

Research Article

Improvement Paths of Governments' Governance Models of National Top 100 Counties

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Abstract: In this study, we have a research of the improvement paths of governments' governance models of national top 100 counties. Although governments of the National Top 100 Counties have formed various types of governance models, any model has its limitations and also any governance model itself bears a series of deficiencies or defects. Therefore, under the situation of continuous development of society and economy, etc., it is of great necessity to improve and perfect the governance models accordingly. In the governance test or trial and error process, the governments shall evaluate established or test governance plans, comprehensively analyze the "gains and losses" of some kind of governance plans, summarize and evaluate achievements, problems and deficiencies of the governance model and provide more adequate guidance or groundwork for the future governance exploration.

Keywords: Governance model, improvement, path, top 100 counties

INTRODUCTION

As the new attempt to break restrictions of existing administrative systems, frameworks and administrative processes and customs, the 4 major governance models of the Top 100 Counties' governments, namely cross-regional cooperation governance model, flat governance model, multi-center cooperation governance model and government-led pluralistic participation governance model, are of great significance. On a general survey of their current development degree and level, it can be found that these governance models are still in the process of development or growth. In addition, each type of governance model itself bears a series of limitations or deficiencies; and under this background, it is of vital significance to explore the improvement paths of the governance models of the Top 100 Counties' governments.

Yang (2008) has a research of the 30 years' reform and change of China's local government: a perspective of governance. Chen (2009) has an analysis on function and model of county entrepreneurship economy. Zheng (2008) study the role of local government and its impact on corporate governance. Xu (1993) analyze the several models of current county organization reform. Ma and Guo (2008) have a research of the local government governance models in globalization times. Sha and Sha (2008) study the new visual angle of local governance and transformation of local government role. Ma and Dai (2008) study the local governance models comparison of china and the U. S. Chang (2007) study on Henan provincial administrative division and regional economy development.

This study has a research of the improvement paths of governments' governance models of national top 100 counties. Although governments of the National Top 100 Counties have formed various types of governance models, any model has its limitations and also any governance model itself bears a series of deficiencies or defects. Therefore, under the situation of continuous development of society and economy, etc., it is of great necessity to improve and perfect the governance models accordingly. In the governance test or trial and error process, the governments shall evaluate established or test governance plans, comprehensively analyze the "gains and losses" of some kind of governance plans, summarize and evaluate achievements, problems and deficiencies of the governance model and provide more adequate guidance or groundwork for the future governance exploration.

THOUGHTS OF IMPROVING GOVERNANCE MODELS OF THE TOP 100 COUNTIES' GOVERNMENTS

Obtaining supports from governments of a higher level, especially from the central government: Under the current power system, governments of higher levels can affect the governments of lower ones in a big way and governments of higher levels can support or provide guarantee for governments of lower ones in aspects of power, financial capital, preferential policies, etc. As doers of governance model improvement, the Top 100 Counties' governments should strive for supports from governments of higher levels, including the provincial and central governments; in the case where the reform encounters various obstacles in

institutional, environmental and personnel aspects, etc., the county governments who are promoting governance reform will get Great impetus if governments of higher levels can provide guarantee or protection.

At present, various types of power decentralization or grant-style reform pilot area construction are promoted at central, provincial and even municipal levels; in all types of test areas, economic contents dominate and there're also some pilot areas incorporating political, administrative and social level or field contents in their trail. County governance can take full opportunity of the current rapid development and significant increase of reform pilot areas; for example, in order to obtain supports in multiple levels including policy, fund, power, etc., Top 100 Counties can apply to central and provincial governments for governance model reform & test areas with reform of government governance model as the theme. If some Top 100 County has more experience or relatively, outstanding performance in a particular aspect of reform, it can apply for reform tests of corresponding item, such as regional cooperative governance reforms test, county deliberative democracy test, social governance system reform test, etc.

Mobilizing or utilizing external governance resources to the maximum: Seen from the perspective of various governance models explored by the Top 100 Counties, almost all governance models have considered promoting governance improvement by mobilizing or absorbing external governance resources. In particular is the multi-center governance model which is fully aware of the role of corporations, citizens and social intermediary organizations in improving or promoting governance. In the transformation process of local governance, capital organization, individual citizens, civic organizations become the active elements in local governance apart from the local governments, which increased the local governance subjects, complicated the governance relationship and also caused the change of local governance space. In the improvement of governance models, external governance resources are an important support in implementing governance and the experience, wisdom and other advantages external resources bear will make the exploration of governance models more effective.

Seen from the perspective of current governance development trend, there is another type of external governance resource called technical governance resource, which mainly refers to various networks or information technologies, including e-government affairs, mobile government affairs, network politic affair platform, online examination and approval, network public service platform and so on. With these network

technologies, government governance or service processes can be improved, the efficiency and capability of government governance can be enhanced and more convenient public services can be provided to citizens or corporations. Application of network and information technologies to the government governance is an important direction and path of current government governance reform; county governments in some places even have established an e-government based on network or IT.

Realizing connection with other governance systems, thoughts and methods: In the exploration of Top 100 Counties' governance models, the implementation of some new governance thoughts or strategies will be likely to conflict with the existing systems, regimes and even laws and some counties even become "regime islands". A long period of alienated governance will undoubtedly encounter more obstacles; consequently, the Top 100 Counties' governments need to consider the development direction of the governance model. On one hand, they should strive to reduce the specific contents of the governance model and to eliminate or weaken elements and aspects that conflict with some existing national or regional governance; on the other hand, they should consider magnifying the local governance experience and strive to make it an example or demonstrative area of governance reform in a specific region or even nationwide and a model for other area's reform.

And as for moderate and micro level, the connection of some specific regimes and systems seems much more important. At present, many places have promoted new attempts that are quite different from the traditional centralized and singleton management or governance in various fields or level; although these new governance tests provide new samples or new paradigms of governance, they also result in diversified fragmentation of regimes and systems and the reform or improvement of local government governance needs to "match" or "adapt to" various specific organizations, regimes, systems or measures to create a governance system with synergistic functions.

Promoting the normalization, long-term orientation and diversification of governance models: In the process of exploring governance models, Top 100 Counties' governments will build lots of temporary, experimental systems, strategies or measures and these temporary should be abolished or be conducted as normalization attempts, that is, be turned into standardized systems. Governance forms that have been tested 1time or several times, such as the specific governance exploration of deliberative democracy,

direct elections of township and village leaders, financial direct governance, shall go beyond 1 time or small-scale tests and become system forms for long-term implementation, preventing the governance models of the Top 100 Counties' governments from becoming "short-lived". In addition, in the exploration of county governance models, the governance exploration shall also be promoted at various towns, streets and village levels, which means governance tests in smaller scope shall be allowed and encouraged to make Top 100 Counties the "experimental fields" for new governance models and pluralistic governance shall be employed to promote the enrichment and diversification of governance models.

IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES OF FOUR DIFFERENT TYPES OF GOVERNANCE MODELS METASYNTHESIS

Improvement strategies of cross-regional cooperation governance model:

- **Strengthening the power of the cross-regional coordination organizations:** Under the cross-regional cooperation governance model, various forms and levels of regional cooperation organizations such as deliberation and coordination organizations, consultation organizations, joint conference, regional cooperation forum, regional governance council, etc., will be established and play their roles. However, due to the ineffectiveness of various cooperation organizations' own operation, or the complexity of coordination matters, it's hard for them to play their part, thus it is necessary to build, improve and enrich various consultation organizations and provide more support on fund, personnel, power and resources. Meanwhile, cross-regional cooperation governance organizations who set governance or profit as their goals shall be simplified and weakened, while service organizations and administrative offices of regional cooperation shall be increased and decision-making power of regional cooperation governance and governance rights shall be centralized and clearly defined to avoid turning all kinds of regional cooperation organizations into the "resistance" for regional cooperation. The development of county economy shall be promoted, the cooperation and support among all enterprises and industries in the county economy shall be advocated and enterprise's evolution and transformation during

cooperation and competition shall be completed through the influence of cross-regional coordination organizations and the cooperation of government, industry, academia, research, etc.

- **Strengthening the effectiveness of regional coordination mechanisms or coordination measures:** In the cross-regional cooperation governance model, various cooperation mechanisms will also take shape, for example cooperation governance measures such as cooperation mechanisms for regional transportation planning, coordination mechanisms for regional water environment governance, regional airports, railway stations, service centers, social security platform, information-sharing platform, etc. These cooperation projects need to further exert their influence to realize the sharing and optimal allocation of regional public resources to the maximum extent. Coordination mechanisms or measures built for cross-regional cooperation shall be further implemented and optimized, striving to normalize, institutionalize and scientize various temporary periodical cooperation mechanisms.
- **Central and provincial governments should grant more coordination power to the top 100 counties of cross-regional cooperation governance:** Under the governance model authorized by governments of higher levels, central and provincial governments should make greater efforts to support the Top 100 Counties to conduct broader, more effective cross-regional cooperation governance, for example, they can establish cross-regional cooperation tests areas in the areas where the Top 100 Counties are centralized or where the regional cooperation of the Top 100 Counties is sufficient by using current governance models of reform pilot areas, conduct regional cooperation governance tests on more levels and conduct optimal configuration and top-level design of various regional cooperation governance organizations, mechanisms and measures to avoid the fragmentation of regional cooperation organizations, the overlap of cooperation mechanisms and the invalidation of cooperation measures.
- **Establishing contradiction, problem or dispute mediation or arbitration mechanisms in cross-regional cooperation governance:** The complex competition and cooperation relationship between horizontal governments of the same levels is presented as all kinds of conflicts; however, its essence is still how each government can get more access to limited right resources so as to maximize

their self-interest or utility. In the tests of cross-regional cooperation governance, various problems, conflicts and disputes may come out, which could be triggered by both the defects of cooperation governance mechanisms and the insufficiency and incompleteness of existing cooperation mechanisms. In this case, in order to avoid the situation of "adjudication unachievable" of disputes, it will become necessary to establish reward and punishment mechanisms regarding right or wrong behaviors, acts beyond the norms and behavior entanglements that are participated by multiple subjects, especially a variety of governance subjects and to establish allocation mechanism of partner interests, power, resources and opportunity fairness.

Improvement strategies of flat governance model:

- **Effectively building "vertical-horizontal" relation system during governance:** For the administrative or administration areas among the Top 100 Counties implementing flat governance, the mandatory governance mechanisms of vertical governance or unified governance shall be removed and issues that are suitable for vertical governance or unified governance shall be further distinguished. For those fields in which vertical governance have been implemented, such as finance, food and medication, watershed governance, environmental health, social security, agricultural subsidies, rural public services, etc., the pros and cons of vertical governance shall be analyzed. At the same time, in the process of vertical governance, the horizontal contact mechanisms or measures shall be built to avoid vertical "barrier division or separation". In some places, attempts can be made to strengthen townships' governance functions and decentralize various vertical organizations and personnel to townships for governance. As for the fields or matters that have simply implemented unification and integration governance, it is also necessary to analyze the "all in a muddle" issue that unification and integration governance have brought and to clearly define the relevant governors of specific issues or specific industries and fields during unification governance, that is, to determine responsibilities and tasks of each position in the unity and to strive to achieve "proper people for proper matters", satisfaction of one and all and each doing his own task.
- **Building "elastic affordable" governance system:** Power relation and structure of flat governance need to be optimized; during the

process of decomposition, decentralization and authorization of power, it's necessary to establish an effective monitoring system for various powers, especially a variety of supervision mechanisms, including social, public opinion and the public and other various external supervision mechanisms. That is to say, Top 100 Counties have to not only make a difference in terms of economic vitality but also make more difference in terms of the political system reform and improvement to go beyond the governance dilemma of "hands-off, chaotic; hands-on, dead". Establishing a system of flexible authorization, flexible application and flexible supervision of power is an important strategy to improve and optimize Top 100 Counties' governments' governance.

- **Bringing in modern information technology and management tools in the implementation process of flat the governance model:** In the local governance reform, technological innovation should be taken more seriously in addition to system innovation, mechanism innovation. Mechanisms and technical support shall be relied on not only because system reform is a holistic and top-down path but also because of the diversification and specification of local governance. Since flat governance gives more weight to the reduction of governance levels, the optimization of governance matters and the refinement of governance organizations while in the current big background that the society become increasingly mobile, diverse and complex, matters in need of the governments' involvement and participation as well as public service contents, forms and types to be provided by the governments are also becoming more and more; under this trend or situation, matters and services requiring governments' intervention are increasing, while organizations, personnel and systems are reducing. In order to avoid the emergence of paradox, the Top 100 Counties' governments need to adopt modern information technology, especially network technology, office automation technology, etc., in the governance, as well as adopt modern management methods, including process reengineering, virtual teams, one-stop services to promote the implementation of flat governance; and they also need to move further towards the direction of government information, including e-government, mobile government, electronic monitoring, etc.

Improvement strategies of multi-center cooperation governance model:

- **Establishing an integrated government to adapt to the current trend of integrated governance:**

From the perspective of international regions implementing multi-center cooperation governance, one of the current important ways to change or weaken the fragmentation or decentralization issues brought by multi-center governance is establishing an integrated governance mechanism. That means, as for the decentralized governance of multiple governance centers brought about by governance subjects resulted from contract outsourcing, privatization, authorization, autonomy, etc., the re-nationalization of some public services, or integrating and stitching some outsourcing services or optimizing multiple centers are the ways to go. In addition, cooperation, coordination, joint action mechanisms, opportunities or platforms among multiple centers shall be established and channels and opportunities among multiple governance departments shall be strengthened. As for fragmentation issues caused by Top 100 Counties' implementing multi-center governance model, efforts shall be made to create a integrated government system by various innovative mechanisms "bridging the fragmentation". Top 100 Counties' governments should do more in adapting to or following up international trends and forging integrated and coordinated government.

- **Strengthening the action and influence of government subjects of multi-center governance:**

In the pattern of multi-center sequence, although the multiple subjects have no affiliations between one another, they are not in an anarchy chaos state. Those traditional and well known technical capabilities of local governments appear not that important and the more important capabilities instead are institutional capabilities as service buyers as well as institutional capabilities as promoter of alliance, partnerships, federations and clubs, with which they could develop social capital and improve social output. On one hand, in the process of implementing multi-center governance, governments' key role, pivot ability or central position must be guaranteed; that is, in the governance process with diversified participation of corporations, non-profit organizations and citizens, governments' centrality shall be highlighted through building cooperation line, forging cooperation framework and other links; for example, when implementing multi-center governance in the top 100 counties, the county government and township government shall be taken as the core layer to build or cultivate multiple governance subjects outside of county (district) and

township (town) governments; on the other hand, it is necessary to strengthen the operational capability of the governments in the multi-center governance. That is, although the governments do not directly control over various resources, capital, etc., their action, mobilization and say need to be reflected; and the best way to reflect this capability is to build a strategic framework and ideas of the multi-center governance with the Top 100 Counties' governments as the core, for example, to lead in designing county economic development plan, county political reform and governance planning, etc.

- **Cultivating the spirit of cooperation, sharing and autonomy of multiple governance centers:**

Seen from the perspective of multi-center cooperation governance implemented by the Top 100 Counties, many governance centers, such as County Economic Development Corporations, County Agricultural Associations County Rural Cooperatives, etc., lack cooperation awareness and capability and sometimes, in order to expand the interests of small groups or governance individuals, they may tend to do damage to the interests of the governments and even the whole society. As for the subjects that lack the spirit of cooperation and sharing, the governments should improve their cooperation and sharing awareness of various governance subjects through diversified mechanisms of leading and guiding, rewarding and offering concessions, punishing and eliminating, etc. As for governance centers that lack autonomy awareness and capability, the government should plan the capability cultivation of governance subjects as a strategic project and penetrate inside the governance center to improve the internal governance system, preventing non-governmental governance centers from becoming profit-oriented and mafia-style organizations as well as preventing non-governmental governance centers becoming organizations with no unity, no influence, no execution power and no planning capability. Not only should the government play a dominant role in the local economic development and social governance, but also it should take the tasks of nurturing, supporting, promoting, encouraging and guiding other governance subjects. A self-governance network shall be gradually formed through bringing into play the influence of spontaneous participation and democratic cooperation of NGO.

Improvement strategies of government-led pluralistic participation governance model:

- **Conducting effective early warning and prevention towards excessive government "guidance":** In the government-led governance model, the governments' strong position is very clear. The mighty county governments effectively promote the Top 100 Counties' economic and social development; however, the governments' strong position also affects the autonomy capability improvement and the governance space formation of other subjects and sometimes, the governments' "control-it-all" governance model indicates "traditional regression" of governments' role. Currently, local governments get involved into the affairs that they shouldn't govern, couldn't govern and aren't able to govern; the situation of the governments being steersman and paddler, being referee and athlete, being political subject and market subject and being advocator and participant at the same time is not slightly looking up. In order to avoid the problems brought by the strong governments, Top 100 Counties' governments should on one hand weaken the role of governments in the future governance model improvement by steps and plans, for example, government power should withdraw from certain areas and levels; on the other hand, Top 100 Counties' governments should give more consideration and action on supporting or helping other governance subjects, for example, enhancing non-governmental governance subjects that Top 100 Counties have gradually cultivated and developed through establishing personnel training plans and function decomposition plans by the organizations of county and township level.
- **Enhancing the participation capability of multiple subjects and forming the mechanism of check and balance of power:** For government-led pluralistic participation governance model, pluralistic participation subjects have a low participation capability and some participation subjects would present the issues of "not being able to survive" and "not being able to act" once they lose governments' "care" or "support" since the gradual development and growth of pluralistic participation subjects are conducted under government's support. Therefore, in the gradual liberating process of governance power, the government should gradually improve the governance capability of participation subjects through all levels' support measures, such as policy, human resources and others and build participation capability improvement mechanism by category

and by step in accordance with different capability level of different participation subjects. As for the small participation space problem resulted from government-leading, pluralistic participation subjects should gradually strengthen their participation power through laws and self-fight and other methods in addition through government's active power decentralization and form a series of feasible, legal, compliance protests, appeals, rights safeguarding mechanisms to avoid participation space being "eroded" or "ignored" and then form a counterbalance system against government power and check and balance mechanism of multiple power.

- **Transforming government-led pluralistic participation governance model into other more mature forms of governance models:** Compared with other governance models, the government-led pluralistic participation governance model is generally a transitional model; it's a "temporary" choice taken by areas where economy have developed but concepts, ideas and governance environment are still backward to realize self-development or to become one of the Top 100 Counties. In the long run, since government-led pluralistic participation governance model carries the characteristics of government regulation and government planning and other subjects are also trying to participate and act on their own, this hybrid model of governance is highly likely to lead to role confusion or dislocation between governments and non-governmental governance subjects in the governance action, which may leads to inefficient governance or disorder. In addition, the regime, system and operation mechanism bred by this governance model also bear the characteristics of hybridity and miscibility; if this hybrid and mixed governance system have been in place for a long time, its drawbacks will increase day after day; if it is gradually "solidified", it will become the resistance for governance innovation and the Top 100 Counties' development. Therefore, we should vigorously reform various transitional systems.

CONCLUSION

Top 100 Counties' governments need to consider the reality of economic and social development and consider the already formed or perfected governance models and make targeted improvement and exploration

of governance models; and also they shall consider improvement or progress of this model in other areas or countries and strive to conduct all-around reform and innovation towards government governance models (including governance philosophy, governance focus, governance systems, governance organizations and governance strategies) in a totally new way of thinking with newer and higher perspective; in the process of implementing new governance strategies or methods, the governments shall fully perfect some kind of governance exploration through full consultation, discussion, publicity, solicit opinions, hearings and other methods with scientific spirit; in the governance test or trial and error process, the governments shall evaluate established or test governance plans, comprehensively analyze the "gains and losses" of some kind of governance plans, summarize and evaluate achievements, problems and deficiencies of the governance model and provide more adequate guidance or groundwork for the future governance exploration.

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