

# Research on the Mode and Optimization Path of Local Government Cooperative Governance in Sudden Public Crisis

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**Abstract:** This paper analyzes the problems in the governance of the novel coronavirus epidemic, and finds that there are still problems in collaborative governance, such as difficulties in inter-governmental coordination, lack of institutional guarantee, and insufficient role of social organizations. On this basis, this paper attempts to build a public crisis collaborative governance model, further explains the model, and puts forward specific action directions and countermeasures for the three types of subjects involved in this model, including government, social organizations and citizens, to participate in the public crisis collaborative governance.

## 1 Introduction

With the accelerating tide of economic globalization, public crisis presents new characteristics including systematism, transboundary, derivative and uncertainty<sup>[1]</sup>. These new characteristics presented by public crisis have brought new challenges and risks to the traditional bureaucratic governance mode of government, and the public crisis governance mode based on the bureaucratic governance mode has a certain degree of governance failure<sup>[2]</sup>. The 20th National Congress of the CPC pointed out that we should modernize the national security system and capabilities, resolutely safeguard national security and social stability, improve the national emergency management system, and build an all-dimensional and efficient national protection system. In this context, in order to overcome the disadvantages of the traditional bureaucratic governance model and better deal with the public crisis, it is necessary to establish a collaborative governance mechanism of public crisis.

## 2 Current situation and problems of coordinated governance

The outbreak of COVID-19 in 2020 was a major test of China's governance capacity and system. In addition, the dilemmas among collaborative agents include the difficulties of coordination between governments, between the government and social media, and the difficulties of coordination between new media. From the perspective of the prevention and control practice, the main problems are mainly attributed to the following three aspects.

### 2.1 Insufficient coordination among the main bodies of government governance

In the face of sudden public health crisis, inter-governmental collaboration includes the authority-guided vertical collaborative path and the cross-governmental interest symbiosis collaborative path<sup>[3]</sup>. Among them, vertical authoritative guidance is the most effective way to strengthen collaborative governance when dealing with sudden public crisis, while horizontal coordination is often subject to the influence of department-level departmentalism, territorial division and segmentation, resulting in insufficient horizontal coordination among governments. During the epidemic prevention and control period, according to incomplete statistics, by May 2021, more than 1,000 officials at all levels were held accountable across the country<sup>[4]</sup>.

### 2.2 Social organizations are not playing a sufficient role

When dealing with sudden public crisis, the Chinese government still belongs to the model of "strong government-weak society", social forces still play a weak role in public crisis, and social organizations have a weak ability to participate in governance<sup>[5]</sup>. Social forces here include not only non-governmental organizations, enterprises, citizens, but also media and other opinion organizations. In the early stage of the epidemic prevention and control in Wuhan, there was a serious shortage of resources. Wuhan Union Medical College Hospital posted a message on its official account asking for help, saying that there was a serious shortage of medical supplies. It can be seen that the Red Cross Society of Wuhan has a poor ability to allocate and

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integrate resources during the COVID-19 epidemic, the degree of information disclosure is not enough, and social subjects have a weak awareness of participating in collaborative governance in the process of epidemic prevention [6]. In short, the effect of social organizations' participation in collaborative governance in the early stage of the COVID-19 pandemic needs to be improved. Specific defects are reflected in the lack of their own capacity, supervision, and clear understanding of their own positioning.

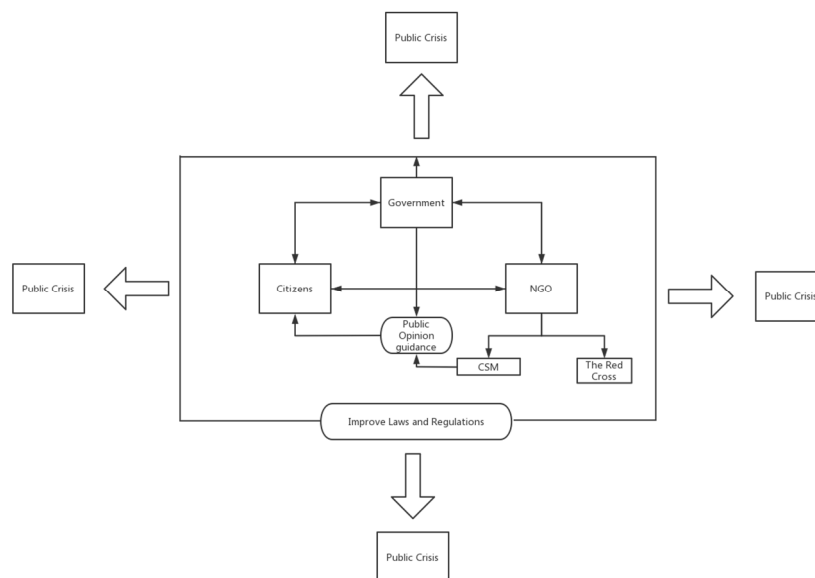
### 2.3 Lack of guarantee for coordinated management of public crisis

The main reasons for the dilemma of collaborative management of public crisis not only include the block of local government's egotism, but also the lack of resource guarantee and poor institutional standardization [7]. China's emergency management is based on the principle of territorial management and hierarchical responsibility. The local government is responsible for the general crisis, and the Department of Emergency Management represents the central support. In case of a major public crisis, the department of Emergency Management serves as the headquarters to assist the central government in organizing emergency management principles. It can be seen that in the face of a sudden public crisis, the existing emergency response system cannot quickly integrate

resources to meet the needs of the COVID-19 outbreak. Meanwhile, the lack and imbalance of resources also hinder inter-departmental collaboration. In addition, the current law does not provide guarantee for coordinated management in public crisis emergencies. For example, the Infectious Disease Law and the Regulations on Public Health Emergencies do not clearly define the responsibilities of various departments, which leads to the phenomenon of compartmentalization and buck-passing when a crisis occurs. In short, the existing legal system and resource supply are still unable to meet the needs of collaborative governance.

### 3. Construction of local government collaborative governance mode

The traditional governance model is difficult to adapt to the problems of large damage degree and wide spread of crisis in sudden public crisis. As a new governance way to deal with public crisis, collaborative governance does not play an effective role in public health crisis. Therefore, it is necessary to build a new model of collaborative governance of public crisis. The author constructs a public crisis governance model in which the government, non-governmental organizations and citizens participate, as shown in Figure 1 [8].



**Figure.1.** Collaborative governance model of local governments in sudden public crisis

This model mainly involves three subjects, namely government organizations (between the horizontal and vertical government), social citizens and non-governmental organizations (enterprises, non-governmental media, the Red Cross Society, etc.). In this model, the government is the leading force to deal with public crisis, improve laws and regulations, make plans, and coordinate its own internal relations. At the same time, the relationship between citizens and other ngos should be coordinated. Social citizens and

non-governmental organizations are important partners. This model mainly shows the Red Cross Society and non-governmental media organizations. The main reason is that in the face of sudden public crisis, non-governmental organizations assume the responsibility of accepting external resources and allocating resources, which requires the Red Cross Society to strengthen its own organizational construction, improve the transparency of information disclosure, and do a good job in the rehearsal of emergency work. At the

same time, it needs to strengthen citizen and government oversight of its operations. In addition, with the rapid development of Internet technology, the private media plays an important role in guiding public opinion when a major crisis happens. Therefore, the guidance of the private media should be strengthened to ensure that news reports are realistic and realistic. In addition, other social organizations also play a role in providing resources, technology and advice, which is not listed in this chart. The third category is mainly social citizens, who should actively cooperate with the work of government organizations and non-governmental organizations, focus on the overall situation, improve their own literacy, risk awareness, and be good at distinguishing right from wrong. To sum up, the effects of the three types of subjects are mutual, and the best synergistic effect can be obtained through the cooperation and game of the two sides, so as to form a joint force to deal with public crisis.

## **4 Construction path of local government cooperative governance mode in public crisis**

Collaborative governance emphasizes the orderly operation of various elements in the organic body, as well as the cooperation and coordination among various elements. The collaborative governance model of public crisis mainly involves three types of subjects, and effective cooperation and mutual supervision of three types of subjects are needed to make the whole model run efficiently. Therefore, this paper starts from the three types of subjects themselves and the improvement of external environment. Trying to build a system that works.

### **4.1 Government organizations: strengthen self-construction and improve the macro environment**

#### ***4.1.1 Improve the construction of laws and regulations and strengthen institutional support***

Improve the construction of laws and regulations and strengthen institutional support: Currently, the relevant legal system on the collaborative management of public crisis is relatively not perfect. Therefore, from the perspective of legislation, government departments should strengthen the top-level design, improve the relevant legal system, specify the collaborative subject, clearly divide the responsibilities of all parties, and improve the standardization and operability of the law. In terms of law enforcement, we will ensure that laws are strictly followed and law enforcement is strict, and increase penalties for dereliction of duty.

#### ***4.1.2 Change the traditional governance mode and shift the focus down***

The traditional bureaucratic system of government departments emphasizes the top-down authoritative leadership, while the sudden public crisis is the process of bottom-up dissemination of information, which will inevitably be affected by the territorial government. Therefore, to break the shackles of traditional bureaucracy on public crisis, it is necessary to build a more equal dialogue system, promote the downward movement of public crisis management center, build a flatter organizational system, promote the transparency of governance process, establish a more equal dialogue mechanism, and promote vertical and horizontal communication and cooperation between governments.

#### ***4.1.3 Strengthen technology and resource investment, and strengthen hardware support***

First of all, government departments should improve the construction of network platforms, strengthen supervision, create a good network environment, and strengthen the guidance of public opinion. At the same time, a more open and shared information platform should be established, and technologies such as big data and cloud computing should be made full use of to facilitate the circulation and distribution of resources. Secondly, it should promote the integration of information technology and governance mode, break the situation of inter-government segmentation, chaotic responsibilities and unbalanced resource allocation, and promote the orderly sharing of information and resources.

### **4.2 Non-governmental organizations: Strengthen self-construction and enhance service capacity**

#### ***4.2.1 Strengthen self-construction and clarify self-positioning***

First of all, to establish a sense of crisis, according to the characteristics of the organization and the industry positioning, have a target and direction of publicity and education, improve the sensitivity of the organization staff to the crisis; Secondly, crisis rehearsal should be carried out to improve emergency plans and enhance their standardization and operability. Specific procedures and processes for dealing with a crisis are clearly stipulated, as well as the distribution of power and responsibilities of relevant personnel, so as to avoid confusion of responsibilities and buck-passing when a crisis occurs. Finally, the supervision and accountability system should be improved to strengthen the supervision and evaluation system of the crisis management process, and the relevant personnel should be evaluated according to the work situation and rewarded according to the actual situation. To sum up, ngos should further clarify their own positioning according to their own internal characteristics and improve their ability to deal with risks in an all-round and multidimensional way.

#### **4.2.2 Establish a sense of collaborative governance and promote information openness and transparency**

Government departments should give full play to the guidance of the concept of synergy, and ngos should actively follow national policies and guidelines, implement the instructions of the government, actively engage in dialogue with the government, strengthen exchanges and mutual assistance with other industry organizations, form an efficient collaborative communication system, cultivate the awareness of synergy among organizations and members, and make the concept of synergy deeply rooted in people's hearts. When a crisis occurs, it is necessary to mobilize positive response quickly and participate in crisis management by integrating resources and providing technology. Finally, it is necessary to promote the reform of the government organization and management system and establish an open and transparent information disclosure system for major issues, so as to improve the public's trust in ngos.

#### **4.3 Citizens: improve the comprehensive quality, legally exercise rights and fulfill obligations**

##### **4.3.1 Change consciousness and improve comprehensive literacy**

First of all, citizens should improve their ability to distinguish all kinds of social rumors, do not believe rumors, do not spread rumors, reduce the pressure on the government to deal with public opinion. In addition, citizens should make good use of the dialogue platform set up by the government and talk to the government through official channels. Finally, enhance the awareness of crisis, keep calm when the crisis comes, no longer take the initiative to step into the role of the recipient, but actively participate in the crisis management.

##### **4.3.2 Adhere to the unity of rights and obligations**

As social citizens in the new era, they should always maintain the unity of rights and obligations, be good at safeguarding their own rights and interests, and understand that national and collective interests are higher than individual interests in a major crisis, and make contributions to safeguarding national interests. Citizens who actively participate in the relevant work of crisis management, at the same time make a rational voice and effective supervision, in violation of relevant regulations, shall bear the corresponding responsibilities according to law.

## **5 Conclusion**

By analyzing cases related to public health crises, it is found that the local government has not formed an effective mechanism for coordinated management of public crisis, which is mainly manifested in difficulties in inter-government coordination, lack of system and

resource guarantee, and insufficient social coordination force. In this context, this paper tries to build a mode of collaborative governance of public crisis, and explains the running logic of this mode and how various subjects play their roles. In general, it is necessary for the government to create an external environment, provide technical support, promote the effective allocation of resources, improve the legal system, and provide a platform for various social platforms to advise. Meanwhile, it is also necessary for ngos to strengthen their own construction and change their consciousness. In short, the construction of the collaborative governance model of public crisis needs the participation of multiple subjects. This study only sketched out a framework, and the specific practice path needs to be further and further refined in the future.

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8. Figure.1 Collaborative governance model of local governments in sudden public crisis. Source : author's own production.