Function of Ideological and Political Education in Mass Incidents

Chao MEN\textsuperscript{1,a,*}

\textsuperscript{1}School of Humanities, Economics and Law, Northwestern Polytechnical University, Xi'an, Shaanxi, China
\textsuperscript{a}mwh8910@163.com
*Corresponding author

Key words: Mass incidents; Ideological and Political Education; Function

Abstract. Mass incidents, a kind of social group events leading to persistent social contradictions and conflicts of interest, are caused by several reasons, such as social structure transformation and social interest pattern readjustment. The frequent occurrence of mass incidents poses a great challenge to national economy development and social stability. Through analysis of its root causes, we can clearly figure out main features of mass incidents, thus having a further understanding of mass incidents. Based on this understanding, this paper applies ideological and political education into mass incidents solution, and depends on its function of social control in resolving mass incidents. This paper points out great significance of ideological and political education in dealing with mass incidents by discussing its preventive, alleviating and counseling function.

1. Preface

Presently, mass incidents happening frequently in China, based on the analysis of social situation, can be defined as, "Events, triggered by contradictions among the people during the transition period of China's primary stage of socialism, are a way for a certain number of people to express their dissatisfaction and safeguard their own interests through means like mob, collective petition, group meditation, and demonstration, which have a significant impact on national security and social stability."[1] "According to identities of participants, objectives, development logic and social consequences, mass incidents can be divided into four types, namely right-defensing events, social disputes, organized crime and social anger discharging events."[2] We urgently need to apply ideological and political education into the disposal of complex mass incidents, and play out its function of social control to regulate social order and personal behavior, thus solving mass incidents properly.

2. Root Causes and Main Features of the Current Mass Incidents

2.1 Root Causes of Mass Incidents

In the transformation period, the conflict of interests between different social groups is the root cause of mass incidents. On the one hand, the rapid development of China's market economy leads to profound change in social structure and stratum, and traditional pattern of resource allocation and interest distribution is broken. Uneven distribution of social resources enlarges the gap of social interest distribution, and the gap between rich and poor, leading to mental imbalance, abnormal behavior, and other social group events. On the other hand, with the differentiation of social groups and benefit distribution, some groups have a tendency to weaken, and the number is expanding. These groups are not only at a disadvantage in economy, but also in politics and culture. When problems can’t be resolved smoothly, a sense of deprivation and discontent easily occurs in such an environment. Once there is a large friction and conflict, it is prone to mass incidents.

Social security lagging behind and social interest disputes are direct reasons for mass incidents. To perfect social security is the cornerstone of the development of market economy. Therefore, in the construction of market economy, five social insurances (medical, pension, unemployment, work
injury, maternity insurance) and a housing fund system must be established. While for some poor areas, social security system has not been established or develops in a low level. Many rural areas are not even covered, and problems in medical care, schooling, old-age care are still very prominent. It is very common that some private sectors arrear workers’ wage and insurance for economic interests, regardless of their insurance system. Besides, specific interest dispute is also a direct fuse event. As the problem of employment is becoming more and more serious, a large number of workers are laid-off, migrant workers become unemployed, and college graduate find it hard to find a proper job. Illegal demolition and confiscation of land demolition are so common, and not-in-place compensation and low compensation standard are also the focus of resentment.

In addition, policy-making mistakes in rural areas and obstacles in expressing the benefit claim also aggravate mass incidents. If different social subjects, in a case of various contradictions, lose their benefits, they often lack emotional catharsis channels for expression mechanism is not sound. One is that low effectiveness and selectivity of China's existing expression channels fail to meet the interests of the masses, and the petition system, reporting system, judicial relief system in some areas are often a mere formality, bring no benefit to the people. Furthermore, law awareness of some people is very weak, and when their interests are damaged, they have no idea what means can be took to express benefit claims. For lack of relevant guidance and timely and effective communication, their sense of resentment easily accumulates to conflicts, and eventually leading to unreasonable mass behaviors.

2.2 Main Features of Mass Incidents

Mass incidents in China, different from other common social phenomena, have their own unique attributes. Accurately summarizing their characteristics is the key to grasp the essence of mass incidents, and also the premise of making scientific prevention and response plan.

The first is the complexity of participation. Causes of mass incidents are profound and complex, with many factors interacting with each other. From the causes of induction, most of mass incidents are caused by interest conflicts among different groups, classes and different interest objectives. From the perspective of the development process, mass incidents have characteristics of multi-level, multi-lateral and multi-stage. From the objective of the actor, complicated individual identities and different cultural qualities lead to different mentality and motivation.

The second is suddenness in the process. The outbreak of mass incidents is often sudden, and the interval is relatively short. When contradictions are intensified to a certain stage, mass incidents are likely to be imminent because of some specific factors. That process is short, sudden, and difficult to quickly control. Mass incidents are often triggered by the accumulation of social conflicts. If conflicts can’t get resolved in a timely manner, it tends to engender psychological discontent and increasingly serious resistance in some people.

The third is the extreme behaviors. As some claims of the masses haven’t get attention and guidance from government departments for a long time, they can’t solve their problems through normal channels. Therefore, the actors have no choice but to take some extreme behaviors to express their emotions, so as to win public comments and attention of government departments. In mass incidents, individual extreme behaviors and emotions can easily be spread, enacted and influence people around, which turns a considerable number of watchers-on into participants, thus promoting the whole group to blind adopt some extreme behavior to express their claims, such as protests, vandalism and violence against law, armed fights and other illegal activities.

The fourth is the interests of the target. The development of China’s modernization and market economy differentiates groups with different interests, and different benefit distribution. When personal interests are hurt, some people will gather people with the same pursuit of interests, and form a common goal to safeguard and realize their own interests by various means. Nowadays, mass incidents, in a certain sense, are caused by conflicts of interests among the masses, making the interest become one main characteristic of mass incidents.
3. Social Control of Ideological and Political Education on Mass Incidents

The function of ideological and political education means, "the ideological and political education plays a positive role in the education and social life."[3] As the nature, characteristics and performance that social mass incidents reflect, ideological and political education needs to play its own social control function to solve social problems and conflicts. Social control function mainly lies in three aspects: social risk control, social order control and individual behavior control.

3.1 Social Risk Control of Ideological and Political Education

Firstly, the ideological and political education can control social risk through coordinating interest conflicts and resolving social contradictions. Since mass incidents rooting from interest conflicts have become the main manifestations of the social contradictions and conflicts, we must strengthen the function of ideological and political education in coordination of interests and resolving social conflicts. The function of coordination and communication enable different social strata and interest groups have a dialogue mechanism for equal expression and democratic communication. Considering common interests of all parties, it may resolve existing interest conflicts. Secondly, the ideological and political education controls social risk through humanistic care, psychological counseling and a good cultural atmosphere. Excessive pursuit of material benefits makes people lose their spiritual life and normal social psychology, hence resulting in the widespread lack of faith and social anxiety. We must rely on ideological and political education to deal with people's psychological problems, guide people to establish the correct values, and meet people's spiritual and cultural needs. Thirdly, ideological and political education can penetrate into the public crisis management, thus preventing and controlling the social risk. "In the process of crisis management, ideological and political education plays the role of information communication, stabilizing the people, psychological intervention, which provides a strong spiritual and psychological support for risk control. After the risk, ideological and political education can be refine spiritual resources and heal the trauma of society and individual through public opinion, moral education, psychological tracking, etc." [4]

3.2 Social Order Control of Ideological and Political Education

Function of ideological and political education on order social control of thought mainly lies in two aspects. First, ideological and political education guides the formation of social order through the constructing and disseminating mainstream ideology. Without the guidance and norms of mainstream ideology, it will be difficult to for a society to pursue spiritual and cultural order from disorder. At present, the socialist core value system constitutes the mainstream ideology of our society. That system takes moral principles and norms into practice through advocating social ethos and behavior, making the society have a stable, healthy and harmonious order. Second, ideological and political education maintains and protects the ideological order through the integration of social consciousness. With a particular world view and methodology, ideological and political education guides the social to think critically about different ideologies especially social thoughts, and exerts the radiating, absorbing, and rendering function of mainstream ideology, so as to form a harmonious picture of social ideology.

3.3 Individual Behavior Control of Ideological and Political Education

"Through reasoning education, inspiring and guiding, ideological and political education encourages the masses to recognize and comply with social value system comprising from moral norms and legal regulations. It turns the passive coercion into active conviction. Ideological and political education helps cultivate sentiments, strengthen wills, and shape sound personalities, thus building a strong character and developing life plans and believes in line with the requirements of society development. By self-education and peer-education, ideological and political education cultivates consciousness of self-discipline and cooperation, and constructs harmonious interpersonal relationship among social members."[5] At the same time, ideological and political education must carry out socialist education of law concept to the masses. The education of socialist concept of law
mainly focuses on four aspects. That is to popularize law knowledge, cultivate law awareness, improve abilities of using law and develop law habits. In short, ideological and political education provides spiritual strength for stimulating the masses to abide by social norms. With moral education, behavior-forming education, and law education, ideological and political education arouses social emotion awareness and individual behaviors and achieves individualization and socialization of social norms, hence achieving its functions of social control.

4. Control of Ideological and Political Education on Mass Incidents

By using the social control of ideological and political education, we can prevent incidents from ideological roots before its happening, adjust the masses' emotion during its happening, and conduct ideological education after its happening, so as to play out the role of ideological and political education on mass incidents.

First of all, to deal with mass incidents must play out the preventive function of ideological and political education. Mass incidents may happen suddenly, which demands us to be well-ready in preventing, ensure the preventing work accurately and effectively, and prevent the occurrence of mass incidents or control them in the bud stage using correct and effective ways. First, we have to strengthen preventing education of the masses through ideological and political education. When the masses meet social conflicts, explain and educate them, lead the public opinion to be positive and healthy, and try to resolve group conflicts and hostility. For the masses having backward thinking and poor economy, educate them and help them solve their problems, so as to achieve social stability. Second, by social control of ideological and political education, a warning mechanism is urgently needed. The outbreak of mass incidents is caused by the accumulation and intensification of conflicts among the masses, which is visible and controllable. "Applying information feedback of ideological and political education and grasping people's ideological activities, we can figure out problems in time, reflect them to the relevant government departments and get rapid feedback. All these work help collect accurate information for establishing early warning mechanism of mass incidents." [6]

Besides, play the alleviating role of ideological and political education in dealing with mass incidents. In the process of dealing with mass incidents, it is more appropriate to adopt flexible and effective communication mode rather than violent repression, but should adopt. Firstly, mass incidents must be quickly controlled after its occurrence, just to prevent the escalation of conflicts. After the outbreak of mass incidents, people's emotions often are restless and extreme, so relevant government departments should timely have dialogues with the actors. Once their negative emotions are outlet, their views are listened, and their questions are answered, those actors will soon calm down. Secondly, its control of social thought order must be used to deal with core conflicts, and comfort the masses' psychological emotion. In mass incidents, the participants tend not only to show anger, anxiety and other extreme emotions, but also have strong resentment and hatred on people who preach ideological and political education. Therefore, the ideological and political education must be based on comforting emotions of the masses. "By strengthening communication between participants, allowing them to vent discontent, we can easily convince them with our sincere and real feelings."[7] It should be taken into notice that for few violent participants with extreme thinking, we need to control and isolate them, in order to achieve overall stabilizing. Thirdly, ideological and political education must combine both the positive and negative aspects through the control of individual behaviors. "Conduct positive education to participants in mass incidents, promote national policies, goal and direction of economic construction, guide them to think from the state and collective angle and use reasonable and legitimate way to solve conflicts in life, thus enabling them consciously realize their mistakes and actively exit from the mass incidents."[8] On the other hand, it is also necessary to conduct negative education. Through cases of mass incidents in the past, we can guide the masses to recognize the negative impact and serious consequences of mass incidents. Criticism and education makes them realize their mistakes, thus changing their original view.
Finally, ideological and political education plays a positive role in mediating mass incidents. On the one hand, by order control for social thoughts, pay a return visit to the masses. After mass incidents for a while, intense emotions of the people involved are often difficult to calm down, and problems in thinking cannot be solved quickly. Therefore, to avoid incidents rebound and maintain social stability, a timely return visit is necessary. We must further strengthen communication with the masses, discover new problems timely, and do targeted preparations. As to government officials in the basic level and violent law enforcement officers, they must take law responsibilities for improper handling of mass incidents and causing widespread dissatisfaction. On the other hand, guidance to public opinions is needed with the aftermath of mass incidents. After mass incidents, a variety of relevant news, comments or rumors, whether true or false, will be widely spread in the society. It will not only affect the mood of the participants once again, but also lead to new unsettle, making some people unknown facts confused the social problem and conflicts. Therefore, relevant departments in local government should actively carry out publicity work. After the incident, the relevant government departments can use the mainstream media, such as press conferences, TV interviews, talk shows to convey the truth to the whole society, actively eliminate distorted remarks in the society, and improve people’s cognitive level.

References


