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*Workplace Participation in Chinese Local Industries**

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Using the World Bank and Chinese Academy of Social Science survey data, this study examines employee participation in management decision making in Chinese local industrial firms. It argues that it is not only important to study why workers should participate but also why they want to participate. Three modes of participation are defined through a factor analysis. These modes are further discussed in light of the Western participation literatures. They are then examined under three sets of conditions: socioeconomic status, institutional constraints, and policy attitudes. The findings suggest that workers' desire for participation is related to the possibility of maximizing individual benefits. They also show that under parallel conditions, workers often make opposite decisions concerning different modes of participation. Finally, in a nondemocratic environment, the impact of socioeconomic development on workplace participation is mixed.

Introduction

Workplace participation is an indispensable component of industrial democracy. It is said to eliminate alienation at work, promote the human aspect of production, and encourage citizen participation in national politics. Various systems of workplace participation have been developed, such as the self-management system in Yugoslavia, the Madrogans in Spain, the kibbutz in Israel, Employee Stock Ownership Program (ESOP) in the United States, Codetermination in Germany, and cooperatives in Britain. However, while advocates of worker participation are busy designing new schemes, few have paid sufficient attention to whether workers want to participate. Further, the concept of workplace participation needs to be treated differentially. It may have different meanings under different circumstances.

This paper deals with workers' desire for workplace participation in Chinese local industries. It will define the concept of workplace participation and show how workers' desire for participation varies under different conditions.

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