

# A Study on the Modernization Path of Chinese County-level Government's Governance Capability

Xibing Dai\* Wei Song

School of Public Affairs, University of Science and Technology of China, No.96, Jinzhai Road, Baohe District, Hefei City, Anhui Province, 230000, China

\*E-mail of the corresponding author: [dxb1992@mail.ustc.edu.cn](mailto:dxb1992@mail.ustc.edu.cn)

## Abstract

The further improvement and development of the socialist system with Chinese characteristics needs to continue to promote modernization of national governance system and national governance capacity. County-level government as the administrative system of grassroots administrative organizations, to achieve its modernization of governance capacity of the overall has important practical significance. However, the existing problems such as the existence of regulatory administrative inertia, the shortage of regional "hard condition", the backwardness of economic level and the drawbacks of science and technology in the background of information technology have hindered the process of modernization of county-level government. Therefore, the county-level government governance capacity modernization must strive to innovate the county-level government governance, governance content and governance means, to achieve a comprehensive upgrade of the modernization of governance capacity, and then promote the government in-depth reform, and promote the healthy development of a harmonious society.

**Keywords:** county - level government governance capability modernization

## 1. Introduction

The so-called "Governance county, the world security". County-level government as a direct participation and management of local social-economic development, the level of its ability to control the effectiveness of governance will play a key role. At present, China is in a critical period of social transformation, in the process of deepening the reform, met a lot of "hard bones", and county-level government as an important experimental area of reform, to promote a comprehensive deepening reform and the rule of law society has played an irreplaceable role. Therefore, it is of great practical significance to study the modernization of county-level government's governance capability.

## 2. Definition of Related Concepts

### 2.1. County-level government

"Government" broad level of interpretation is a collection of national organizations, usually by the head of state, the national legislature, the state administrative organs, the judiciary and the military organs and other components; however, from the narrow level, "government" is the administrative organ that undertakes the responsibility of public administration. The "county-level government" studied in this paper is limited to the narrow level of government.

"County" as a local administrative system is an important component of the national structure. The country's vertical structure is divided into five levels of the State Council, provincial, city, county and town. The county is subordinate to the municipal government as the middle level, higher than the township government. Once the county-level administrative system has been established, the scope of management is also determined accordingly. Local administrative units and county-level administrative system is interdependent, the local administrative unit exists with the existence of the county administrative system. Therefore, the county's setting is due to the state for the necessity of local management, is the basic structural unit of the country. In short, county-level government is government units established by the central government, in order to the effective management of the corresponding regional social affairs.

### 2.2. Governance capability

The birth of the new public management movement in the West led to growing concern about government governance. Researchers found that the level of governance capability determines the quality and level of government governance behavior, the scientific, stable and effective performance of the government governance model can be measured effectively. Many scholars who study the government's governance capability expressed their views from different perspectives. For example, Xuehua Shi that the government's governance capability refers to the government to achieve long-term rule, active management of social affairs, to provide the basic services generally available to the public, to stabilize and eliminate social contradictions, the sum of potential and existing strength and energy to ensure the healthy development of society.

Xuezhi Yi summed up the previous study and proposed that government governance must finally

achieve the goal of good governance. Of course, in addition to its concept in the macro level to be interpreted, some scholars are more concerned about the functions of local governments. They argue that local government functions can reflect the local government's capability to manage national affairs and social public affairs.

In summary, we can understand the government's governance capability as the ability of the government to transform its will and goals into reality in the process of managing state affairs and social affairs.

### 2.3. Modernization of governance capability

The concept of modernization of governance capability has not yet formed a unified definition in academia. Now more academics believe that "modernization of governance capability" and "good governance" have the same purpose. Yong Xu believes that "governance" is rich in content, "governance" not only has the characteristics which contained by "management", but also advancing with the times; "governance" contains the dominant position and positive role of the people. Xiaoping Gao believes that modernization of governance capability is the ability to realize the system and mechanism of governance system into a certain need, to play its function and improve the level of public governance. Although the concept of modernization of governance capability has not yet been a conclusion, to achieve the modernization of governance capability is the pursuit and goal of national and government governance capability.

## 3. The Current Situation of Chinese County-level Government Governance Capability

### 3.1. The connotation and characteristics of the modernization of county-level government capability

The author believes that the modernization of governance system and governance capability is another new type of modernization, namely, "the fifth modernization", which has been put forward after the modernization of agriculture, industrial modernization, modernization of national defense and modernization of science and technology. The process of modernization of county-level government governance is the most basic component of the overall goal of comprehensively deepening reform, it refers to the county-level government not only to meet the socialist modernization drive, but also to strengthen the ability to rule the country according to the characteristics of grassroots level government, to all aspects of institutional advantages into the ability and the level to manage social affairs, and then deal with the relationship between government and society.

### 3.2. The effects of county-level government governance capability

County government in the vertical is the middle part, it links governments of central, provincial, regional and organizations of township, village. Compared with the governments of central, provincial, township, county-level government has a more complete and specific authority, but also has greater flexibility and creativity. County-level government can be based on reality, such as the imbalance of regional economic and social development, and then according to local conditions, scientific formulation development plan. It will promote the local economy and social sustained and stable development, and promote the stable progress of the economy and society.

As an important hub of China's administrative region, county-level government in the central, provincial, city, town bear the role of the link. But in the horizontal, the functions of the county-level government is extremely extensive and specific, it is both the forerunner of the party and the country's major policy, and the commander of political stability, economic development and social management in the region under its jurisdiction. This requires the county government not only to always maintain a high degree of consistency with central, provincial and municipal functions, but also concerned about the particularity of jurisdiction county, to ensure the policy implement with dynamic and flexible.

### 3.3. The basic achievements of governance

At present, China is in the economic New Normal and the stage of deepening the reform, economic and social changes have determined that the Chinese government's governance capability will be affected accordingly. But historically, from the reform and opening up to date, the high level and quality of our government's capability to govern social affairs shows that we are confident that we will solve the problem of modernizing our governance capability in the new era.

In terms of ability to improve people's satisfaction, the county-level government has made great achievements. Reform and opening up was put forward, conform to the social development and people's demands, county-level government to implement the central decision, basically solve the people's "food and clothing" problem. The "three represents" took the fundamental interests of the overwhelming majority of the people as the starting point of the ruling and further satisfied the people's expectations. "Harmonious society" and "the scientific development outlook" not only pay attention to economic development, but also pay more attention to solve the contradiction between people and people, people and nature. "Mass line", "Three Stricts and Three Steadies" is closer the distance between the government and the people, especially the distance

between the county-level government and the people, profoundly appreciate the needs of the people. The resolution of these problems, enhance the people's satisfaction with the government, but also from the heart to reshape the authority of the government. In general, the county-level government in improving people's satisfaction, the goal is clear, the effect is significant. However, more and more serious environmental pollution, rich and poor, urban and rural, regional disparities have widened trend, the contradictions caused by employment, medical and other specific problems are still prominent, County-level government has made some achievements, but there is still a long way to go.

In terms of the ability to take responsibility, China has initially established a responsible government, service-oriented government. "The rule of law", "power list" so that the power of the government was shut in into the cage of the system, and further protect the realization of the people's rights. In the concept, the government defines its role as a service sector, and always represent the fundamental interests of the overwhelming majority of the people. In addition, to a certain extent, our government to achieve the openness and transparency of government affairs, the use of scientific and technological means to protect the implementation of the power of supervision of the people. For example, from the central to the local governments at all levels to establish a government spokes system, at any time to the public announcement of the government's actions. As well as all levels of government websites, microblogging, WeChat platform to facilitate the masses to obtain information and solve the problem. There is also the national public officials performance examination system, safeguarding the interests of the people as the final basis for the performance of government, by the people as the final judge of government performance.

In terms of ability to build the rule of law, as early as the 15th CPC National Congress, China has clearly formulated the strategy of governing the country according to law and establishing a socialist country under the rule of law. Now the four plenary session of the Eighteenth Central Committee put forward the "rule of law, according to the constitution", "to improve the authority of the Constitution" is still in the agenda of the construction of socialist rule of law. Building a socialist "rule of law", "Human rights into the constitution", the Constitution has been amended to clearly protect the legitimate private property of citizens, the enactment of administrative licensing law, property law and so on can reflect the mature ability of our government to build a socialist legal system.

In terms of responsiveness, the fruitful results of the county-level governments in this regard depend on the development of the grassroots self-government organizations in China. For a long time, the Chinese government uphold the purpose of serving the people and "self-management, self-education, self-service". Promptly reflect the demands and opinions of the general public, and take timely measures to ease the contradictions and solve the problem. Not only saves time, cost, but also set a responsible government image.

#### **4. Problems in the Modernization of County-level Government Governance**

The modernization of county-level government governance is an important issue to deepen the reform of the administrative system and the only way to realize the socialist modernization drive. However, the system of modernization of county-level government governance is still not perfect, ways and methods are not sound enough. Therefore, in the process of modernization of county government governance there are still some drawbacks, the specific performance is:

##### **4.1. Regulatory administration still has a greater inertia**

China's administration is considered to be a top-down political rule, dictatorship, supervision and control under the influence of traditional concepts such as centralization and planned economy. In the context of a comprehensive deepening of reform, such ideas and acts are still more or less: everything is done according to the goals set by the government, the government dominates the management of social affairs, society, business, individual only passive compliance system.

##### **4.2. The "hard condition" of county-level is insufficient**

The modernization of the county-level government governance means can not be separated from the higher level of economic culture and level of scientific innovation. At the same time, the process of modernization of county-level government governance is inseparable from the support of high-quality talent and advanced technology. County-level areas as the most basic regional units, the market economy is still very backward, social self-government organizations are not developed. County level political, economic, social and cultural development situation is relatively slow, talent is also relatively weak. As an important participant in the construction of socialist modernization, local enterprises, social organizations and social individuals can not really play a role in promoting the modernization of county-level government governance. Modern means of governance also can not be effectively used. The lack of economic and cultural conditions at the county level has had a strong resistance to the modernization of county government governance.

#### 4.3. The malpractice of means of modernization of county-level government governance under the background of information

E-government and other means of modernization provided by information development is an important way for the county government to achieve modernization of governance. However, from the current situation of e-government in China, although all levels of government and relevant departments have been building e-government platform, and try to use these platforms to publicize government information, but the lack of interconnection between government departments, so published amount of information and data is still very small, and even some departments can not update information. At the same time, e-government platform is more like a bulletin board, a lack of public consultation and feedback on the question.

#### 4.4. The development of social organizations at the county level is insufficient

Social organization as an important supplement to the provision of public services play an important role in the process of modernization of county-level government governance. But in the past for a long time, as one of the main bodies of governance modernization, the space for the free development of social organizations in the "government-dominant" mode is limited. Although with the construction of "service-oriented" society and the deepening of reform, China's social organization has developed faster and faster. However, we also see that the total amount of social organizations at the county level is relatively small and the degree of development is low. Affected by the county-level government, independence is not enough. The influence of social organization is small and the strength is weak. Citizen consciousness is not yet mature, the quality of civic culture is low, and the ability of citizen's political participation is low. Relative to the needs of the market and people's lives, the development of social organizations is insufficient, but also need to make more efforts.

### 5. The Paths of Modernization of County-level Government Governance

The modernization of county-level government governance capability has a fundamental and global role in achieving the modernization of state governance, but in reality there is no precedent to follow. So the road of the modernization of county-level government governance capability requires us to further explore and try. Under the guidance of the theory, combined with the experience of regional governance modernization, it provides a reliable basis for exploring the way of county-level government governance modernization. The author believes that the way of county-level government governance modernization should start from the following three aspects: modernization of governance main bodies, modernization of governance content, modernization of governance means.

#### 5.1. Modernization of the main bodies of the county-level government governance

The modernization of governance main bodies is the prerequisite for the modernization of county-level government governance. The modernization of governance main bodies refers to the change of governance main bodies dominated by the government. In the case of ensuring social stability, to diversification of the main body to solve public problems as the core, so that more local enterprises, social organizations and social groups involved in the process of governance, to achieve the governance model of the upper and lower interaction, and the governance model of multi-party participation, to really achieve achieve the masses manage social affairs. Because of its special status, the decision of the county-level government involves all aspects of social life, and the closest to the vital interests of the people. Of course, with the development of society, the social problems are increasingly complicated. While safeguarding the interests of the people, in order to ensure the improvement of work efficiency, the decision of the county-level government should be more and more towards the direction of democratization. Therefore, the multi-party co-consultation will become the best choice for county-level government decision-making. Of course, this series of improvements made a request to the consultation itself, that is, means of modernization, office automation and information processing computerized. The government needs to deal with more and more problems, which requires the government to carry out functional differentiation, to let the community deal with things within the scope of social services, to reduce the government's work in the relevant areas, to avoid falling into the daily trivial matters, reduce the overall administrative efficiency.

#### 5.2. Modernization of the content of county-level government governance

County-level government need to governance social affairs in multifaceted, their scope of administration penetrated to local society, political, economic, cultural, health, ecological and so on. County-level government wants to realize the modernization of governance not only to solve the problems of local economic development, political life, ethnic relations, social stability, cultural health, ecological and environmental protection, but also from the perspective of the public to solve the highest degree of concern in society, the most intense response, the most serious situation of the problem, and effectively protect the vital interests of the people. Of course, the

modernization of these governance content is interconnected, mutual influence. Therefore, when solving the problem, we need to take into account the interests of all aspects, to maximize the interests of the community. In the modernization of political governance, the government should improve the local political system, maintain social harmony and stability, promote the development of democratic politics, express people's aspirations, pay attention to social conditions and public opinion, put the power into the cage. In the modernization of economic governance, county-level government to break the urban and rural dual economic structure, to achieve coordinated development of urban and rural areas, to promote the resources to free flow between urban and rural areas, and promote the process of rural market. In the modernization of social governance, county-level government needs to timely and equally provide basic and public services, and thus continuously improve the level of public welfare and social welfare in the region. In the modernization of cultural governance, county-level government should make full use of and play the authority of the government, the exercise of the government's cultural functions, vigorously carry forward the Chinese traditional culture, enhance the strong sense of national culture. In addition, we should increase the cultural innovation, enhance the people's political and cultural literacy, support the construction of cultural industries, and continuously improve the cultural strength of the county-level region.

### 5.3. Modernization of the governance means of county-level government governance

The modernization of governance means as an important guarantee for the modernization of government governance has played a key role in improving the efficiency of county government governance. The modernization of governance means the new technology, new ideas, new ideas, new system applied to the governance process, so as to further improve the efficiency of government social governance. County-level government can proceed from the following three aspects:

First, vigorously strengthen the legalization and institutionalization of governance. National governance modernization must adhere to the rule of law, to create the legal system of China. To realize the modernization of the rule of law, it is not only necessary to upgrade the rule of law country, law-management and the big country of law to the rule of law in China, good governance and strength the rule of law, but also need to speed up the construction of the system of socialist rule of law with Chinese characteristics. From the actual situation, the county-level government to deal with political, economic, cultural and other issues lack the concept of the rule of law. In the process of advancing the modernization of governance, county-level government should pay full attention to the rule of law awareness, strengthen the rule of law concept and the rule of law thinking. Therefore, on the one hand to help the government to govern social affairs according to law, on the other hand also help to enhance the legal literacy of the people in the region.

Second, strengthen the informatization of governance. Through strengthening the construction of e-government, the implementation of government affairs and social affairs information disclosure, both to make up for the lack of human resources in the public sector, but also to improve the quality of service and improve work efficiency. The use of new media technology to actively respond to the aspirations of the masses of the people, so as to further improve the enthusiasm of the main body of governance.

Third, in the governance process to innovate marketize tools and social means. As the social needs continue to increase, the government is carrying more and more social functions, not only increases the administrative costs of the government, but also affects the administrative efficiency. The County-level government to choose social organizations for service outsourcing, in accordance with the market mechanism to run, with the private sector to gradually replace the monopoly, in improving the efficiency of administrative services, while also saving the cost. And actively use such as administrative hearings, public participation, volunteer service and other social administrative means, and continue to attach importance to the status of these social means.

## 6. Concluding Remarks

The Modernization of government governance capability is an important way for governments around the world to realize the efficiency of government work and promote the transformation of government functions. This article combines the characteristics of the Chinese government system level, focusing on the county-level government in the process of governance how to adapt to social development to achieve the modernization of governance capacity, putting forward an important way of modernization of the county government governance capability is to innovate the main body of governance, governance content and governance means. But the emergence of new social needs and contradictions, will continue to impact the existing governance. Therefore, the current approach to modernization of governance to a certain extent, can only serve the moment, we need to constantly explore and update the modernization of governance capability to meet the new social needs in different social contexts.

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**Xibing Dai** was born in 1992. He is a man. He is from Anqing City, Anhui Province. Postgraduate Student in School of Public Affairs, University of Science and Technology of China. The main research direction is public policy.

**Wei Song** was born in 1962. He is a man.. He is form Hefei City,Anhui Province. Dean, Professor, PhD Tutor, School of Public Affairs, University of Science and Technology of China. Mainly research intellectual property, science and technology policy.