

*Original Paper*

# Participation of Social Organizations in Urban Social Governance: Realistic Dilemma and Optimization Path

Chao Li<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> School of Management, Northwest University of Political Science and Law, Xi'an, China

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## **Abstract**

*In order to promote the modernization of social governance, we cannot ignore the indispensable role of social organizations in urban social governance. Affected by factors such as backward value cognition, weak supervision mechanism, weak service ability and insufficient resource support, the role of social organizations has not been fully brought into play. In order to solve the problem of function output of social organizations in municipal social governance, it is necessary for the government, society and social organizations to form a joint force, commit to updating the value concept of social organizations, improve the supervision system of social organizations, pay attention to the capacity building of social organizations and strengthen multi-channel resource support, so that social organizations can better participate in municipal social governance.*

## **Keywords**

*urban social governance, social organization, realistic dilemma, optimized path*

## **1. Introduction**

In order to realize the modernization of municipal governance and even the modernization of national governance system and governance capacity, it is of great theoretical and practical significance to study how social organizations fully play their roles in municipal social governance and how to realize their mechanisms. However, as one of the important subjects of social governance, social organizations play a very limited role in urban social governance. How to effectively play the role of social organizations in urban social governance is an urgent problem to be solved in the process of improving the level of social governance, enhancing governance ability and accelerating the modernization of urban social governance.

## 2. Social Organization: The “New Engine” of Urban Social Governance

Social organizations have the characteristics of non-government, non-profit and voluntary public welfare. These characteristics determine that social organizations have obvious comparative advantages in participating in urban social governance, and must occupy the main position of social governance and play an irreplaceable role. Social organizations give full play to their advantages and roles, become the government’s right-hand arm in social governance, jointly deal with social public affairs, and improve the level of social governance. It can be said that social organizations are the “new engine” to promote the modernization of urban social governance.

### *2.1 Realize Resource Integration: Enhance the Sociality of Municipal Governance*

Municipal social governance is not a single-centered governance of the society by the government. The government needs to draw strength from the society extensively to form a social governance community, give full play to social regulation and residents’ autonomy, and enhance the sociality of the governance community. Social organizations have the advantages of being close to the people and non-profit, and most of the members of the organizations are people from all walks of life who have a common sense of responsibility and are committed to helping the vulnerable groups and maintaining social justice. The dedication and service consciousness shown by the members and their volunteers have also been recognized and respected by the broad masses of the people, which makes them have broad social cohesion and appeal. Therefore, social organizations can maximize the accumulation of scattered human, financial and physical resources, fully mobilize social forces, use the integrated resources to enhance organizational capacity and promote organizational growth, so as to better serve the society.

### *2.2 Improve Public Services: Enhance the Autonomy of Municipal Governance*

The development of social organizations is conducive to the innovation of urban social governance, the enrichment of public service delivery methods, and the optimization of public service supply. In addition to government services and market services, the participation of social organizations also provides voluntary services, which enhances the self-service ability of the society and enhances the autonomy of the community. In the new era of everyone’s pursuit of a better life, the growing public’s diverse demands for public services appear to be more scarce administrative resources. As an important subject of social governance, social organizations undertake part of the responsibility of providing public goods and public services through public service outsourcing, which has outstanding effects on improving the quality of public services, meeting the diversified service demands of the public, reducing the supply cost of public services and alleviating the financial pressure of local governments, and has become the main way of government reform and social governance innovation in China. And let social organizations become partners of the government in the field of public services. The participation of social organizations makes the social governance community form the complementary function of government and society, and enhances the self-serving ability of society. The ability of social autonomy is an important index to measure the quality of municipal social governance. The stronger the ability of social autonomy, the higher the ability of municipal social governance.

### *2.3 Resolve Social Conflicts: Enhance the Public Nature of Municipal Governance*

China is in a rapid transition period, which will inevitably produce various social problems and contradictions. As an important subject of social governance, social organizations play an irreplaceable regulating role for the government. Social organizations can participate in a series of public activities that are closely related to the interests of the people, such as power supervision, resource allocation, and policy formulation, which will help eliminate conflicts and disputes at the source. It can care for the most vulnerable groups in the society, find and solve their interest demands, and alleviate social conflicts by integrating and coordinating public interests. By encouraging everyone to participate in social construction, social organizations allow people to know the field and carrier of common life in the participation, enhance mutual understanding, on this basis, care about and are willing to contribute to the construction of a better field and carrier, and finally form a “common emotional connection” between individuals and society, in order to form the identity of social members. Towards a community of social governance in which everyone has responsibilities, responsibilities and benefits. By joining social organizations, people participate in the social governance of the city, pay attention to public affairs closely related to their own interests, cultivate their own sense of “ownership”, and promote the promotion of community publicity.

### *2.4 Promote Public Decision-making: Improve the Scientific Nature of Municipal Governance*

Social organizations are generally established in response to governance problems in specific fields. In urban social governance, social organizations have a decisive influence on every stage of the public policy process in their field of activity. During the policy formulation period, social organizations take root in the people, listen to the public opinions, understand the demands of the people, reflect the interests of the people, provide references for the government to make decisions, and improve the scientific nature of decisions. In the period of policy implementation, social organizations play the role of executor and supervisor. On the one hand, it directly participates in the implementation of public policies and becomes one of the subjects of policy implementation. On the other hand, supervise the process of policy implementation and effectively promote the implementation of policies; During the policy evaluation period, social organizations can objectively evaluate public policies by virtue of their professionalism and keen judgment in the field of organizational activities, analyze new situations and problems after the implementation of policies with their own professional knowledge, and feedback relevant information to government departments to make suggestions for policy adjustment. In short, relying on the professional and popular nature of social organizations and their role in various stages of public policy is conducive to the realization of scientific decision-making in the social governance of the city.

### 3. The Realistic Dilemma of Social Organization Participating in Urban Social Governance

#### 3.1 Backward Value Perception

At present, no matter the government, the society, or the social organizations themselves, there is a deviation in the value cognition of the importance of social organizations in the social governance of the city. First, the understanding of some management and related departments is not in place. China's traditional management model is "omnipotence government", in which the government usually does everything, and social organization are in an awkward position of passive arrangement. Some administrative and cooperative departments even regard social organizations as subsidiary organs of government organizations and require them to carry out the directives of government departments. Administrative power has also penetrated into all levels of social organization operation, and social organizations depend on the "face" of the government whether it is personnel appointment and removal, organizational activities or organizational goals. Therefore, some government departments are far from understanding the importance and role of social organizations in strengthening and innovating municipal social governance.

Second, some social organizations do not have a strong sense of responsibility. Different from enterprises, social organizations naturally have the attribute of public welfare, which determines that the organizational goal of social organizations is and must be the maximization of social interests, so social organizations should take social public interests as the starting point and foothold of all organizational activities. However, due to the late start of social organizations in our country, the development is in the initial stage, on the one hand, their own strength is weak, difficult to play the role, so it is difficult to effectively fulfill social responsibilities. On the other hand, some social organizations can not take the initiative to practice the responsibility and responsibility of the organization, the awareness of active service is not strong, and the importance of the organization's own social governance in the city is not deep enough.

Third, the public's recognition is not high. Compared with the European and American social organizations, the development of Chinese social organizations is relatively late and immature. And most of them belong to the government-led type, with the dual attributes of government-run non-governmental, administrative and civil coexistence. On the one hand, China's social organizations are too dependent on the government, and their organizational structure and management mode are almost identical with the government, which makes them maintain a long power distance and emotional gap with the public, and it is difficult to give play to the advantages of non-governmental organizations. On the other hand, due to the lack of professional research on their own organizational structure, excessive centralization of power allocation, and problems in the mechanism of personnel selection, it is common for social organizations to have chaotic internal management, disorderly operation, and corruption. In addition, social organizations themselves have little publicity, and the public has little understanding of social organizations, which makes the purpose of their activities sometimes even suspected by the public, which

also leads to a lot of work can not be smoothly promoted when social organizations participate in social governance.

### *3.2 Weak Supervision Mechanism*

Public welfare and reputation are the core of the survival of social organizations, social organizations must accept strict operation supervision to ensure that the organization's service and management always reflect the public welfare. At present, the lack of supervision of the operation of social organizations is mainly reflected in three aspects: the competent government units, the social supervision and the internal supervision of social organizations.

The first is the government supervision. On the one hand, the relevant laws and regulations in our country are still very imperfect and there are many problems. If social organizations want to play their due role, the government must create a sound legal environment for them. However, at present, the relevant laws in China are limited to the Regulations on the Registration and Administration of Social Organizations promulgated by The State Council, the Regulations on the Management of Foundations, the Interim Regulations on the Registration and Administration of Private Non-enterprise Units, and the Interim Measures for the Suppression of Illegal Non-governmental Organizations and the Interim Measures for the Registration of Private Non-Enterprise Units promulgated by the Ministry of Civil Affairs, etc., which have the problem of low legislative level. The imperfection of relevant laws of social organizations makes social organizations lack corresponding legal supervision. Due to the lack of laws and regulations, some social organizations are easy to take risks to carry out improper profit-making illegal activities, which leads to the loss of public property and harms the image of the entire social organization. On the other hand, according to the Regulations on the Registration and Administration of Social Organizations, the legitimacy registration and operation of social organizations in China are subject to the dual management of registration management authorities and business authorities. On the surface, the system seems to have institutional arrangements for the government to supervise social organizations, but in fact, due to the lack of information between civil affairs and business authorities, social organizations are faced with the problem of multiple supervision and repeated supervision, which is prone to the problem of buck-shifting and power and responsibility. The supervision of social organizations by relevant government departments still remains in the aspects of registration approval, business content and nature. The supervision of social organizations in terms of their activity process and use of funds is weak and the supervision method is limited, and the in-process and post-event supervision is ignored, thus leaving the supervision of social organizations in a vacuum.

The second is social supervision. Social supervision has always been a relatively weak link in the supervision system of social organizations. On the one hand, the public has little understanding of social organizations, and most social organizations lack corresponding information disclosure systems. Organizational information cannot be disclosed to the public in a timely, active and continuous manner, and the channels for the society to understand relevant information about social organizations are very limited. On the other hand, the public's consciousness of supervision over social organizations is weak.

“Turn a blind eye” to the illegal acts of social organizations, and only when it involves vital interests will they stand up and fight. It is not fundamentally recognized that corruption of social organizations is a violation of the interests of the state and citizens, and it is the right of citizens to supervise social organizations.

Finally, internal supervision of social organizations. Social organizations are Mired in the crisis of trust, and the reason is still the incompleteness of internal management system. At present, social organizations lack self-discipline, and most of the rules and regulations formulated by social organizations are too general, not detailed enough, and not strong in operation. When they encounter problems in practice, there are no specific implementation standards and norms, and the operation of organizations is very arbitrary. Although some social organizations have board of supervisors, the effect is not significant due to the limitation of professional ability. Moreover, subordinates supervise superiors, which is difficult to implement in practice.

### *3.3 Service Ability Is Not Strong*

Municipal social governance regards social organizations as important members of the multiple subjects of social governance and provides a broad space for them to play their roles, but it does not mean that social organizations have been entrusted with important responsibilities and are perfectly competent for their roles. On the contrary, when social organizations participate in social governance, their service quality is often not ideal due to their weak service ability and lack of professionalism. Far from the expectations of the government and the public. There are some problems in the social governance of social organizations, such as lack of professional talents, single service type and low professional level of service. First, the lack of professional talents limits the service capacity of social organizations. At present, in the human resources market, social organizations generally lack competitiveness, and it is difficult to attract high-quality professionals. On the one hand, due to the poor employment stability and low salary and benefits of social organizations, the brain drain of organizations is serious. The mobility of the members of the organization is large, and it is difficult to provide stable public services to the public continuously. On the other hand, because some social organizations are not attractive to professionals, their members are often part-time workers and some volunteers without relevant professional background or lack of pre-job training, which makes the governance power of social organizations uneven. Second, the overall structure of social organizations participating in social governance is obviously unbalanced, and the types of services are single. The activities of social organizations mainly focus on social security, environmental health, epidemic prevention and control, etc. Comparatively speaking, the participation of social organizations in public welfare, social welfare, and fund categories is still relatively small. The types of services are single, and the existing value is mainly concentrated in the supply of social services, which is difficult to meet the growing and diversified needs of residents. Third, China’s social organizations are generally small scale, fewer personnel, simple structure of small social organizations. Such organizations do not operate for a long time, and often lack a clear organizational philosophy and goals. Due to the lack of funds, the field of organizational activities

is often constantly changing due to market demand, and it is difficult to develop deeply in their own professional fields, which restricts the service supply capacity of social organizations to a large extent. Therefore, when participating in the social governance of the city, social organizations are prone to the dilemma of insufficient service ability, which seriously affects the level and efficiency of social organizations in providing public services. The public will also have doubts about the operational capacity and internal management level of social organizations, which will affect their image in the public mind.

### *3.4 Insufficient Resource Support*

In the process of practice, due to the lack of financial support, some social organizations not only cannot play their due role and advantages in the social governance of the city, but even can not take care of themselves, or can only barely maintain their own operation. The lack of financial support for social organizations is mainly reflected in the following aspects: on the one hand, social organizations over-rely on government finance. Relevant research data show that among the main sources of funding for social organizations in China, about 49.97% comes from government finance or subsidies, 21.18% comes from membership fees, 6% comes from business income, and 5.63% comes from corporate sponsorship and project funding. The proportion of other income is very low, both below 5%, and personal donations only account for 2.18% of the total. The above data reflect the current predicament of social organizations. Due to the serious imbalance in the structure of funding sources, income mainly depends on government fiscal expenditure, resulting in social organizations can only obey the mercy of the government. However, the government's financial support capacity is limited, and with the government advocating the transformation of functions in recent years, implementing the separation of government and social organizations, and encouraging social organizations to assume responsibility for their own profits and losses, the financial allocation has been greatly reduced, and some social organizations even face difficulties in normal operation. In the provision of public goods and services, the government has not established a regular cooperation mechanism similar to that of public institutions and other institutions, and social organizations are obviously in a weak position, with a considerable degree of opportunity inequality. And even if there are opportunities for the government to work with social organizations, too few are really capable of buying services. On the other hand, some social organizations lack social credibility, are estranged from the public, and have poor organizational visibility, so it is difficult to raise funds through charity, corporate sponsorship, and member payment. The lack of funds means that it is difficult for social organizations to play their due role in the social governance of the city, even if they are willing to participate in the social governance.

## **4. The Path Optimization of Social Organization Participation in Urban Social Governance**

### *4.1 Renew the Values of Social Organizations*

First of all, the government should change its administrative concept from the "all-powerful government concept" to the "limited government concept", continue to promote the separation of government and

society, and delegate power to society. Correctly understand the role and positioning of social organizations in urban social governance, incorporate the development of social organizations into the national economic and social development planning, and strive to build a public service operation mechanism with government leadership, policy support, social participation, and cooperation and complementarity. The so-called government-led is that in the social governance of the city, the government and social organizations are equal and full cooperation, rather than the relationship between management and management between superiors and subordinates. The government should fully give social organizations autonomy and allow them to work independently, and the government should only guide social organizations to carry out activities from the overall perspective. The so-called policy support means that the government should play the role of policy and system makers, and provide financial support, system support and tax incentives for social organizations to participate in municipal social governance. The so-called social participation means that through the guidance of social organizations, citizens' concerns and demands on social public affairs are expressed in a rational, orderly and organized way, so as to alleviate social contradictions and make them a positive force to promote the construction of a harmonious society. The so-called cooperation and complementarity means that in order to cope with government failure, the government takes the initiative to provide space for social organizations to participate in social governance and create various conditions for cooperation to meet the diverse needs of the people. Let social organizations and the government complement each other's strengths, play their unique roles in the field of public services, and build a new public service system. Secondly, social organizations should also change their inherent concepts and cultivate the spirit of volunteerism. Volunteerism is the value pursuit of social organizations, but also the sense of responsibility and the spirit of The Times. They should take it as the core to build a positive organizational culture for good, and become the forerunner and leader of social progress with a strong appeal and cohesion. Strengthen their own sense of responsibility. In the face of the public, the sense of responsibility of social organizations is reflected in the timely expression of public service needs and the accurate delivery of public services. In the face of the government, social organizations should actively fulfill the contract, provide satisfactory public services for the entrusting parties and consumers, and gradually transform into the "hard core" force of social governance in the city.

Finally, strengthening publicity and establishing a positive image of social organizations is one of the effective measures to broaden public support and improve social credibility of social organizations. First of all, the lack of public recognition of social organizations is largely due to the public's lack of understanding of social organizations. Therefore, it is necessary to widely publicize the aims, objectives and activities of social organizations through new media such as mobile Internet to narrow the distance between them and the public. Secondly, we should guide the public opinion of social organizations by setting up a typical way. For some brand social organizations that play a good role and have high credibility, it is necessary to release publicity in a timely manner to show the positive style of social organizations. For some social organizations that violate the law and discipline, we must also announce



disciplinary measures in a timely manner, and promote the formation of a good social atmosphere in which social organizations operate in the sunshine and serve society.

#### *4.2 Improve the Oversight System for Social Organizations*

Faced with the trust crisis of social organizations, it is necessary to strengthen the supervision and management of social organizations through the combination of internal supervision and external supervision by the government, society and social organizations themselves.

First of all, on the one hand, the government must optimize its legal environment, and it needs to clarify the subject status of social organizations in the social governance of the city, and clarify the rights and obligations that social organizations should exercise. We will adopt laws and regulations to regulate and guide the behavior of social organizations and strengthen supervision over them. We will revise and improve existing laws and regulations in light of the actual situation, and legislate on the establishment, operation, supervision and evaluation of social organizations, so as to achieve whole-process management of social organizations. At the same time, it is also necessary to introduce different types of laws flexibly to adapt to different types of social organizations and constantly improve the legal system of social organizations in our country. Local governments also need to issue local regulations on the management of social organizations according to their actual conditions, so as to realize the pertinence and feasibility of laws in dealing with practical affairs. On the other hand, the dual management system of planned economy has obvious characteristics and is not suitable for the development of social organizations, so it should be gradually abolished.

Secondly, optimize the internal supervision of social organizations. First, promote the institutionalization of organizations. Social organizations should formulate their articles of association according to their own conditions, laws and regulations, professional ethics and other comprehensive factors. The articles of association are the fundamental articles of association of social organizations and the primary basis for carrying out various organizational activities. Therefore, it is necessary to establish a daily management system, personnel system, financial system and supervision system as the core of the constitution, and form a self-restraint and self-supervision mechanism within the organization. The second is to give full play to the decision-making function of the Council and the supervision function of the board of supervisors, so that the decision-making, implementation and supervision of the organization can be operated organically, so that all work can be followed by rules and regulations.

Finally, we must improve the supervision and management system of social organizations. The government led the introduction of third-party evaluation institutions such as universities and research institutes to test the governance effectiveness of social organizations through diversified evaluation methods. Social organizations should regularly announce the use of funds to the public, actively accept the supervision of donors, the government and the society, set up convenient complaint channels such as telephones and public number mailboxes, and deal with complaint information in a timely manner. It can also strengthen the supervision of social organizations through the news media, and use public opinion

to effectively expose the bad behaviors of organizations. Perfect social supervision allows social organizations to operate in the sunshine and better participate in social governance.

#### *4.3 Focus on Building the Capacity of Social Organizations*

First, we need to innovate the working mechanism for talents. The lack of human resources of social organizations restricts the action power of social organizations to participate in urban social governance. The construction of talent team in social organizations should start from three aspects: full-time talent absorption, high-level talent introduction, talent reserve and training. First of all, the non-profit of social organizations determines the low level of salary treatment, which is a big “pain point” for organizations to retain talents. Therefore, on the one hand, social organizations should develop reasonable salary and welfare, performance evaluation standards, social security benefits, job promotion space and other ways to retain more professionals. On the other hand, through the organization of activities to promote the spirit of volunteerism and dedication to enhance the sense of honor and mission of the organization members to perform their duties, encourage members to participate in public welfare. Secondly, the government should provide favorable conditions for social organizations to actively introduce high-level and high-level professionals through policy incentives and job security, so as to expand the influence and credibility of social organizations in municipal social governance, and make organizational behavior and activities scientific and efficient. Finally, we regularly organize members to participate in social governance knowledge training through expert lectures, conference exchanges, network videos and other means, encourage members to participate in vocational skills examination, and strive to build a professional service team. Through the development and use of existing human resources, the business ability and quality of social organizations can be comprehensively improved, so that the members of the organization can continue to grow and feel the sense of gain, and promote the stability of the talent team of the organization.

Second, we need to improve the incubation mechanism. In terms of organizational capacity building, the incubation of social organizations has been highly valued by the government and relevant departments. Various localities have set up social organization incubation bases, and pointed out that incubation bases should play the functions of resource sharing, information exchange, policy consultation, growth empowerment, professional research and thought guidance. The social organization incubation base not only provides “grassroots organizations” with hardware facilities such as office space and office equipment, but also provides capacity building training, daily consultation and accompanying growth services, supporting and nurturing the rapid growth of social organizations in the categories of convenience services, public welfare charities, and welfare assistance, and helping them develop and expand. The construction of social organization incubation bases can make use of the advantages of resources and platforms to help social organizations continuously improve their service capabilities and service levels, and release the vitality of social organizations to participate in social governance, change the “one-man show” model of the previous government, and hand professional public service content to specialized social organizations.

The third is to build brand effect, good brand building is one of the important channels to enhance the social influence and professional level of social organizations. On the one hand, good branding can strengthen values, enhance the attractiveness and radiation of social organizations, enhance internal employee identity, responsibility and sense of belonging, and enhance organizational cohesion. On the other hand, brand construction is a long-term development and learning process, which can cultivate the professional ability of members, improve the organizational management mode to match the brand strategy, and promote the portfolio management to professional operation. Social organizations should clarify their own vision, mission, functions and tasks in the modernization of urban society, take the needs of the people as the orientation, innovate the content of public services based on the needs, ensure that the people have access to professional and diversified services, expand the influence of organizations, and promote organizational branding.

#### *4.4 Strengthen Resource Support through Multiple Channels*

Problems such as the weak fund-raising capacity and low efficiency of social organizations, single fund-raising channels and insufficient fund donations have seriously affected the ability of social organizations to participate in the social governance of the city. It is particularly important to improve the financing methods of social organizations, establish diversified sources of funds and rationalize the proportion of funds.

First, we need to strengthen financial support. We should improve the system for the government to purchase public services from social organizations, which should be oriented towards meeting the public needs of the public. The procurement work should, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Government Procurement Law, clarify the scope of the government's purchase of public services, formulate fair and reasonable bidding and procurement procedures, and guide social organizations to participate in healthy competition. Social organizations with good qualifications and strong professional ability are selected to participate in the municipal social governance through competition. At the same time, we will establish and improve the relevant assessment and evaluation system for the government's purchase of services, introduce a third-party assessment system for the purchase of services, assess and evaluate the quantity and quality of the purchased services, and publish the evaluation results to the public. We will implement all preferential tax policies of the state for social organizations, and provide eligible social organizations with preferential tax policies in accordance with relevant laws and regulations, so as to reduce the burden and increase the capacity of social organizations. At the same time, since social organizations assume certain functions of providing public services and public goods, it is inevitable to seek financial support from the government. To provide special funds for social organizations committed to social assistance, public charity, community services and other fields, moderate support, help to form, and promote the diversification of social organization types to meet the growing and diversified needs of the public.

Second, to expand financing channels, we should seek help from enterprises. Enterprises can help social organizations raise funds, cooperate in public welfare projects, and obtain donations of materials and

equipment. Enterprises can also provide services such as internal management, professional services and financial management for social organizations, and provide necessary resource support and technical support for the development of social organizations. Enterprises are also very willing to cooperate with social organizations from the perspective of tax incentives and social responsibility, which is conducive to their brand positioning and marketing, and improve their influence and reputation in the entire market. To seek help from the public, social organizations should pay attention to the use of urban media resources to widely publicize their organizations, convey their aims and objectives to the public, and narrow the distance between them and the public. Through publicity work, we can not only get the support and recognition of the public, but also improve the visibility of the organization and expand the fundraising channels.

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