Research on Optimization of Administrative Cultural Environment in China's Grassroots Policy Implementation

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Keywords: Administrative Culture; Grassroots Civil Servants; Policy Implementation; Cultural Environment

Abstract: Administrative culture is the value basis of policy implementation. It will be expressed through the materialized forms such as thoughts, systems, and behaviors, and become the background framework of policy implementation. However, in the process of policy implementation, the grass-roots civil servants show some problems, such as dislocation of values, ambiguity of behavior boundary, and dilution of pragmatic style. These problems will be attributed to the influence of "power-based" administrative concept, lack of administrative system culture and negative administrative psychology. So it's necessary to reshape modern execution concepts, strengthen construction of administrative system culture and cultivate administrative behavior culture to optimize the cultural environment. Only in this way, can we more effectively improve the implementation system of grassroots policies.

Introduction

As a social governance program, the effectiveness of policy implementation will directly affect the authority and legitimacy of the government. In the most common form, "implementation" behavior presupposes a pre action; especially a "cognitive act" that clarifies what needs to be done and makes decisions for it [1]. From this basic understanding, policy implementation is actually the act of implementation in the form of ideas. It has evolved from a technical process to a value-selection.

Western academia has brought cultural research into the perspective of social observation, and gradually formed a trend of thought since 1960s [2]. American scholar Fred W. Riggs thought that "different countries have different environment and culture which influence and shape their public administration."[3] The failure of "Auckland plan" in 1970s inspired people to study the effectiveness of policy implementation. They gradually focused on the environment variable of culture. Jeffrey L. Pressman and Aaron B. Wildavsky proposed that "execution can be regarded as an interactive process between the establishment of goals and actions appropriate to achieve them" [4]. Then T. B. Smith first proposed that "idealized policies, implementing agencies, target groups and environmental factors are the four main factors in policy implementation."[5] McLaughlin (1976) proposed in his theory of "mutual adjustment model" that, "the goal and means of policy executors can be changed due to environmental factors."[6] Then in 1987, Yanow proposed a cultural perspective on policy implementation in his “path to policy culture realization”.

On the basis of western research, Chinese scholars have carried out a series of studies on the identification and confirmation of policy implementation. They comprehensively analyze the influence of culture on policy implementation from both positive and negative aspects. Scholar Jin Taijun believes that "policy implementation is influenced by many direct and indirect factors, mainly including environmental factors, decision-making itself, organizational and individual factors."[7] The environmental factors include political environment, economic environment, cultural environment and natural environment [8]. Actually, the new policy implementation activities will gradually mature, progress, or be negative or regressive in the administrative cultural environment. Participatory political
culture is conducive to promoting the democratic, honest and legal construction of policy implementation, and to improving the effectiveness of policy implementation [9]. The bureaucratic thinking, the lack of administrative ethics, the solidified administrative culture, and the distortion of administrative values are the four obstacles that restrict the implementation of local government [10].

However, the previous research focused on the macro structural analysis from the concept, system, mechanism and other factors. There are not many results to find and analyze the core influencing factors through the basic composition of administrative culture. Studies on how the policy implementation behavior reflects the administrative culture are fewer. Therefore, this article will be based on the grassroots guidance to try to find out why there are policy implementation deviations from the perspective of concept, system and behavior. Then we propose some suggestions on how to improve grassroots policy implementation through administrative culture optimization.

Administrative Cultural Performance of Ineffective Policy Implementation

The government and its civil servants are the key to determine the quality and effectiveness of implementation. They are always rooted in the value concept and interest orientation to make judgments and choices. Therefore, there are three standards to evaluate the implementation. The first is the implementation concept of civil servants, which directly determines the implementation right or wrong. The second is the legality and compliance of implementation behavior, which directly reflects the boundary and bottom line of implementation. The third is the implementation style and willingness, which directly reflects the implementation efficiency. According to these three standards, we can explore the problems existing in the implementation of grassroots policies from the aspects of concept, system and behavior.

Dislocation of Implementation Concept and Prevailing. Idea is the guide of behavior. Any behavior is the manifestation of certain thoughts. In the process of implementation, the prevalence of individualism makes the executive body position themselves wrongly. This has three main manifestations at the conceptual level. Firstly, the grassroots civil servants are weak in people-oriented consciousness. "Serving the people" has become a slogan, empty talk, and even alienated into "the people serve me". They have played "official tune" and set up an "official frame" in the face of the people. Secondly, the ambiguity of the role has diminished their sense of purpose and responsibility to serve the people. Some grass-roots civil servants set up the wrong attitude. They regard themselves as "parent officials", and regard the people as their own subjects. As a result, the phenomenon of "door is difficult to enter, face is difficult to see and things are difficult to handle" has been repeatedly banned in practice. Even some grass-roots civil servants use the executive powers given by the people as a tool to seek unreasonable and illegal private interests for individuals. They evolve the purpose of "serving the people" into "serving the renminbi." Thirdly, the administrative faith is lost. In the grass-roots government where bureaucracy and formalism are still prevalent, the public service consciousness has not been internalized into the inner execution faith of grass-roots civil servants. The power supremacy has become an opportunity to make some civil servants lose their struggle goals and directions in policy implementation. This leads to the behavioral tendency of profit-seeking and political achievements-pursuing. They completely deviate from the goal of public administration.

Weak awareness of the rule and vague of implementation boundary. In China, the traditional spirit of serving citizens is a patriarchal hierarchy based on human feelings. Coupled with the dislocation of the executive concept, this kind of historical and cultural tradition inertia directly leads to a large number of phenomena that the executive rules are too broad and too soft. This is mainly manifested in three aspects. Firstly, there are some unwritten implementation rules that can be widely recognized and followed. It's the potential rule of implementation supported by "reason". It regards human feelings as the lubricant to dredge the system. It believes that human feelings and relations have the irreplaceable advantages compared with rules and regulations. In many cases, whether the policies and decisions of the grassroots government can be implemented quickly and effectively depends on the relationship. Secondly, some grassroots civil servants have weak awareness of the rule of law. They
believe that the essence of implementation is "obedience to the superior authority". Even if the leader's order is contrary to the spirit of the policy, they will carry out according to the leader's wish, rather than laws and regulations. The "leadership worship" consciousness make some grassroots civil servants ignore the value of serving the people wholeheartedly. Thirdly, some grassroots civil servants break through the bottom line of pragmatic behavior for the people in the process of policy implementation. They make a superficial article in pursuit of political achievements, such as "face project" and "roadside flower project". They prefer to choose individuals or villages with more development ability to input poverty alleviation resources, so as to achieve results as soon as possible. Even some grassroots civil servants arbitrage and cheat for the benefit of the people at the expense of the public. So the livelihood fund become their own "reserved plots".

Desalination of pragmatic style and obvious job burnout. Actually, the administrative behavior driven by certain motives or desires is a cultural phenomenon. The way of behavior embodies certain cultural characteristics. But not all executives can have lofty executive concepts. In practice, eagerness to seek success, false reporting, exaggeration, and ruling politics are still in existence. They are mainly manifested in two aspects. Firstly, the new bureaucratic style has begun to grow, which is characterized by "inadequate service, lack of initiative, lack of responsibility ". In practice, it is mainly manifested in the actions of seeking stability, singing the tune in meetings, and muddling for official. For example, some grassroots civil servants adhere to the official philosophy of "the less trouble the better". Secondly, some civil servants have weak execution willingness and obvious job burnout. They are shoddy, chaotic, and slow. According to the questionnaire survey of 2015 civil servants in China's 31 provinces, more than half of the civil servants have different levels of job burnout [11]. The burnout of grassroots civil servants is significantly higher than other levels of civil servants. There are three significant differences in emotional exhaustion, dehumanization and low achievement.

Administrative Cultural Causes of Deviant Grassroots Policy Implementation

As Mr. Qian Mu said, "all problems arise from cultural problems. All problems shall be solved by cultural issues. "[12] "I think the research should be studied from a cultural perspective. Every learning is a part of culture."[13] So in order to understand the causes of deviant policy implementation, we should also return to the cultural perspective. Along with the traditional understanding that culture is divided into three levels of belief, norm and behavior, administrative culture will be manifested in the form of materialized thought, system, norm and behavior. At present, there are three administrative cultural factors leading to the deviant implementation. They are "power -based" administrative concept, lack of administrative system culture and negative administrative psychology.

Ingrained "power -based" administrative concept. China's long history of feudal tradition has created the cultural connotation of power-based. No matter in or outside of the administrative system, there is a shadow of power. The bureaucratic standard and the consciousness of power worship are gradually recognized and accepted by people. They even develop into the inherent cultural concept dominating the value orientation and behavior choice. Since the Qin Dynasty, China has formed a huge bureaucratic system under the highly centralized administrative system. However, this "power-based" tradition didn't disappear with the establishment of new China. The autocratic ideas derived from "power-based" are still affecting the behavioral choices of local civil servants. Not only does it lead to the bureaucratic faction, but also it results in the deviation of emphasizing power over responsibility. Meanwhile, the profound autocratic thought makes officials who can obtain vested interests unwilling to delegate power. They often exclude the interactive participation, refuse the democratic supervision, and prefer the dark box operation. Although China's Constitution has clearly emphasized that the power of the government is given by the people, some civil servants in important positions enjoy the social powers superior to other groups.

Lack of administrative system culture. If the values only stay at the level of reason, it is difficult to provide practical codes of conduct. It will result in the ambiguity of the boundaries and the “edge ball effect” in policy implementation. In the process of policy implementation, imperfect grassroots
legal system, unreasonable supervision system, and unscientific assessment system make grassroots civil servants have to take self-interested behaviors and evasive measures. Influenced by conservative administrative culture, some China's implementation systems have not kept pace with the times. This provides a variety of realistic opportunities and psychological excuses for civil servants' cross-border actions. In addition, China's traditional administration with authoritativeness and moralization, have added a lot of human governance colors into administrative practice. Although the feudal system has been removed from the historical stage, human factors left in modern administrative system culture still deeply affect some administrative activities. Influenced by traditional human culture and relationship oriented thought, it is easy for grassroots civil servants to deliberately form some "circles" according to geographical, professional and academic factors. This kind of human-based distinction has virtually destroyed the objective and fair administrative principles, and created opportunities for grass-roots civil servants to seek rent. Especially when the policy implementation involves large interests , the grass-roots civil servants will take "human relationship" as an important consideration factor.

**Influence of negative administrative psychology.** "In fact, the manifestation of any cultural form and behavior has its psychological side."[14] As the basis of behavior, psychology directly determines the specific content of behavior. It will have a lasting and stable impact on the behavior once formed. Although democracy, rule of law, service and efficiency gradually are permeated into civil servants' concept, the negative administrative psychological habits still restrict the policy implementation. They are mainly manifested in the rejection of old-fashioned psychology and negative loss psychology. So more and more grass-roots civil servants have the concept of "all-powerful government". They seek stability and refuse the concept of "limited government". They do everything in an all-round way. In addition, with the development of marketization, modern administrative management systems such as "first asking responsibility system" and "last elimination system" have been established. The authority, stability and security of the traditional career superiority is severely challenged. The existence of this negative administrative psychology will weaken the civil servants' overall concept and cooperation consciousness. They ultimately restrict the intensity and validity of policy implementation.

**Optimization of Administrative Culture to Improve the Policy Implementation**

As Almond said, "political culture is not completely consistent with a given political system or society, and the type of political orientation may or generally exceed the political system."[15] In this sense, when a certain culture cannot be adapted to the corresponding implementation practice, it will form "executive intestinal obstruction" and "cultural soft blockage". This requires us to pay more attention to the positive role of administrative culture at the level of concept, system and behavior.

**Reinvent modern execution concepts to enhance the endogenous motivation.** In fact, administrative culture plays an important role through ideas, beliefs, and habits. The potential value orientation directly affects the ideology of civil servants, and then constrains the administrative behaviors. Therefore, in order to change the current situation of ineffective policy implementation, we should actively optimize the administrative concept culture and establish a scientific implementation concept. In practice, we should get rid of the "official oriented" consciousness, and firmly establish the "people-oriented" concept. We should strengthen the ideological and political construction, and always keep in mind that "power is granted by the people", "power is used by the people" and "emotion is connected with the people". In addition, we should promote democratic ideas and firmly establish the concept of democratic administration. Through expanding people's participation ways, we can change the authoritative administration and firmly establish the concept of public service. The "regulatory" implementation will be transformed into "service" implementation, and the grassroots civil servants will be "public servant" instead of "master". No matter which policy is implemented by the grassroots civil servants, we must proceed from the local actual situation and actual wishes of the people.

**Construct administrative system culture to provide institutional support.** However, no matter how beautiful the value idea is, it must depend on the concrete behaviors to realize. The value idea is
only the theoretical form. Its realization depends on the concrete operable system. So we should update the behavior system timely to provide strong institutional support, in accordance with requirements of modern administrative culture.

Firstly, we should improve the legal system under the guide of administrative culture of the rule of law. Culture is the mother of system. Any administrative system acts on the ideological world through certain cultural forms. Therefore, under the guidance of the rule of law, we should consolidate, revise and integrate the existing legal system. We should abolish out-of-date contents and establish a scientific supervision system to expand public participation. Through setting scientific evaluation indicators to clear up the behaviors of emphasizing "trace", we can resolutely prevent and correct formalism and bureaucracy in the implementation process. The grassroots civil servants will be urged to take the law as criterion and the system as the standard.

Secondly, we should balance he relationship between emotion and law to realize the unity of legal effects and social effects. There always has a sequence of values such as emotion, reason and law in China. Although China has adopted "ruling the country by law" as the basic strategy, the concept of emotion formed for a long time inevitably conflicts with the law. So observing the public sentiment, respecting the public opinion and paying attention to the people's livelihood have been the central task of all levels of China's governments. However, the people's sentiments also have a distinction between rationality and irrationality. We cannot blindly distort the facts to cater to the public opinion, ignore the legal regulations, and destroy the fairness and justice of the whole society. So in the process of policy implementation, the grass-roots civil servants should not deny the authority of the legal system due to the influence of public opinion.

Thirdly, we should increase publicity of the rule of law to establish the concept of the supremacy of law. From the perspective of cultural origins, perfect legal system only has the function of prevention and remedy in advance. The internalization of the concept of legal system can make the grass-roots civil servants truly "administrate according to law". As Harold Berman said, "laws must be believed in, otherwise it will exist only in name." In China, the rule of law is not only the basic strategy of governing the country, but also a kind of concept and culture that regards law as the highest authority of the society. So we should extensively carry out the education of "the concept of the rule of law", and actively create a good institutional culture atmosphere. Only in this way, can civil servants complete the psychological transformation from "have to do" to "should do".

Cultivate administrative behavior culture to improve policy implementation ability. Although the external systems for implementation are perfect enough, the quality of the system lies in the person who practices them. As the final implementer of most public policies, the behavior of grassroots civil servants greatly affects the degree, speed, quality and rationality of the target. So it's necessary to optimize the administrative behavior culture through cultivating progressive psychology. Firstly, we should improve the executive capacity of grassroots civil servants through learning and training. On the one hand, it is necessary to broaden the thinking of implementation ideologically, deeply study the relevant professional knowledge and actively combine social research to obtain more and deeper policy information. On the other hand, it is necessary to improve the ability of cooperation from action. Secondly, we should cultivate healthy administrative psychology of grassroots civil servants. Not only can they have the ability to overcome the influence of negative administrative psychology, but they also can reduce the conflict between the old executive concept and the whole organizational culture. Through forming the correct motivation in daily implementation and selecting the organization's behavioral goals, they can achieve the targets more specifically and efficiently. At the same time, we should strengthen belief education and promote their good implementation attitude through learning the theory of socialism with Chinese characteristics.

Conclusion

For a long time, administrative culture has always made the activities of every administrator and the establishment of the administrative system in a specific cultural atmosphere with great influence.
Similarly, the policy implementation behavior reflects the content of administrative culture to a certain extent. The concept of policy implementation reflects the value orientation of administrative culture. The boundary of policy implementation embodies the institutional stipulation of administrative culture. The way and willingness of policy implementation reflects administrative style. The organic combination of the three constitutes a complete system of policy enforcement. In the crucial period of comprehensively deepening China's implementation of reform measures, it is necessary to internalize the overall value into the concept to adapt to the overall implementation activities. This is not only conducive to improving the standardized level of policy implementation, but also to promoting the standardization, coordination, fairness, transparency and integrity of behavior.

References