From "Decentralized Governance" to "Integrated Governance": a Logical Shift in Social Governance

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Abstract. With the accentuation of high complexity and uncertainty in post-industrial society, the traditional governance model characterized by a single subject can no longer meet the requirements of this trend. This means that it is necessary to break through the constraints of the original governance model and integrate different subjects in the same governance field into a framework of collective action to jointly address public issues. However, in practice, multiple governance actors often fall into the dilemma of fragmented governance due to conflicting interests, which manifests itself in decentralized structure, fragmented process and closed system. In grassroots practice, a "fusion governance" with the ruling party as the pivotal organization can effectively break this bottleneck through structural reshaping mechanism, absorption and interaction mechanism and value integration mechanism. In this context, the logic of social governance has changed from the "line logic" in the past decentralized governance mode to the "composite logic" in the fusion governance mode, which is manifested in the compounding of subjects, diversification of tools and diversification of values.

Keywords: convergent governance; governance logic; decentralized governance; grassroots governance.

1   Introduction

Social governance, as an important part of national governance, is an important issue in the governance of the new era. Since the post-industrial society, exploring the innovation of social governance paths with multiple subjects has become a new requirement for social construction in the new era. However, in reality, the diversification of governance subjects has not effectively improved the effectiveness of grassroots social governance, but has generated new governance disorder due to the decentralization, fragmentation and closure of the traditional governance structure [1]. This means that there is an urgent need to change the traditional governance style and realize the logical transformation of grassroots social governance with appropriate structural adjustment and mechanism transformation. Therefore, based on the innovation paths followed by many existing governance models, it is of rich theoretical value and practical significance to explore the supporting logic behind the operation mechanism of specific models, and then sort out the logical progression of social governance model transformation

from the macro level, in order to build a social governance community of shared governance and construction.

2   The real dilemma of grassroots social governance

In grassroots social governance, the value orientation of governance is often affected by the diversity of goals and value differences of governance subjects in the actual operation process, thus presenting a decentralized governance state of "overall fragmentation and local collaboration" [2]. This not only makes it difficult to bring into play the effect of collaborative governance of multiple subjects, but also leads to the dilemma of "fragmentation" of grassroots social governance. Specifically, this "fragmentation" dilemma is manifested in the fragmentation of the governance structure, the fragmentation of the governance process, and the closure of the governance system.

First, the specialization and refinement of the traditional hierarchical system has led to the decentralization of the grassroots social governance structure. In the past, the section hierarchy was able to orderly assign different specialized affairs to their respective functional departments by virtue of its specialized division of labor, thus ensuring the effective operation of the whole system. However, this over-refined division of labor has, to a certain extent, created a horizontal division of functions and a vertical hierarchical division of labor, leading to the creation of "organizational gaps". Specifically, the horizontal division of labor based on the principle of specialization and refinement reflects the rationalization of section organization. However, due to the over-emphasis on functional division of labor, the integrity of the hierarchical organization is challenged by "departmentalism", resulting in "information silos" and "interest games". On the other hand, excessive vertical hierarchical differentiation increases the frequency of organizational friction and leads to distortion of information in the process of vertical transmission, which weakens the effectiveness of power operation. This ultimately leads to inefficient governance in grassroots society.

Second, the fragmentation of the governance process is manifested in the phenomena of "localism," "fragmentation," and "fragmented governance," and it is more prominent when it comes to cross-domain or cross-border issues [3]. Specifically, since the post-industrial period, the openness and mobility of social structures have increased significantly, which has led to the "trans-domesticization" and "borderlessness" of governance matters that were originally "internal" to an administrative region " situation [4]. On the one hand, the lack of a reasonable mechanism for dividing responsibilities among multiple subjects has led to the blurring of the boundaries of responsibilities among subjects, which has led to the phenomenon of "power crossing the boundary" or "shifting responsibilities". On the other hand, due to the impact of the market economy, the pluralistic subjects gradually show a tendency of public spirit deficiency.

Third, the closure of the governance system mainly stems from the autonomy of the hierarchy itself. Specifically, this autonomy is manifested in the government's incorporation of various governance matters into the internal cycle of the entire hierarchy and its independent resolution of these governance matters by various administrative means, making it the sole subject of the entire governance system. However, in the

current situation of individualized interest demands, the closed governance system presents the real dilemma of insufficient responsiveness. The lack of responsiveness of governance is manifested in the fact that the government is unable to respond to all kinds of atomized governance demands due to its limited professional scope, and in the absence of other governance subjects, it is difficult to properly deal with all kinds of highly specialized matters by itself, which eventually leads to the legitimacy of government governance being questioned.

In general, the dilemma of decentralized grassroots social governance is prevalent in all contexts of social governance. This dilemma not only seriously affects the governance linkage among multiple subjects; it also exacerbates the tension between the vision of collaborative governance and the current situation of governance. Therefore, we need to focus more on the linkage and interaction among multiple subjects and explore an alternative governance model to reconstruct the governance pattern and shape the governance relationship.

3   The connotation and operation mechanism of integration governance

3.1   The connotation of integrated governance

In response to the current fragmentation dilemma in grassroots social governance, some scholars have proposed two major governance models, collaborative governance and holistic governance. Among them, compared with the western collaborative governance, the integrative governance is not only the governing collective action of multiple subjects, but also the collaborative common governance led by the ruling party. This process not only includes the integration of governance values, but also covers the reshaping of interest patterns. Holistic governance refers to the holistic operation of institutions and departments within the government, which advocates management from fragmentation to centralization, from parts to wholeness, and from fragmentation to integration [5]. In contrast, fusion governance covers not only the integration of government as well as other non-government subjects, but also the integration of governance concepts, and its connotation is richer in meaning. Thus, it can be seen that fusion governance has certain commonalities with collaborative governance and holistic governance, but also has certain development and extensions on the basis of the two. In summary, the fusion governance referred to in this paper is to achieve the fusion of governance subjects, governance affairs and governance concepts through the use of certain mechanisms to promote the orderly interaction among multiple subjects under the current governance pattern of decentralized co-existence of multiple subjects, so as to finally achieve the improvement of social governance effectiveness.

Specifically, the integration of governance is mainly reflected in three aspects. First, the integration of governance subjects. It mainly refers to a pivotal organization leading the integration of originally scattered governance subjects into the same governance structure, eliminating the organizational barriers between them by strengthening the

consultation and interaction between them, and promoting the formation of the governance synergy of multiple subjects. Second, the integration of governance affairs. It mainly refers to the integration of various governance affairs originally scattered in various fields and links into the same field and the same link, replacing the past diversified governance affairs with the single governance affairs formed after the integration, so as to improve governance efficiency and reduce governance costs. Third, the integration of governance concepts. It mainly refers to the transformation of efficiency-oriented values into people-centered composite values in the process of governance linkage, which provides value support for the orderly operation of the integrated governance system.

3.2   Operational mechanism of integrated governance

In practice, the specific mechanisms that support the effective operation of integration governance mainly include structural reshaping mechanism, absorption and mobilization mechanism, and value integration mechanism.

Structural remodeling mechanism.
The structure reshaping mechanism refers to the reshaping of the section hierarchy in the past decentralized governance situation into a platform-based governance structure through the integration of governance subjects and governance issues under the leadership of the joint party branch. Among them, the section hierarchy of decentralized governance mainly refers to a hierarchical, departmental, and responsibility-based organizational management structure. It often takes authority and position as the basis for division, and shows a top-down, strictly hierarchical vertical structure form. This structure not only divides different governance subjects too finely, resulting in the inability to form governance synergy. In contrast, the platform-type governance structure mainly refers to the integration of different governance subjects and their governance affairs, and then presents them in the form of one-stop and flattened on a unified platform carrier. This structure can integrate multiple subjects from different fields into the same governance field, providing a solid structural support for the cooperation and synergy among multiple subjects. Specifically, this mechanism is mainly realized through two paths: joint party building and platform building.

First of all, joint party building refers to the establishment of a joint party branch as a pivotal organization on top of multiple subjects to realize the effective integration of governance subjects by playing its pivotal effectiveness. In practice, this integration of subjects mainly includes personnel integration, functional integration and goal integration. Personnel integration mainly refers to the composition of the members of the joint party branch by the main persons in charge of multiple subjects. Functional integration is to integrate the functions of each organization and put them under the leadership of the joint party organization, so that the joint party branch can coordinate the efforts of all parties to solve various complex cross-border problems. Goal integration refers to the higher level of unification of the original independent governance goals, so as to

unite the consensus of all parties and form a governance synergy. Secondly, the platform co-construction path refers to the joint party branch taking itself as the carrier to integrate the governance affairs originally belonging to different subjects into a unified platform through deliberation and consultation and co-construction system, so as to use the governance synergy to solve problems together.

In general, the structural reshaping mechanism breaks the governance dilemma of fragmentation of multiple subjects in the section structure and reconstructs the platform-type governance structure on the one hand; on the other hand, it also lays the structural foundation for the orderly interaction of multiple subjects in the integration governance and provides the necessary guarantee for the operation of the whole integration governance system.

Absorption and mobilization mechanism.
The mechanism of absorption and mobilization is based on the openness and mass nature of the joint party branch, through its role of political absorption, continuously absorbing multiple subjects into the governance system, and through its role of social mobilization, stimulating the governance vitality of multiple subjects, so as to mobilize the people's enthusiasm to participate in governance and jointly contribute to the improvement of governance effectiveness. Specifically, this mechanism mainly relies on two paths, namely political absorption and social mobilization, to realize.

First of all, the political absorption path refers to the joint party branch absorbing members from different governance subjects into the branch through various ways, thus providing strength support for the joint party branch to deal with cross-border complex issues in an integrated manner. This path can absorb the pioneer party members from all walks of life as branch members, and promote the joint governance and joint construction of multiple forces under the support of the branch's deliberative system. Secondly, the social mobilization path refers to the joint party branch relying on its own mass base and party authority to carry out open party building activities by mobilizing the power of party members to break the closed and fragmented dilemma of the decentralized governance system, and to fully mobilize people's enthusiasm for governance while meeting their demands for governance, so as to realize the shared governance and construction of grassroots social governance. In this process, the joint party branch on the one hand responds to people's personalized governance needs precisely by mobilizing diverse party resources, and helps party members and cadres strengthen emotional ties and expand interpersonal networks in the process of serving the masses. On the other hand, the joint party branch provides more channels and opportunities for the public to participate in social governance through open party building activities, and ultimately realizes the all-round mobilization of social forces by playing the role of the branch's party members as leading role models. This path aims at mobilizing social forces in all aspects through the diversified subjects absorbed by the joint party branches.

All in all, the political absorption path can bring social forces in the same governance field into the collaborative governance framework, promote the formation of a united front and governance linkage in grassroots governance [1], and thus provide the necessary resource base for social mobilization. The social mobilization path can make full

use of the resource advantages possessed by multiple subjects to jointly serve the social public in the same governance field, and fully stimulate the vitality of social governance in the open party building activities, mobilize more social forces to participate in social governance, and lay a solid mass foundation for the political absorption path. The two paths promote and guarantee each other, and jointly promote the effectiveness of holistic governance.

Value integration mechanism.
The value reshaping mechanism is mainly based on the guiding and statute role of cognitive mode and value orientation for the behavioral choices of governance subjects, and promotes the formation of value consensus of multiple governance subjects through political leading and service leading to provide a strong guarantee for the synergistic co-governance of integrated governance [6]. Specifically, in the field of convergent governance, the value integration mechanism mainly realizes the restraint of power alienation and the reconstruction of public spirit by constructing two major paths of political leadership and service leadership.

First of all, political leadership refers to strengthening the construction of grass-roots party organizations as the focus, and continuously strengthening the identity and purpose consciousness of branch members through the continuous deepening of the political training system, so as to gather the consensus of "people-centered" governance. In this process, the joint party branch is responsible for ideological and political education and open party building for the members of the branch, so as to gather the political consensus of the branch members and strengthen the sense of responsibility and mission. On the other hand, through the integration of party building activities into grassroots governance, the discourse of social governance is transformed into social service, thus effectively avoiding the criticism of the administrative system such as disengagement from the masses and corruption caused by efficiency orientation [1]. Secondly, service leadership refers to the joint party branch taking service as the core and meeting the public service needs of grassroots society as the starting point, leading the healthy development of grassroots society in service and improving the performance of grassroots social governance [7]. By carrying out various public service activities and condolence activities, party members can, on the one hand, precisely respond to people's individualized governance demands and establish a solid trust mechanism between political parties and the masses. On the other hand, it can also create a strong public spiritual atmosphere and plant public spiritual cultural genes, which in turn can provide strong value support for the development of integrated governance [8].

In short, the value integration mechanism promotes the effective integration of value consensus between the two sides through political leadership of party cadres and service leadership of the people, thus transcending narrow individualistic values and promoting the construction of an integrated governance community.

4   Conclusions

From the perspective of the process of social governance modernization, the social governance pattern has shown the trend of diversified governance subjects under the impetus of market economy. Theoretically, these diversified governance subjects can make up for the shortcomings of the past single subject governance of the government and cooperate with the government to jointly deal with the increasingly complex cross-border governance issues. However, in practice, due to the lack of a perfect synergy mechanism and unified value orientation of these governance subjects, they have always been in a decentralized governance state of "overall fragmentation and local collaboration", and have not really formed a governance "synergy" in the theoretical sense. Therefore, this paper tries to introduce the concept of "integrated governance" to respond to the existing governance problems.

Looking at the logic of moving from decentralized governance to integrated governance, we can see that the logic of social governance has changed from the "line logic" of the past decentralized governance model to the "composite logic" of the integrated governance model. Specifically, this composite logic can be understood in three dimensions: subject compounding, tool diversification and value diversification.

First of all, the compounding of subjects refers to the cooperation and interaction of multiple subjects under the premise of following common action guidelines to promote the overall effectiveness of social governance in the form of a community. It is worth noting that the "compounding" of governance subjects is not simply equivalent to the "pluralism" of social governance subjects, and there is actually a fundamental difference between them. In particular, the pluralism of subjects is more a certain generalization of the types and forms of governance subjects from the static level, while the compounding of subjects is a certain supplement and transcendence on the basis of the former, which puts forward higher requirements on the relationship between governance subjects from the dynamic level, that is, the compounding of subjects emphasizes more on the connection and interaction between multiple governance subjects. On the other hand, the pluralism of governance subjects does not actually mean the formation of cooperative governance pattern. On the contrary, the "many but incompatible" governance subjects are one of the important reasons for the fragmentation of governance. Therefore, in order to realize the transformation from decentralized governance to integrated governance, it is necessary to realize the transformation from "pluralism" to "compounding" of governance subjects. From this point of view alone, the subjects of governance in social governance should in fact follow the evolutionary process from "singularity - pluralism - compounding".

Second, the diversification of tools means that social governance no longer relies solely on the monolithic administrative instruments of the past, but is more often facilitated by a combination of governance tools. In fact, this diversification of governance tools is inextricably linked to the diversification of governance subjects and the complexity of governance affairs. In the integrated social governance of the past, the government's monolithic governance instruments were sufficient to deal with most simple governance matters. However, in today's diversified governance pattern, on the one

hand, the increasingly mature governance subjects have to participate in social governance through certain means and ways to meet their own governance demands, and in this process, each characteristic governance tool is formed. On the other hand, when dealing with complex cross-border governance matters, a single administrative tool is likely to lead to the real dilemma of governance failure. In this regard, in order to ensure its own governance effectiveness, administrative tools must rely on some other governance tools to complement and improve. Therefore, the diversification of governance tools is not only the inevitable result of the transformation of decentralized governance into integrated governance, but also a necessary path in the process of modernizing social governance.

Finally, value pluralism refers to the transformation of social governance from a monolithic "logic of efficiency" to a pluralistic logic of governance that "balances efficiency and legitimacy". Among them, there is an essential difference between the "logic of efficiency" emphasized by the former and the "logic of efficiency" contained in the latter. For the former, the governance efficiency it emphasizes is essentially the efficiency of administrative governance, which is reflected in the rapid implementation and execution of administrative affairs and administrative orders. Therefore, the "logic of efficiency" for the former is more directed to the needs of the pressure-based hierarchy. In contrast, the governance efficiency emphasized by the latter is formed under the value pursuit of "people-centeredness", which is essentially expressed in the efficiency of governance response, and this efficiency is specifically reflected in the rapid response and effective response to the governance demands of the public. Therefore, the "logic of efficiency" for the latter not only directs the goal of governance to the actual needs of the people, but also puts forward higher requirements for the effectiveness of governance behavior. On the one hand, the effectiveness of governance emphasizes the precision and adequacy of response to the people's demands, and on the other hand, it is also consistent with the "people-centered" governance requirement. More importantly, after the people's demands for governance are fully and effectively responded to, it will, on the one hand, arouse the people's recognition of the legitimacy of the subject of governance, and on the other hand, enhance the people's modern values and civic consciousness, thus promoting the formation of a governance pattern of multiple subjects[9]. In short, compared with decentralized governance, the connotation and extension of the value concept of integrated governance have undergone different degrees of transformation. It is no longer limited to a single logic in decentralized governance, but has transformed into a pluralistic governance logic that covers governance responsiveness, governance effectiveness, and governance legitimacy. (For the transformation of social governance logic, please refer to Figure 1)
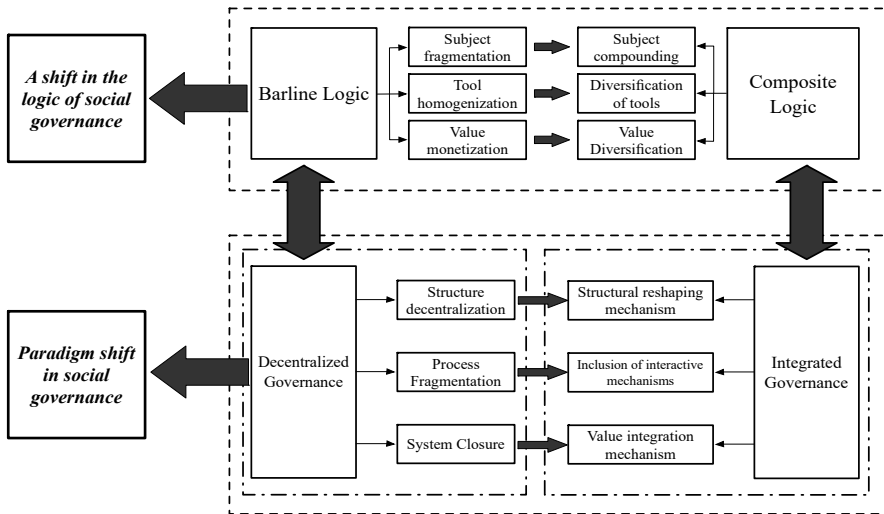
Fig. 1. A shift in the logic of social governance (Self-drawn)

The "integrated governance" described in this paper is mainly derived from the distillation and generalization of the experience of grassroots social governance, and based on this concept, the logical transformation of grassroots social governance has been sorted out and analyzed to some extent. As to whether "integrated governance" is applicable to a wider range of governance fields, whether "integrated governance" has the risk of falling into administrativeization again, and whether there are more logical shifts in social governance, more scholars are still waiting for more research and discussion from different perspectives. The questions of whether "integrated governance" risks falling back into administrativeization and whether there are more logical shifts in social governance remain to be studied and explored by more scholars from different perspectives.

5   References

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