children. This is a significant change in the traditional family planning policy implemented in China for several decades.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Multiple streams theory, which is a new policy analysis theory originated from foreign countries, is still being perfected and developed. This theory need make corresponding changes in the application for Chinese policy analysis process. Multiple streams theory provides a fresh perspective to examine the transformation process of public policy, and it will be able to obtain a new path of interpretation.

As a basic national policy, one-child policy has been implemented for several decades. However, with the promotion of Chinese comprehensive national strength and the enhancement of public awareness of democracy, coupled with the change of social reality, the traditional one-child policy is no longer suitable for Chinese development. Multiple streams theory is used to analyze the changes of Chinese one-child policy. The problem stream, policy stream and political stream, which used to change one-child policy, is discovered including four main aspects. First aspect, social problems caused by traditional one-child policy. Second aspect, suggestions come from the National People's

Congress members and experts. Third aspect, Strong national mood. The Last aspect is the continuous development of people-oriented scientific development. These factors have contributed to the policy changes of one-child policy in China. A universal two-child policy is begun to implement. However, whether the new policy will be able to adapt to the development of Chinese society, whether to bring the desired results also need to wait for the test of time. At the same time, it is the problem that needs to be solved in the research of public policy in China.

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