

Research on the Optimization Path of Public Participation in Grassroots Social Safety Governance — Taking Hangzhou’s “Million Volunteers Police” as an Example

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Abstract: Strengthening public participation in grassroots social safety governance is an important means to improve the social governance system and enhance the capability of social governance. To further optimize the path of public participation in grassroots social safety governance, this paper takes the current situation of public participation in Hangzhou’s “Million Volunteers Police” as a starting point, identifies the restrictive issues such as the incomplete main body factors, insufficient cultural factors, imperfect system factors, inappropriate resource allocation factors, and not in-depth strategic factors, and puts forward countermeasures and suggestions for training governance subjects, constructing governance systems, and deeply cultivating governance culture, in order to improve the efficiency of public participation in grassroots social safety governance.

Keywords: Public Participation; Social Safety Governance; Optimization Path

Public participation refers to the totality of actions by social organizations and the public themselves, excluding the government, in influencing decisions and laws through various means and methods in the government decision-making and legislative process. At present, the level of public participation in China is divided into three levels: The first level is at the decision-making and legislative level, mainly reflected in the participation in legislative hearings at the municipal and above levels of the People’s Congress organs. The second level is at the administrative level, conducting centralized discussions and consultations. The third level is in grassroots governance, represented by grassroots autonomy and rural autonomy.

Volunteer police generally take on the role of maintaining social order and security in public places such as grassroots communities (villages), schools, property communities, and factory enterprises in a voluntary and unpaid form. Under the leadership of local public security organs, they provide necessary assistance work according to the needs of the jurisdiction’s security management, including protecting the lives and property of citizens, maintaining social order, conducting legal knowledge propaganda, assisting public security organs in handling some routine affairs, conducting conflict dispute investigation and resolution work, and promptly reporting illegal and criminal activities to public security organs, which helps to improve the work efficiency of the police.

In the current social security prevention and control practice of public participation, the mechanism of public participation is either missing or imperfect, resulting in the current situation of low efficiency of public participation in grassroots social safety governance in China. This paper takes the current situation of public participation in Hangzhou’s “Million Volunteers Police” as a starting point, based on in-depth interviews and data analysis of questionnaire surveys, and concludes that the current grassroots social safety governance model of Hangzhou’s “Million Volunteers Police” has problems such as incomplete main body factors, insufficient cultural factors, imperfect system factors, inappropriate resource allocation factors, and not in-depth strategic factors. In order to further improve the mechanism of Hangzhou’s “Million Volunteers Police” participating in grassroots social safety governance and enhance the efficiency of public participation, the following measures for improvement are proposed:

1. Cultivate Governance Subjects

1.1 Expand the scope of participating subjects.

The “Million Volunteers Police” in Hangzhou can introduce more experts and professionals from various fields, such as law, psychological counseling, emergency rescue, etc., to improve the professional level of the “Million Volunteers Police” team. Strengthen cooperation

with universities and research institutions to attract more talents and scholars to participate in community safety construction, inject new vitality into the “Million Volunteers Police” model, and encourage enterprises and merchants to join, forming a diversified and socialized participation pattern.

1.2 Improve the Quality of Participating Subjects.

Through enhanced training and education, improve the professional literacy and comprehensive ability of the participating subjects of Hangzhou’s “Million Volunteers Police”. The training content can include laws and regulations, safety prevention knowledge, emergency handling skills, etc., strengthen the linkage and collaboration with health, fire, emergency and other departments, and jointly carry out practical exercises and training activities to enhance the practical ability of participating subjects.

1.3 Optimize the Participation Mechanism.

Establish and improve the participation mechanism, clarify the responsibilities and rights of the participating subjects of Hangzhou’s “Million Volunteers Police”, ensure that they can play their roles effectively, and encourage participating subjects to carry out independent innovation and exploration practice, forming a unique volunteer police work model.

2. Construct Governance Systems

2.1 Further establish a relationship of equal dialogue among multiple subjects. Effective dialogue between governance subjects and objects helps to prevent highly organized interest groups from being shaped into long-term representatives and holding the right to speak in negotiations, allowing the dispersed interests of the grassroots masses and mobile populations to be included in the negotiation agenda. In the practice of negotiation, it is specifically manifested in various forms such as negotiation proposals, meetings, discussions, and demonstrations. The richness and flexibility of the negotiation methods can expand the choice space of the negotiation subjects, and the matching of the negotiation methods with the types of issues also affects the efficiency and process of the negotiation.

2.2 Continuously expand the ways of public participation.

Innovate the government’s governance methods and strive to build platforms for public participation. By constructing a diversified negotiation mechanism and institutionalized participation mechanism, it can effectively reverse the current situation of single participation methods and scarce channels of Hangzhou’s “Million Volunteers Police” in grassroots social safety governance, and help the volunteer police to participate more widely and deeply in grassroots social governance. Firstly, strengthen the construction of grassroots social organizations, relying on grassroots multi-level, multi-angle, and personalized attention to the needs of the public, and cultivate and develop various social organizations with service, public welfare, and mutual aid as the core. Enable the social public to better integrate into fields such as social governance, service innovation, and livelihood security. Secondly, innovate the way of cooperation, absorb social support institutions and enterprises, through institutionalized methods such as joint meetings, public opinion discussions, and mutual consultations, while the leaders of the party branches of the organs serve as part-time members of the grassroots party organizations, and implement point-to-point pairing, widely listen to public opinion, gather the wisdom of the masses, from discovering problems, rapid response, classification and summary, to form a closed loop for solving problems, comprehensively solve public needs, and achieve a synergistic governance model of complementary advantages and resource sharing.

3. Deeply Cultivate Governance Culture

3.1 Pay attention to the consolidation of citizens’ participation awareness.

At present, the proportion of high school and college education in the volunteer police team participating in grassroots social governance in Hangzhou is relatively large, and the age is relatively old, so it is necessary to strengthen the guidance and consolidation of the volunteer police’s participation in grassroots social governance. Vigorously strengthen public education and publicity efforts, give full play to the guiding role of newspapers, WeChat, Weibo, and TikTok, etc., actively create an atmosphere of “the people’s city is built by the people, and

the people's city is for the people" in the whole society, cultivate the sense of ownership of the volunteer police in participating in grassroots social safety governance, and improve the ability of the volunteer police to actively participate. At the same time, publicize the advanced deeds and typical experiences of the participating subjects, set examples and benchmarks, motivate more people to join the "Million Volunteers Police" team, strengthen cooperation with the media, and expand the social influence of the "Million Volunteers Police" team through news reports, special reports, and other means.

3.2 Carry out multi-dimensional volunteer police capacity training.

Establish a platform for exchange and learning, providing volunteer police with learning channels for knowledge about participating in grassroots social governance in Hangzhou, such as content, form, procedures, and rules, to improve the degree and ability of volunteer police participation. Carry out backbone instructor training, relying on the current command structure of the volunteer police team, the grassroots public security bureau should be responsible for the regular training by the backbone instructor team, especially for skills such as anti-fraud propaganda, anti-theft and fraud propaganda, and safety prevention and control. After the backbone instructors complete the training, according to the construction of the volunteer police team in the jurisdiction, relying on the backbone instructor team, through organizing collective teaching, sending education to the door, pre-job training, online self-study and other methods, to carry out pre-job training for all volunteer police teams.

4. Matching Governance Strategies

4.1 Improve the incentive mechanism for public participation.

Providing appropriate incentives for the active involvement of volunteer police in grassroots social governance will encourage them to continue such behavior. At present, the assessment mechanism for volunteer police activities is not well-developed, offering only a small amount of bonus or recognition for a few outstanding volunteers, without a suitable assessment and reward system, resulting in a lack of enthusiasm and motivation among most volunteer police. Survey results show that appropriate reward measures can stimulate their enthusiasm for participating in grassroots social governance. Therefore, it is necessary to further explore and improve the incentive guarantee mechanism, focusing on the different needs of different groups of volunteer police, and develop attractive and diversified incentive measures to create a positive atmosphere of "compete, learn, catch up, help, and surpass," making the volunteer police team more dynamic and vital.

4.2 Establish an evaluation mechanism for public participation.

Further improve the public evaluation perspective, taking the satisfaction of the public as the main pillar for continuously optimizing the participation mechanism of Hangzhou's "Million Volunteer Police." Especially in actively understanding and meeting the needs of the public, the Hangzhou municipal government and the Public Security Bureau should enrich and expand the content of the evaluation mechanism, optimize from the perspective of the effectiveness of the "Million Volunteer Police" in participating in grassroots social safety governance, public needs, and opinions and suggestions, and promptly communicate and resolve the demands reflected by the public. It is essential to effectively introduce a third-party expert evaluation system, hold regular seminars and experience exchange meetings, and establish cooperative mechanisms with enterprises to further enhance the enthusiasm and sense of responsibility of volunteer police in participating in grassroots social safety governance.

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