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INCREASING GRASS-ROOT GOVERNANCE IN CHINA: A STUDY OF THE VILLAGE-BASED WORK TEAM IN THE TIBETAN AUTONOMOUS REGION

Abstract:

This paper studies how the Chinese government increases its governance through grass-roots interventions within the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR), and what are the policy outcomes. As a reaction to the widespread violent incidents that broke out at the grass-root level in 2008, the TAR government has employed the Village Based Work Team (VBWT) to monitor and maintain social stability since 2010. By sending down work teams composed of government officials to each of the 5451 villages in the TAR, the regional government has never had a stronger control at the grass-root before.

This paper argues that the VBWT is a double-edged sword to the grass-root governance in the TAR. On the one hand, it increases the presence of the regional government and enhances social stability by bringing in massive government officials and funding to the village level; on the other hand, the heavy-handed influence of personnel, and the lack of governmental coordination mechanism seriously undermines the outcome of the policy.

Keywords:

Grass-root governance in China, village-based work team, social stability maintenance, Tibetan Autonomous Region, government and local relationship

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