

# Research on the Path of Remolding Rural Governance from The Perspective of Modernization of National Governance

## -- Shandong Province Is Taken as An Example

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### Abstract

Under the traditional governance framework of "township government and village governance", the contradiction between the "idling" of township government operation and the "shell" and "administrative" of village governance can no longer meet the practical needs of rural social development. Based on this, this paper uses the structural equation model to explore the impact of multiple governance subjects on the reconstruction of rural governance from the perspective of the modernization theory of national governance, and puts forward safeguard measures to reshape the new path of rural governance, trying to change the current plight of traditional rural governance.

### Keywords

Rural governance; Modernization of national governance; Structural equation model.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The modernization of rural governance is the foundation of the modernization of the national governance system and governance capacity. "The countryside is the root of China, the background and carrier of understanding the past China and thinking about the future China cannot bypass, and the countryside is the biggest realistic problem in China". [1] Since the founding of the People's Republic of China, China's rural governance has gone through three stages: rural power, people's commune, and "township governance and village governance". At this stage, China's rural governance is facing the contradiction between the "levitation" of "township governance" and the "shell" and "administrative" of "village governance". From the perspective of the modernization of national governance, we should break the dilemma of traditional "township governance and village governance", reshape the multiple governance path of "township governance and village governance", build a new rural governance system, and achieve good rural governance. Therefore, reshaping the modernization path of township and village governance is conducive to accelerating the modernization of the national governance system and governance capacity. Under the rural revitalization strategy, based on the perspective of the modernization of national governance, it has become an urgent problem to study the path to reshape the traditional "township governance and village governance" and stimulate the vitality of rural multiple governance subjects.

## **2. THE DILEMMA OF TOWNSHIP AND VILLAGE GOVERNANCE IN**

### **2.1. Institutional dilemma of township governments**

Township political power includes township party committees, people's congresses and governments. The township party committees belong to the leading force of the state power and exercise the state political power. As the lowest level of state power, the township government determines the particularity of its relationship with rural society. Its healthy operation is undoubtedly of great significance to the overall development of the country. The daily affairs of the township government have two aspects: upward and downward, which are reflected in the assignment of tasks by the superior government to the township government, and downward in response to the expression of interests of the rural people. Theoretically, it is consistent to be responsible for the superior and the rural people, but in practice, the requirements of the two will inevitably be different. Under the current system, the superior basically controls the villages and towns. From position arrangement to performance assessment, from work content to work process, the township government concentrates all kinds of forces to complete various tasks assigned by the superior government, which is divorced from the rural reality, neglects the development of rural society, and harms the interests of the rural people.

### **2.2. The practical dilemma of villagers' autonomy**

Rural governance and its modernization should be a win-win interaction between state power and civil society. However, some local villages and towns and the functional departments of the superior government have the problems of unclear definition of the scope of responsibilities, unsmooth management system, and dislocation of functions. In order to complete the tasks of the superior government, some functional departments often transfer the relevant work tasks directly to the village committee in the role of "double handed". In addition, because rural development needs a wider range of resource allocation, which is not within the capacity of the village committee, the village committee has to seek various resources beneficial to rural development through administrative operation. In turn, this encourages the higher administrative departments to control the countryside in an administrative way. This will inevitably lead to the deviation between the village committee and the villagers, which leads to the tendency of rural administration.

### **2.3. The governance capacity of rural governance entities needs to be improved**

In the new era, all aspects of China's rural grass-roots party organizations need to be further strengthened. First of all, the loss of rural talents and the aging of rural population restrict the improvement of the organizational capacity of grass-roots party organizations. Secondly, the foundation of rural collective economy is weak. The grass-roots party organizations lack deep financial support for the completion of rural undertakings, weakening the mobilization effect of rural society. Finally, the ability and quality of village cadres affect the effect of rural governance. The village cadres have insufficient capacity, poor coordination ability, weak public service ability of the villagers and inadequate understanding of various national policies. They can not grasp the development trend of rural society well, and can not reasonably handle the contradictions between the cadres and the masses.

## **3. PROPOSAL OF RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS**

### **3.1. Propose research assumptions**

Since the "service-oriented government" was put forward in 2004, it has gradually received theoretical demonstration and practical exploration. The report of the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China clearly proposes to build a service-oriented government that

the people are satisfied with. Building a service-oriented government has become the practical direction of China's current transformation of government management mode and deepening the reform of government administrative system. Since the founding of the People's Republic of China, the role of local governments in China has undergone "the transformation from an all-around government to a market-oriented government and from a market-oriented government to a service-oriented government. Local governments that do not play a good role as service providers cannot become modern governments." [2]

Based on the above research, the following assumptions are proposed: H1: The transformation of township government functions has a positive effect on the reconstruction of township government and village governance.

"The difficulty of rural governance lies in the effective allocation of resources to the countryside and the provision of matching public services." [3] Zhu Gang believes that there are three kinds of unreal financial gaps in Chinese villages and towns, and takes this as the starting point to think that "the establishment of the tax-sharing system not only gives the township finance a legal status in the financial system, but also clarifies the legitimacy and scope of the township financial revenue in a systematic way." [4]

Based on the above research, the following assumptions are proposed: H2: township government finance has a positive effect on the reconstruction of township government and village governance.

The low quality of township government cadres and the imperfect development of rural social organizations are common, which restrict the functioning of township governments. [5] At present, the quality of human resources of township governments in China cannot meet the requirements and challenges of the transformation of government functions and the handling of rural affairs. Yang Yun believes that in order to achieve good results in the election of village committee cadres within the administrative village, the improvement of the system should be based on increasing the villagers' understanding of the candidates. [6]

Based on the above research, the following assumptions are put forward: H3: The ability and quality of township cadres have a positive effect on the reconstruction of township government and village governance.

According to previous studies, rural grassroots cadres are the most direct and concrete promoters of all work. Rural grassroots cadres are the backbone of rural work and the core leadership force to promote rural reform and lead the cause of rural economic and social development. [7]

Based on the above research, the following assumptions are proposed. H4: The ability and quality of village cadres have a positive effect on the reconstruction of township and village governance.

Subjects at all levels have the problem of functional alienation when participating in rural governance, and the role of village committees is not clear; The cohesion of the authority subject is weakened, and the unstable factors are increased; The status of various emerging subjects is prominent. Due to the dilemma of governance imbalance due to the conflict of interests, it is proposed to integrate social contradictions and integrate the relationship between various subjects. [8] The general election of the village committee is the beginning of the villagers autonomous management, which fully reflects the autonomous decision-making, autonomous management, and the important significance of villagers' participation in the autonomous management activities. The orderly conduct of the general election of the village committee can protect the collective interests of villagers and promote the rapid development of the village. [9]

Based on the above research, the following assumptions are proposed. H5: The village committee has a positive effect on the reconstruction of township government and village governance.

Grass-root party organizations play an irreplaceable role in the country's social governance, and are the foundation of governance and the source of power. The 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China recently proposed that we should focus on improving the organizational strength, highlight the political function, and build rural grass-roots party organizations into a strong battleground for publicizing the Party's ideas, implementing the Party's decisions, leading grass-roots governance, uniting and mobilizing the masses, and promoting reform and progress. The function transformation of rural grass-roots party organizations is essentially "to ensure the core role of the leadership of the party organizations, at the same time, we should gradually dilute the administrative color, and return the administration, society, and economy to itself, so as to achieve the return of the party itself." It also further proposed that the purpose of the function transformation of grass-roots party organizations is to achieve the political function centering on the adjustment of rural social interests and the care of the masses.[10]

Based on the above research, the following assumptions are proposed. H6: Grassroots party organizations have a positive effect on the reconstruction of township and village governance.

At present, Chinese scholars' research on villagers' participation in rural cooperative governance is still based on citizens' political participation and rural governance. At present, it seems that there are still many problems in the process of villagers' participation in rural governance in China, but in general, the level of rural governance has been significantly improved compared with the past, the villagers' sense of autonomy has gradually increased, the sense of political participation has been greatly improved, and the sense of trust and identity of political participation has been constantly enhanced. [11]Through the analysis of the current situation of farmers' political participation under the conditions of socialist market economy, it is proposed that to improve farmers' political participation, we should start with vigorously developing rural economy, cultivating farmers' subjective consciousness, and broadening farmers' political participation channels.[12]

Based on the above research, the following assumptions are proposed. H7: Villagers play a positive role in the reconstruction of rural governance.

The participation of new villagers in rural governance is an effective and active push to promote the modernization of the rural governance system, which is conducive to the establishment and improvement of the linkage mechanism for the common expression of the collective interests of the rural people, the creation of a good atmosphere for the new generation of villagers to actively participate in the management of the rural construction of their hometown, the stimulation of the villagers to actively participate in the management of rural social affairs, and the construction of a new community of rural interests, And constantly improve the cohesion of rural governance and the ability of rural social autonomy.[13]

Based on the above research, the following assumptions are proposed. H8: Xinxiangxian has a positive effect on the reconstruction of township government and village governance.

The power of the village group leader comes from the recognition of the villagers and the support of the village committee. Therefore, it has the dual identity of the head of the household and the agent, and it is also the representative of its own interests. When the head of the village group puts its own interests above the public interests, there will be the impact of private identity on the public identity, resulting in the alienation of the crowding-out effect of the village group, and affecting rural governance.[14]

Based on the above research, the following assumptions are put forward: H9: villagers' groups have a positive effect on the reconstruction of village governance.

### 3.2. Summary of research assumptions

According to the assumptions made in the previous section, the following summary of assumptions is arranged. As shown in Table 1

**Table 1.** Summary of expected assumptions

Assumed serial number	Assumptions
H1:	The transformation of township government functions has a positive effect on the reconstruction of township government and village governance.
H2:	Township government finance plays a positive role in the reconstruction of township government and village governance.
H3:	The ability and quality of township cadres have a positive effect on the reconstruction of township government and village governance.
H4:	village cadres has a positive effect on the reconstruction of township government and village governance.
H5:	The village committee has a positive effect on the reconstruction of township government and village governance.
H6:	grass-roots party organizations have a positive effect on the reconstruction of township and village governance.
H7:	villagers have a positive effect on the reconstruction of township government and village governance.
H8:	Xinxiangxian has a positive effect on the reconstruction of township government and village governance.
H9:	The villagers' group has a positive effect on the reconstruction of village governance.

## 4. QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN AND CONCEPTUAL MODEL

### 4.1. Questionnaire design

This paper uses the Likert five-level scale to design the questionnaire, and collects the questionnaire information through online distribution of the questionnaire and offline structured interviews. In the process of questionnaire collection, the author visited three areas in the sample cases, namely Liuwang Town, Linyi City, Daotuo Town, and Shangtang Town, Dezhou City, and collected questionnaire data from villagers in the form of structured interviews. The other three areas used the form of online distribution of questionnaires. When filling in the questionnaire, the author explained the purpose of the questionnaire and the precautions for filling in the questionnaire to the respondents, Let the respondents know the real situation of the region they are in and choose the most agreed or consistent description of the nine observation variables of township and village governance from their own feelings. The criteria are as follows: 1. Very dissatisfied; 2 Not satisfied; 3 General; 4 Satisfied; 5 Very satisfied. At the same time, according to the results of the field survey before the questionnaire design, the questionnaire is adjusted appropriately to determine the final questionnaire. The questionnaire of this study is designed with the following two scales.

#### (1) Measurement of township government indicators

The following table sets the corresponding measurement items based on the assumption of the reconstruction of rural government and the field survey and visit to the rural grass-roots. The measurement scale is shown in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Measurement scales of township politics

Measurement index	Measurement items
Township government	Your opinion on the effect of township government function transformation on rural governance
	Your opinion on the role of township cadres' ability and quality in rural governance
	Your support of township finance for rural governance

(2) Index measurement of village governance

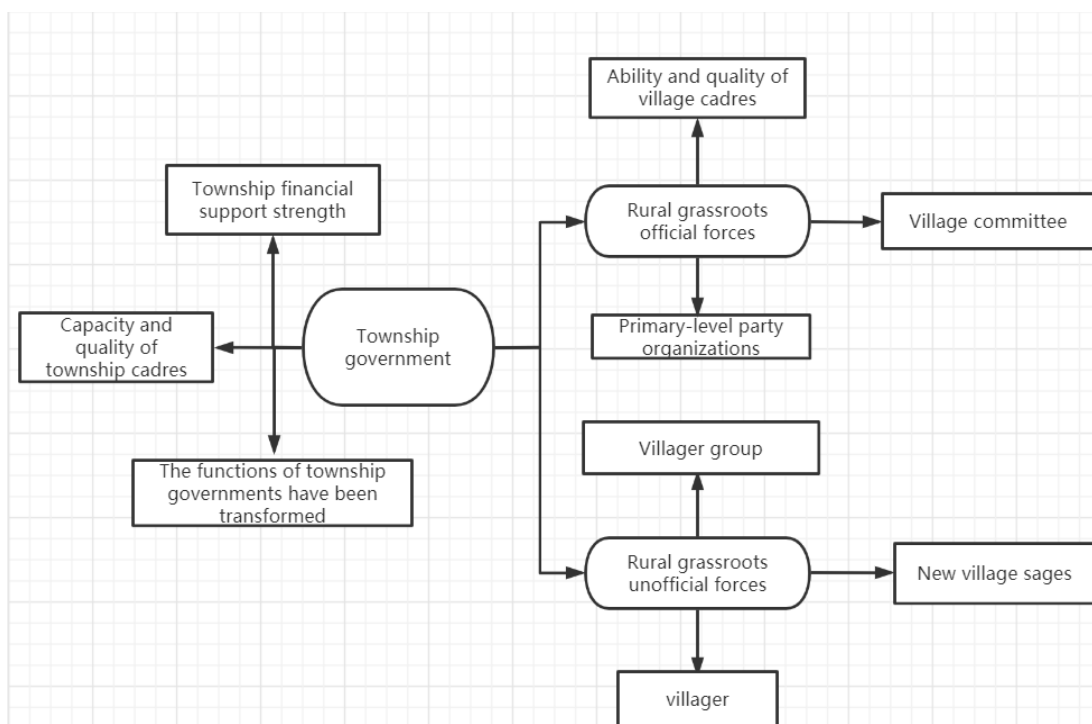
The measurement scale of village governance is shown in Table 3.

**Table 3.** Measurement scale of village governance

Measurement index	Measurement items
Village governance	Your understanding of the role of village cadres' ability and quality in rural governance
	What do you think of Xinxiangxian's role in rural governance
	Your understanding of the role of grass-roots party organizations in rural governance
Village governance	Your participation in village affairs management
	Your opinion on the role of the village committee in rural governance
	Your right to speak in the management of village affairs

**4.2. Conceptual model proposed**

Based on the above research assumptions and the changes of rural grassroots governance subjects under the theoretical framework of national governance modernization, the following conceptual model is proposed, as shown in Figure 1.



**Figure 1.** Modernization theory of national governance to rural governance path reconstruction of the conceptual model

The conceptual model in Figure 1 is explained as follows:

This conceptual model divides the main body of rural governance into three parts: the township government, the official force of rural grassroots and the unofficial force of rural grassroots. Its core is the modernized rural governance system model of "township government guidance - rural grassroots Party organizations as the core - villagers' groups, new villagers' sages, villagers' collaborative participation".

First of all, from the perspective of conceptual model, the township government is cut off from the rural grassroots by means of taxation and administrative control, which makes the township government in a state of "suspension". Therefore, the township government should transform its function, build a service-oriented government, and participate in the modernization of rural governance.

Secondly, the official power of rural grassroots is shown in the following aspects: first, the rural grassroots party organization is the solid fortress of rural grassroots, and plays the core leadership role in rural governance; Second, the village committee should cooperate with the village party organization, do a good job of connecting the preceding and the following role, not only to maintain close contact with the villagers, but also to make a correct interpretation of the superior documents, so that the villagers actively participate in the village governance; Third, village cadres are the direct promoters of the modernization of rural governance and the implementers and implementers of the Party's lines, principles and policies. Their ability and quality should keep pace with The Times in order to play a better role in rural governance.

Finally, the unofficial power of rural grassroots is mainly manifested in the following aspects: first, rural sages can offer suggestions for rural governance, set up models, and play a value-leading role in rural governance; Second, the villager group is the basic-level governance unit in the rural governance system, and its ability to organize and mobilize, maintain order and balance interests is indispensable in effective rural governance. Third, villagers are the main body of rural governance. They are not only the beneficiaries of rural governance, but also the participants of rural governance and the basic force of the whole rural governance. Only when villagers actively cooperate and participate in rural governance and give suggestions for rural governance, can the modernization of rural governance be realized.

## 5. EXPLORATORY ANALYSIS AND RESULT ANALYSIS OF STRUCTURAL EQUATION MODEL

### 5.1. Exploratory analysis of structural equation model

According to the theoretical model and related research hypothesis, the township government, rural grassroots official force and rural grassroots unofficial force are taken as latent variables. After importing the sample data, run the structural equation model. Table 4 lists the parameters.

**Table 4.** Modified model fitting indicators

Reference index	CMIN/DF	RMR	GFI	AGFI	NFI	IFI	TLI	CFI	RMSEA
Statistical value	1.665	0.019	0.967	0.927	0.982	0.993	0.987	0.993	0.055
Evaluation criteria	<3	<0.05	>0.8	>0.8	>0.9	>0.8	>0.9	>0.9	<0.08

As can be seen from the table, CMIN/DF is 1.665, RMR is 0.019, GFI is 0.967, AGFI is 0.927, NFI is 0.982, IFI is 0.993, TLI is 0.987, CFI is 0.993 and RMSEA is 0.055. This indicates that the model fits well.

### 5.2. Analysis of the effect model of rural and village governance from the perspective of modernization of national governance

Path coefficient analysis of SEM model: Analysis of influencing factors of rural governance and village governance, which provides a theoretical basis for the study of reshaping path of modern rural governance and village governance. In this paper, the influence factors of rural

governance are studied through the path coefficient analysis of the model. The path analysis of the structural equation model can describe the correlation between the factors intuitively and effectively. Path analysis can present the interaction mechanism among latent variables and between latent variables and observed variables in the model, and determine whether there is a positive and negative influence relationship between variables. The correlation path coefficients calculated according to the final model of rural governance are shown in Table 5 below.

**Table 5.** Path coefficient results of structural equation model of township and village governance

	path		Estimate	Normalized path coefficient	S.E.	C.R.	P
Rural grassroots official forces	<--	Township government	0.969	1.010	0.071	13.642	***
Rural grassroots unofficial forces	<--	Rural grassroots official forces	0.211	0.207	1.028	0.206	***
Grassroots unofficial forces	<--	Township government	0.754	0.768	0.987	0.764	***
Q12	<--	Township government	1.000	0.859			***
Q11	<--	Township government	0.973	0.842	0.059	16.374	***
Q10	<--	Township government	0.961	0.835	0.062	16.077	***
Q9	<--	Rural grassroots official forces	1.000	0.784			
Q5	<--	Rural grassroots official forces	0.991	0.860	0.072	13.839	***
Q4	<--	Rural grassroots official forces	1.01	0.861	0.074	14.41	***
Q8	<--	Rural grassroots unofficial forces	1.000	0.841			
Q7	<--	Rural grassroots unofficial forces	1.07	0.869	0.068	16.326	***
Q6	<--	Rural grassroots unofficial forces	1.099	0.874	0.066	16.554	***

(Table: Q4 grassroots Party organizations; Q5 Village Committee; Q6 Villagers; Q7 Villagers Group; Q8 New village sages; Q9 Ability and quality of village cadres; Q10 Transformation of township government functions; Q11 Ability and quality of township cadres; Q12 Township finance; "\*\*\*\*" means  $p < 0.05$ .)

From the results in the table above, the following conclusions can be drawn: First, the standardized path coefficient from the township government to the rural grassroots official force is 1.010, and the p value is 0.000. This shows that the township government has an obvious positive influence on the official forces of the rural grassroots. That is, the township government can promote the improvement of the official governance level of the rural grassroots. Secondly, from the perspective of the observed variables, the path coefficients of the township government, township finance's support to the countryside, township cadres' ability and quality, rural grassroots party organizations, rural cadres' ability and quality, village committees, new villagers, villagers and villagers' groups' reshaping of village politics and village governance are all values in the normal range, with a p value of 0.000. That is to say, the above factors have a positive effect on the reconstruction of rural politics and village governance.



## 6. CONCLUSIONS

This paper builds a theoretical model of influencing factors of reshaping rural politics and village governance, uses the structural equation method to explore the influence degree of each governing body on rural politics and village governance, and on this basis puts forward the guarantee countermeasures for the new path of reshaping rural politics and village governance. Through this study, the conclusions are as follows:

(1) At present, the traditional "rural governance" is mainly faced with the dilemma of "unitary" leadership of the township government, "administrative" tendency of the villagers' self-governance system, urgent improvement of the ability of various governance subjects in the grass-roots villages, and low degree of organization of villagers.

(2) The running results of structural equation model show that, under the traditional rural governance system, reconstructing the path of rural governance should break the bad cycle of "unitary" leadership of the township government -- "administrative" of the countryside -- difficulties in grassroots operation, and realize the pluralistic governance of the countryside.

(3) From the running results of structural equation model, it can be seen that under the traditional system of rural governance, the reconstruction of "rural governance" is influenced by factors such as town government, village grassroots official force and village grassroots unofficial force.

(4) On the basis of empirical analysis, the reconstruction of rural politics and village governance should follow the path of "township government guidance - grassroots Party organizations as the core - villagers' groups, villagers' sages and villagers' participation" to realize the modernization of rural governance.

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