

Study on the Effect and Gender Difference of Social Capital on Political Participation of Woman Significant Talents: Evidence from the 3rd Survey on the Status of Chinese Women

Hongmei Huo*

Party School of Liaoning Provincial Party Committee, Shenyang 110004, Liaoning, China

*Corresponding Author.

Abstract:

With the data from the third Survey on the Social Status of Chinese Women, the situation of woman significant talents' social capital and political participation was discussed, and a multiple regression model was introduced to analysis how a woman significant talent's social capital influenced her political participation decisions. It was found that the factors including gender, age had positive influence on political participation within the social-political system; among factors from social capital, factors including the resource allocation factor, strong connection, the horizontal network factor also had positive influence on political participation within the system. According to woman samples, it was found that resource allocation factor and horizontal network factor exert positive influence on political participation within the social-political system, while strong connection factor had negative influence. It was also found that the weak connection factor had significant positive influence on political participation out of the system, and the horizontal network factor had significant negative influence on political participation out of the system.

Keywords: *Woman significant talent, social capital, Political participation*

I INTRODUCTION

Political participation behavior refers to the political behavior that citizens participate in national political life and social public affairs through various legal ways. The degree of woman political participation is an important index to measure the level of civilization of a country or region and the development level of democracy. As for the definition of "woman political participation", it was summarized from the view of objective behavior that woman political participation referred to the activity that woman citizens attempted to influence and promote the decision-making process in political system [1]. Woman political participation was divided into broad and narrow domains by some scholars. The former one referred to the woman group's participation in national political life and social public affairs (such as the implementation of right to vote and expression of political opinions through speech); the latter

one referred to the phenomenon that women get access to organs of authority, occupy the leading positions, master and execute political rights and participate in management and decision-making of public affairs, that was, women in power [2].

According to relevant researches conducted by the UN, the representatives for any group in the decision-making layer couldn't exert real influence on public policy, or express and protect the benefit of the group until they occupied over 30% of the decision-making layer. However, the Chinese woman political participation level was still far away from the necessary level of "30%". It was reported in the World Gender Equality Report released by the World Economic Forum in 2013 that the political discourse power of Chinese women ranked the 59th in 136 countries all over the world, and the woman political participation degree didn't reach the average level of G20 countries. Thus, improvement on woman political participation degree was becoming an important part in realizing "the basic state policy of equality of men and women, and women's participation in politics is one of the significant topics that domestic scholars focus on. As to women's participation in politics, domestic relevant researches were mainly listed below: researches on the comprehensive study of women's participation in politics [1], influencing factors of women's participation in politics [3], the historical analysis on women's participation in politics [4], international contrast study [5], rural women's participation in politics⁴, and researches on consciousness and behavior of professional women's participation in politics [6]. However, there are few researches on woman significant talents' participation in politics, and no existing researches mainly focusing on the situations of women in leading positions (entering politics/being in power) with fewer researches on woman citizens' participation in politics.

The social capital was believed as an important part of the mechanism influencing political participation [6-8]. An actor in a certain social relationship network or social structure could acquire various political and economic information and resources through this kind of network to improve his/her social and economic status. It was believed that social network had positive effect on people's political participation [9]. And daily contact with friends had a significant influence on actor's political attitude [9]. It also suggested that social capital can not only provide physical and emotional support for actors, but also promote the coordinate cooperation of members in a group, and the more social capital stock an actor had, the more social public affairs the actor was inclined to participate in [10]. It was discovered that social capital had a significant influence on actors' participation in volunteer associations to support democracy [11]. It was in Hu Rong's research that each factor of social capital had a significant positive influence on domestic urban citizens' political participation [12]. According to Zheng Shuhui's research, the more frequency citizens participated in horizontal social groups, the more political participation they made [13]. Luo Aiwu's research on the voting behavior of Chinese rural citizens in grass root elections discovered that social activity network had significant positive effect on rural citizens' voting decisions [14]. The empirical research conducted by Luo Jie with data from "Investigation on Social Network and Job-hunting Experience of Eight Cities in China" (JSNET2009) suggested that social capital had positive influence on citizens' political participation [15]

There were lots of researches on social capital and citizens' political participation by scholars interior and abroad, but little attention was paid to the group of high-end woman talents. What influence should social capital have on high-end woman talents' political participation? This was the very problem this paper wanted to discuss in-depth.

II METHOD

2.1 Data source

In 2010, the third Survey on the Social Status of Chinese Women was conducted in the country, and the data on political participation was included. The data set in the paper originated from the provincial independent sample of Liaoning Province in the survey, and a questionnaires method was used in order to collect the raw materials.

2.2 Descriptive statistics

There were 174 valid samples, including 99 men (56.9%) and 75 women (43.1%). As shown in TABLE I, it could be indicated that from the age view, there were not too many people less than 30 years old, and only 1.6% women subjects were "post-80s". The ages of most high-end talents being surveyed were from 30 to 35 years old. There were 30.4% men and 29.8% women are "post-70s", whose ages were from 31 to 40 years old; there were 43.5% men and 39.2% women are "post-60s", whose ages are from 41 to 50 years old; 26.1% men and 29.4% women were "post-50s", whose ages were over 51 years old. From the view of education background, there were 93.6% men and 93.7% women whose education background was higher than bachelor's degree; postgraduates separately occupied the proportions of 33.9% (man) and 46.9%(woman). From the view of talent type, 32.3% (man) and 34.4% (woman) of the samples were the Party and government administrator; 35.5% man and 34.4% woman of the samples were professionals and technical; 32.3% man and 31.3% woman of the samples were business administrator.

TABLE I The Distribution of the Talents' Age, Education, Political Status, and Talent Type

--	--	PERCENTAGE(%)	
		Man(n=99)	Woman(n=75)
Age	less than 30 years old	0	1.6
	31-40 years old	30.4	29.8
	41-50 years old	43.5	39.2
	51-55 years old	18.1	16.7
	over 55 years old	8	12.7
Education	Technical secondary school	3.2	.0
	Junior college	3.2	6.3
	University	59.7	46.9
	Graduate college	33.9	46.9

Political Status	The masses	17.7	18.8
	League member	0	3.1
	Communist	80.6	68.8
	Democratic party member	1.6	9.4
Talent Type	Party and government administrator	32.3	34.4
	Professionals and technical	35.5	34.4
	Business administrator	32.3	31.3

Data resources: the 3rd Survey on the Status of Chinese Women.

III VARIABLES FOR REGRESSION ANALYSIS

3.1 Dependent variable

The dependent variables were used to investigate political participation situations of high-end talents, and following indexes of the questionnaires were used: “administrative positions”, “whether report situations/put forward policy suggestions to relevant government departments through various approaches”, “whether put forward suggestions and report situations to the units, communities or government departments”, and “whether comment on national affairs or social events on the Internet” (the index, “whether serve(d) as members of National People’s Congress or members of Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference”, was not listed in the investigation because there were few people who once served or now serve as members of National People’s Congress or members of Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference).

3.2 Independent variable

The social capital situations of high-end talents were investigated by the independent variable. There were 14 detailed indexes including: whether proactively contact or visit relational network members including leaders, colleagues, clients/cooperative partners; the situation of the enterprises of each level and government leaders that the subjective visit around the Spring Festivals; whether be able to acquire help from enterprises of each level and government leaders while in need; parents’ education background, organizational participation and so on. Through factor analysis, dimensional reduction will be conducted on the 14 indexes above in this paper. According to principal component method, SPSS is applied to conduct factor analysis on the 14 measurement indexes. After rotating with varimax method, five factors were acquired. In accordance with connotation of each factor, they were separately named as network construction, resource allocation, weak connection, strong connection and horizontal network factor.

The calculating process of factor analysis method was omitted.

3.3 Control variable

The variable of individual characteristics of high-end talents is investigated by the control variable, including gender, age, education degree, and political status.

IV RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Model implement

The multiple regression model was introduced to investigate the influence of social capital variables on high-end talents' political participation, and the gender differences was analyzed by the model, too.

4.2 Result analysis

4.2.1 Influence of Social Capital on Political Participation within the Social-political System

The Model I in the Table 2 was the result of regression analysis about the influence of social capital on significant talents' political participation within the social-political system, for both man and woman. Generally, the gender ($P < 0.01$) and age ($P < 0.01$) which were individual characteristics variables, had positive influence on political participation within the system; in social capital, the resource allocation factor ($P < 0.01$), strong connection factor ($P < 0.05$), the horizontal network factor ($P < 0.05$) also had positive influence on political participation within the system. It illustrated that the situation of women's political participation was better than that of men, which was consistent with the description of samples above.

TABLE II Regression Analysis on Influence of Social Capital on High-End Talents' Political Participation

Variables	MODE I		MODEL II		MODEL III	
	B	BETA	B	BETA	B	BETA
<i>Constants</i>	-2.838***		-1.435* *		-.237**	
Sex ^a	.336**	.169			.136	.068
Age	.024**	.194	.008	.074	-.009	-.073
Education	.142	.091	.125	.076	.075	.048
Political Status ^b	.111	.044	.170	.071	-.058	-.023
Network Construction	.015	.015	.115	.113	.060	.060
Resource	.217**	.217	.300**	.283	.010	.010

Allocation						
Weak Connection	.044	.044	.164	.167	.190**	.190
Strong Connection	.148*	.148	-.194*	-.205	-.061	-.061
Horizontal Network	.161*	.161	-.212*	-.214	-.064*	-.064
Adjusted R-Squared	.194		.161		-.12	
F	4.341		2.728		.808	
Sig.	.000		.017		.008	

Note:*p < 0.05,**p < 0.01,***p < 0.001. a: category reference was man; b: category reference was communist.

Age had significant positive influence on political participation within the social-political system, which could be interpreted that the older an actor was, the longer the time he/she would use to construct individual relational network; the richer the accumulation of individual capital was, the stronger the motivation for political participation was.

In social capital, the higher the score of network resource allocation factor was, the more help from leaders of different levels an actor could get; the more social capital that an actor could assemble, the more opportunity for him/her to contact government officials, and the more opportunity to enter politics. The strong connection factor in social capital mainly related to the education degree of informants' parents. The higher the education degree was, the stronger the consciousness of political participation was; meanwhile, parents' attitudes towards political participation also influenced their children's political participation degree. The horizontal network factor revealed the informants' participation degree to different organizations/associations. It was demonstrated by existing researches that participating in horizontal association activities could help an actor to enhance the awareness of his/her own political benefit and develop sense of responsibility.

The Model II in the TABLE II was the result of regression analysis about the influence of social capital on significant talents' political participation within the social-political system, for woman only. According to woman samples, the individual characteristics variables such as age, education degree and political status didn't pass the statistical examinations; however, statistical examinations on resource allocation factor (P<0.01), strong connection factor (P<0.05) and horizontal network factor (P<0.05) passed the statistical examinations. Resource allocation factor and horizontal network factor had positive influence on political participation within the social-political system while strong connection factor had negative influence, which was inconsistent with the examination result of the overall sample. On one hand, the inconsistency may be the result of the sample volume. On the other hand, the higher the education degree of high-end women talents' parents had, the little the opportunity that talents took administrative positions,

which could be explained that their parents were at certain economic or social status so as not to encourage their daughter to enter politics with more risks and working pressure.

4.2.2 Influence of Social Capital on Political Participation out of the System

The Model III in the Table 2 was the result of regression analysis about the influence of social capital on significant talents' political participation out of the social-political system, for both man and woman. The weak connection factor ($P < 0.01$) in social capital had significant positive influence on political participation out of the system. Weak connection referred to the relation network providing heterogeneous resources to the informants but not close to him/her. In this paper, relation network of the people owning administrative positions or significant titles, and being visited during the Spring Festivals were named as "weak connection", it was a measure of the range an individual relational network could cover, that was, network width. The larger the network width was, the more resources and information that an actor could get. The higher the individual political quality was, the easier the actor expressed political opinions on the Internet.

The horizontal network factor in social capital ($P < 0.05$) had significant negative influence on political participation out of the system. Because people with higher organizational participation degree usually spent less time on the Internet and hoped to deal with people in the reality, people with higher scores in horizontal network factor usually had lower degree of political participation through Internet or channels out of the system.

However, in Model III, the gender variables didn't pass the statistical examination. So there is no regression analysis on woman samples separately.

V. CONCLUSION

With the multiple regression models, the mechanism of high-end women talents' social capital on political participation was analyzed in this paper. According to research results, generally, individual characteristics variables such as gender and age had positive effect on political participation within the social-political system; social capital factor, such as resource allocation factor, strong connection factor, and horizontal network factor had positive influence on political participation within the social-political system. From the view of woman samples, resource allocation factor and horizontal network factor had significant positive influence on high-end women talents' political participation within the system; strong connection factor had negative influence. Weak connection factor and horizontal network factor in social capital separately had positive and negative influences on high-end women talents' political participation out of the social-political system.

As mentioned above, for high-end women talents, expanding the scale of relational network and volume, and enhancing the degree of social participation and organizational participation could effectively improve the level of political participation. Firstly, actions of gender cooperative

organizations and the women federation should be encouraged to improve the organized degree of high-end women talents; secondly, high-end women talents' focus on accumulation and development of social capital should be guided, so as to establish better social communication culture, gradually to expand the social network scale, and to strengthen "weak connection" in order to improve the social capital stock and the willingness and ability to political participation; thirdly, with reference to foreign experience of "quota system", it is regulated by the law that the woman political participation proportion must not be less than 30%, which can be regarded as one of the most urgent schemes to improve the current political participation level of Chinese women.

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