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Social Governance Community:Connotation Definition,Construction Practice and Optimization Approach

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Abstract
The social governance community serves as a crucial pillar for the modernization of social governance. The lack of clarity and specificity in defining the connotation of the social governance community stands in stark contrast to the attention given by party committees and governments, significantly hindering its construction. This article endeavors to utilize scientific methods to delve into and specify the connotation of the social governance community. Using the practice of D township in X county, Z province, as an observation point, which is representative in both governance-oriented grassroots social governance innovation and urban-rural dualism, we analyze the experiences and shortcomings encountered in the construction of the social governance community. Furthermore, we propose optimization approaches from multiple dimensions, including carrier, motivation, and capacity.

Keywords
social governance community; connotation transformation; optimization approach

1.Introduction

The creation of a "social governance community" was first explicitly proposed at the 19th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China's Fourth Plenary Session, and the 20th National Congress of the party further emphasized raising the social governance community's construction to the rank of national security. Thus, it is clear that one of the most important aspects of China's national governance system and a hot issue for social governance innovation in the near and far future is the establishment of the social governance community. Research on the "social governance community" has accelerated in accordance with governmental requirements. The three main concerns guiding current research are how to conceptualize the social governing community, why creating one is important, and how to do it.

One outcome-oriented prerequisite for innovation in national social governance is the establishment of a community for social governance. Practically speaking, answering the query, "What is a social governance community?" is crucial to the community's formation. This topic has previously been studied by academics like Yu Jianxing, who examined its basic meaning, defined it by dissecting its conceptual elements, and traced the discourse's historical origins (Zhang Lei, 2019; Yu Jianxing, 2019; Ding Yuanzhu, 2020; Liu Wei and Weng Junfang, 2022). More recent research has looked at the social governance community's meaning and

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current features from the standpoint of Chinese modernization (Wang Dianli and Xu Jingran, 2023).Scholars have mostly addressed the second question by addressing it from the angles of practical relevance, modern value, and practical demands (Li Youmei and Xiang Feng, 2020; Chen Song and Yin Lei, 2020). Academic research has largely moved its attention to the third issue, which constitutes the bulk of studies, after examining the first two topics. These investigations show clear phased features: Early studies were more theoretical and macro-focused, aiming to investigate broad building routes for the community of social governance from theoretical angles, including component parts and processes of implementation (Yu Jianxing and Ren Jie, 2020; Huang Huixiang and Liu Xiao, 2021). A more micro and operational approach has been taken in more recent studies, where researchers have focused on a specific topic, condition, or aspect of the construction process (Zhang Cheng, 2021; Pan Bo, 2022; Zhao Xiaofeng and Ma Rui, 2023) or discussed construction pathways based on summaries and reflections of individual construction cases (Wang Shizong and Hu Chong, 2021; Wu Fangyan and Wu Dandan, 2023).

All things considered, the body of research on the social governance community that has already been conducted has given individuals access to a knowledge base, construction concepts, and detailed operational advice that will help them continue to build and expand their understanding of the social governance community. The inadequacies of the existing studies, however, are also quite evident. These flaws are most noticeable when looking at the following two areas from the standpoint of creating a social governing community: First off, there is still no clear operational direction for linked building practices because of the ambiguous presentation of the social governing community.Who, for instance, ought to be the key players in the field of social governance? Using the government as an example, we can observe that it has a highly intricate structure consisting of several departments and levels. Should the duties involved in building the social governance community be shared by all governmental levels and departments? Such difficulties are rarely addressed in current research. The second issue is the absence of a thorough explanation of the social governance community's development process, which makes it difficult to comprehend the resources available to the community as well as the challenges and real-world scenarios it faces.This is not a good way to get expertise in building and generate specific ideas for related construction methods. This page is a first effort to rectify the aforementioned inadequacies. It makes an effort to respond to the following queries: Who are the main actors in the social governance community? Which issues have come up throughout the social governance community's construction? How can we better promote the construction of the social governance community?

By defining the meaning of the social governing community, this essay seeks to address the first question. By examining regional building practices, it also aims to provide light on the second query. Ultimately, it investigates realistic methods for maximizing the development of the social governance community, drawing on the first two facets.

2.The definition of the connotation of the social governance community

To build a social governance community, it is essential to first clarify its basic connotation. We also need to define the social governance community's meaning from a practical standpoint, grounded on a clear com-

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prehension of its essential meaning. This will allow us to offer precise operational guidelines for practical application.

2.1Analysis of the Connotation of the Social Governance Community

A proposal to "improve the social governance system featuring party committee leadership, government responsibility, democratic consultation, social coordination, public participation, legal protection, and technological support, and build a social governance community where everyone has responsibilities, fulfills their duties, and enjoys the benefits" was made during the Fourth Plenary Session of the 19th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China. Thus, the meaning of the term "social governance community" has been defined by some scholars as follows: "A group that is consciously formed by the government, social organizations, and the public based on the principles of interactive consultation and equal rights and responsibilities, with the common goal of solving social problems and responding to governance needs, and that is mutually connected, mutually reinforcing, and stable in relationships."

The definition given above can assist us in comprehending the meaning associated with the term "social governance community." It states that the social governance community is fundamentally a "group" or that it takes the form of a "community." Nevertheless, since human groups are diverse, not all groups are considered to be a part of the social governance community. Families, for instance, are typical social groups and also typical communities, but they are not regarded as being a part of the social governance community, and the same is true of communities. For this reason, it is necessary to define the fundamental characteristics of the social governance community.From a definitional standpoint, the social governing community's "genus" is established by classifying it as a "group." But it's also important to describe its "specific difference." The meaning of "genus" and "specific difference" may be fully understood by combining them.

The social governance community is distinct from other groups in a number of significant ways, as demonstrated by the definition analysis above. These differences make up the community's "specific difference." First of all, each of its component themes is distinct. The subjects that make up the social governance community are clearly defined. As to the concept, the government, social organizations, and the public are the primary subjects of the social governance community. The equalization of connections between the subjects comes in second. Under the guiding concepts of "interactive consultation and equal rights and responsibilities," the different subjects engage in interaction that highlights the equality of their relationships. The third factor is the precision of its goals. Addressing social challenges and meeting governance demands is the particular reason for the existence and operation of the social governance community. And lastly, the way it emerged naturally. Ideally, a mature social governance community should be spontaneously formed and maintained by various governance subjects based on their mutual needs.

Our fundamental comprehension of the social governing community is supported by the previously described description of its connotation. But practically speaking, it doesn't stop at just defining its meaning. To give precise practice guidelines, we also need to further elucidate its meaning. We can only guarantee that there is a clear implementation plan for social governance initiatives by taking this action.

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2.2The Specific Connotation of the Social Governance Community

The "group" that makes up the "social governance community" is "government, social organizations, and the public." In actuality, to whom do these phrases pertain? Which societal concerns is it trying to address? What needs does it aim to solve in terms of governance? What techniques and systems does it use to address these issues and meet these demands? How is it possible to establish a pattern of relationships that is "self-consciously formed," "mutually connected, mutually promoting, and stable"? These are the concerns that need to be addressed if we are to fully comprehend the "social governance community" and move forward with building it.

There is disagreement on the primary constituents of the social governance community. The fourth plenary session of the 19th CPC Central Committee suggested, "Improving the social governance system led by the Party committees, with government playing its due role, democratic consultation, social collaboration, public participation, legal guarantees, and technological support, to build a community of social governance where everyone is responsible, everyone fulfills their duties, and everyone benefits." It is clear from this criterion that the government, society, party committees, and the general public are the four basic constituents of the social governing community. But it becomes complicated when you look at how these four entities are really put together.Using the word "government" as an example, it is well known that the Chinese government is organized into five levels: the central, province, municipal, county, and township levels, each of which is made up of a number of departments. Which branch of government, then, makes up the majority of the social governance community? The grassroots is the primary focus of social government, regardless of theoretical study or real-world experience.Thus, the grassroots governments and their operational departments—such as township (street) governments and county-level government departments—are the primary political bodies within the social governance community. These are the things that are most familiar to the average person and have the most regular and personal interactions with them. This feature of the primary government bodies has been reflected in the promotion of the grassroots social governance method of "reporting issues to the street or township and reporting to relevant departments" in recent years.The two primary categories of organizations that are discussed in the social governance community are diverse social organizations and grassroots mass self-governing groups, also known as village/community organizations. In the context of the social governance community, the term "public subject" refers primarily to those with a special interest in a given topic rather than to the wider public in general.

Which societal issues is the social governance community trying to solve? What demands in terms of governance does it address? There is significant variation in the types, degrees, and contents of social issues and governance demands. Does the social governance community need to address all of these issues of social concern and governance? It is obvious that the response is no. The social governance community should not deal with every social issue and demand for governance. It is impossible to expect a single social governing community to provide a universal solution for all problems, as they may only be able to address certain concerns from a practical standpoint.At the grassroots level, the social governance community generally seeks to address a range of issues that are directly tied to the everyday lives and immediate interests of regular people. Many of these concerns are what we term "daily trivialities," including distributing park-

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ing spots in the neighborhood, settling arguments within families, and arbitrating problems between neighbors.

How does the social governance community address issues? What are the methods and mechanisms used by the social governance community to solve problems? All things considered, the method and apparatus for resolving disputes mainly depend on "democratic consultation" and "technological support," with "legal guarantees" providing the essential guarantee for its operation. Instead than focusing on top-down administration, governance emphasizes equal stakeholder negotiation. This idea is best shown by the premise of "deciding matters that concern everyone through consultation with everyone".Besides, what is being bargained for? Negotiations mostly center on issues involving the interests of different governing institutions. These interests can also be viewed as each entity's demands from a governance standpoint. The goal of negotiation is to as closely as possible satisfy the demands of each party. But in practice, diversity and variety in governance requirements are commonplace. As a result, one of the most important things the governance process has to deal with is recognizing and communicating these requirements.This is when "technological support" can come into play. Algorithms and models created cooperatively by technical experts, social governance experts, and numerous stakeholders in social governance can help reveal the true needs and intensity of social governance in some aspects in real-time by optimizing the standardization and digitization of social governance behaviors. This addresses the difficulties posed by the complexity, variety, and potentiality of wants in social governance to some extent."

3.Construction Practice of the Social Governance Community: Based on the Investigation of D Township

A preliminary image of the social governance community has been sketched by the preceding analysis and elaboration of its implications, which can offer some theoretical direction for the community's formation. But in order to create the perfect social governance community, it is important to look at and evaluate actual procedures, compile lessons learned and areas for improvement, and investigate optimization routes. Subsequently, an attempt is made to give a general reference for related practices in the future by summarizing the experiences and limitations of the social governance community's building practice in D Township, X County, Z Province, based on the study and analysis of that practice.Two factors primarily guided the selection of D Township, X County, Z Province as the observation subject: First, social activity, a number of disputes, and a strong creative drive for local governance leadership are the defining characteristics of X County, which is situated in Z Province's developed eastern coastline area. As part of the province's efforts to "comprehensively achieving modernization of provincial social governance at a high level," a number of cities have actively participated in the practice of modernizing municipal social governance, leading to the emergence of a variety of worthwhile experiences and models. This is an example of a locally driven grassroots social governance innovation focused on governance that combines top-down design with bottom-up autonomous exploration to address needs and settle disputes. Second, X County in Z Province is a classic example of the dual structure of urban and rural areas since it has not entirely reached urbanization, with "townships" still existent. As a result, it also has typical representational relevance for advancing the development of the social governing community across the country.

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3.1The Social Governance Community Construction Practice in D Township, X County, Z Province

A concentrated effort has been made in D Township, X County, Z Province, in recent years to realize the objective of "village residents solving village matters, with no need to go outside the village for big or small issues." By means of empirical investigation, the village has devised a "three-part five-step method" and a "handshake reconciliation" approach to conflict resolution, which successfully targets problems from the outset and resolves them at the local level.This pragmatic strategy embodies a vivid practice of "building a social governance community where everyone is responsible, everyone fulfills their duties, and everyone benefits," and it directly implements the demand made in the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China to "timely resolve conflicts and disputes at the grassroots level and address them at their inception."

The creation of a dispute mediation system, enhancing teamwork, and developing creative work procedures have all been done in D Township to support the "handshake reconciliation" process. As a result, D Township now has a "frontline post" for settling disputes and complaints, which serves as a starting point for the development of a social governance community. Among the particular procedures are:

Concerning the creation of a mechanism for resolving conflicts: First, make the primary arena of dispute resolution stronger. Establish a "handshake reconciliation studio" in each of the eleven administrative villages that serve as the fundamental units. Make sure that the necessary signs, venues, staff, systems, and assessments are present. Coordinate at the township level the opening of handshake reconciliation studios with the convenience service centers. Visits are managed by staff who are on hand 24 hours a day to ensure complete coverage of the mediation network. As of right now, the township's 12 "handshake reconciliation studios" and its 2 tourist police mediation rooms serve as the primary dispute resolution forums for small-scale agricultural disputes. Second, establish a fresh force devoted to resolving disputes. Invite the forces of public security, procuratorates, judges, and village legal counselors to actively engage in mediation by joining the studios, building a collaborative settlement mechanism, in response to the diversity, complexity, and specialization of rural disputes. 54 of the 284 conflicts that were received since the handshake reconciliation studios opened for business were resolved through mediation with the help of the appropriate departments, yielding a 100% success rate. Thirdly, create a vast forum for resolving disputes. Make full use of information technology to create a big data analytic platform that facilitates "handshake reconciliation" in light of the increasingly complicated attitudes and interests, as well as the regular occurrence of varied disputes in communities.Provide a functional system for both online and offline operations that includes closed-loop referrals, service windows, specialized staff, platform support, consulting, and assessment. Incorporate grassroots governance with grid management as well. This will result in a dense vertical and horizontal information collecting network, with an emphasis on developing an information-based management platform for online analysis and offline resolution.

Regarding the formation of a team: The first step is to appoint and fortify the secondary handshake staff at the village level. Each village adopts the "three-team" as its central organization and operates on the basis of choosing the most deserving candidate and assigning the competent candidate. Village cadres, party

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members, and local elites make up the majority of the handshake personnel team, which is augmented by other social forces, including personal applications and organizational referrals. Seeing that "every village has a team of handshake personnel," the emphasis is on appointing and training party cadres skilled in problem-solving and fresh local elites passionate about public welfare to be stationed in the village-level "handshake reconciliation studios."As of right now, 93 handshake personnel—39 party members, 28 cadres, and 26 local elites—have been hired and trained. The second task is to work together and organize the singing of three fresh faces. Apply the "three teams, three faces" strategy to the fullest and leverage personal assets to advance grassroots governance. The "Bao Gong face" is presented by cadres, the "Guan Gong face" by party members, and the "Sun Wukong face" by local elites. These expressions of feeling are intended to help resolve conflicts. Thirdly, it is to support the complete execution of obligations and enhance assessment. Completely put into practice the color-coded warning system for the village-level control force, and send out color-coded alerts depending on peace and stability, the number of petition conflicts settled, etc. Every month, the warning index is made available to the public, and the warning scenario is directly included in the rural cadres' performance evaluation, therefore creating a system in which rural cadres share accountability.

Regarding novel work mechanisms: First, schedule a monthly visitation schedule for the leadership teams of the townships. In order to have a firsthand understanding of the true state of grassroots small conflicts and public feelings, the township has instituted a monthly visitation mechanism for the leadership team. Every month on the 14th, they travel to and remain in the approved contact areas, where they sit in "handshake reconciliation studios" to receive visits, assist each village in evaluating and assessing disputes, create "one strategy, one list" for the approved issues, and work to promptly resolve disputes locally. The leadership team has visited and addressed disagreements 85 times thus far, with every one of them being resolved. Second, set up the service mechanism known as "Three-Station Reception": (1) Permanent petition reception: There are two full-time handshake personnel stationed at the township-level handshake reconciliation studios, who are available around-the-clock to take all types of petitions and conflicts. Departments such as public security, procuratorates, and courts can join the studios at any moment for mediation. Departmental stations are deployed based on the unique character of conflict issues.The three teams rotate every week, with handshake personnel from each of the three teams in each village taking turns staying in the studios to help resolve disputes and make sure that the issues brought up by the public can be "addressed at the door, with accessible personnel, and resolved difficulties". Thirdly, set up a quick response system for resolving disputes. The village-level handshake reconciliation studios are ready to immediately resolve both little and significant concerns brought up by the grassroots population. The handshake employees look into complaints and make sure that "simple issues are resolved on the same day, difficult issues are responded to within 3 days, and major issues are addressed within 7 days" as soon as they get them. 2023 saw the optimization of the "Smart Service" online platform through the use of digital empowerment. People may receive fast tailored services, conveniently schedule consultations, and settle petition problems online by just scanning the QR code at their doorway. 46 conflicts have been settled using online mediation, guaranteeing a prompt resolution of small disputes at the grassroots level, efficient management, and a successful avoidance of the problem where protracted unresolved difficulties lead "small matters to escalate." As a re-

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sult, there have been fewer multiple trips, hierarchical visits, and mass repeat visits.A total of 284 conflicts of various kinds have been successfully mediated since the studios opened for business in 2020, yielding a 100% mediation success rate. This has encouraged the localization of over 90% of grassroots issues at the township and village levels and innovated the “handshake reconciliation” work, aiming to establish a “vanguard” for resolving petition conflicts.

3.2Experience and shortcomings of D Township's practice

The following is a summary of D Township’s practice experience: First of all, higher departments are paying close attention. It is our understanding that the X County Political and Legal Affairs Committee has always placed a high importance on the social governance community construction practice in D Township that centers on dispute resolution. In order to provide D Township with personnel and material support for its work, relevant leaders have visited the town multiple times to oversee and direct the work. They have also communicated and coordinated with relevant government departments, allowing D Township to receive relatively good policy, manpower, and other resource support. Second, all available local resources have been used. For instance, when assembling the handshake personnel team, party members and local elites were taken into consideration. These individuals are regarded as superior by the public and are well-versed in local customs, which makes them ideal mediators of disputes. Furthermore, rather than depending just on objective criteria for strictly rule-based judgments, the mediation method emphasizes the use of local, village, and family attitudes to mediate. This strategy addresses the complexities of dispute resolution and is a practical, scientific approach.

Still, there are a number of serious issues with D Township’s practices that require more investigation. First, the issue of low participation—that is, the unwillingness and lack of incentive for engagement among pertinent entities—mostly shows up. Government and social institutions have demonstrated a high readiness to participate in D Township practices; but, in comparison, public knowledge and willingness to participate are not as prominent. Furthermore, further observation is needed to see whether the other two categories of entities can continue to exhibit strong and consistent enthusiasm for engagement. The second issue is that the qualities of equal consultation and insufficient capacity—that is, the incapacity of those involved in governance—are not well represented. Different entities must be able to completely voice their perspectives on the basis of equal standing in an ideal social governance community in order to come to a consensus on problem-solving. Governments and other social entities, however, frequently act as mediators in D Township practices. It should be noted that mediation of conflicts does not always entail the creation of consensus or the actual resolution of disputes and the restoration of a stable social order.

4.Optimization Approach to the Construction of Social Governance Community

A mature social governance community is not something that just happens; it must be “self-consciously formed” and self-sustaining. It must be nourished and fostered instead. It can only genuinely become acknowledged and endure if all stakeholders fully acknowledge and cherish its roles. As a result, it’s essential

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to maximize the strategy used to build the social governance community from angles like carriers, dynamics, and capabilities.

4.1 The Dimension of Carriers: Consolidating the Organizational Carrier of Social Governance Community Construction

From the perspective of practical construction, it is necessary to first establish corresponding work platforms based on these macro principles in order to provide organizational support for the construction of the social governance community, even though the Party and the state have made principled provisions for the creation of the social governance community, outlining the fundamental duties of various governance entities. The macro-principled condition of the state for the development of the social governance structure is "leadership by the Party committee and responsibility by the government". Thus, local Party committees and governments must naturally assume primary responsibility for building the social governance community in accordance with the distinctive practices in different locations. A variety of issues are covered by social governance, and it frequently calls for the participation of several ministries and geographical areas. Many local social governance initiatives are struggling to gain traction because of the Chinese government's current "block" structure and how to create synergies within it. Current studies indicate that "under the leadership of the Party, has become an important institutional arrangement to promote the coordinated governance of multiple subjects and enhance the overall governance capacity of the grassroots governance system." This means that it would be preferable to fully utilize the Party committee's function and create the necessary work platform for the "Party leadership" in order to build the social governance community. The above-mentioned D Township's real-world experience helps to partially validate the significance of this idea.

In particular, the Party committees of grassroots governments must be fully allowed to assume a leadership role. The Party organizations of grassroots autonomous organizations and social organizations can participate as members of corresponding entity or non-entity social governance community working groups, which should be spearheaded by the local Party committee. As the organizational vehicle for the actual activity, form a working group for social governance community creation at the village and community levels. By doing this, we can more effectively rally the support of all stakeholders, create a cooperative effort, and work together to further the development of the social governance community.

4.2Dimension of Power: Exploring the Sustainable Power Mechanism for the Construction of Social Governance Community

As was already noted, there are inevitably many stakeholders in the social governance community. But the issue remains: What encourages these stakeholders to engage and join the community? Promoting the growth of the social governance community is unquestionably one of the government's official duties. But is the government really motivated enough to accomplish this task over the long term? Previous studies show that, as a result of the need for innovative governance, local governments frequently display a high degree of initial excitement and desire for innovation. But when innovations are not sufficiently acknowledged by higher authorities, or are acknowledged but experience declining marginal usefulness, local gov-

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ernments frequently lose interest in pursuing these innovations further. Furthermore, a major contributing factor to the people's lack of excitement for being involved in public affairs is a lack of "publicness". These findings imply that a crucial element in creating the social governance community is encouraging the passion of diverse stakeholders to engage in active participation.

In order to guarantee that all stakeholders have a strong desire for involvement, it is imperative from an operational and practical standpoint to develop incentive systems at the beginning of construction. A "universal incentive mechanism" of this kind guarantees that all parties engaging in community activities have compatible interests and that each participant is strongly incentivized. However, because creating such incentive structures is a type of governance innovation in and of itself, it really poses a number of difficulties. Therefore, conducting pertinent pilot projects based on local conditions and utilizing local unique governance resources to build matching incentive mechanisms would be a more practically realistic scientific method.In order to objectively analyze their normalizing and motivating effects, it is imperative that their real impacts be properly evaluated, particularly through long-term examinations. Using D village, X county's "handshake reconciliation" process as an example, what encourages each side to take part? How much longer can this drive last? In order to provide a strong conceptual basis for the creation of associated incentive systems, these concerns need extensive observation and in-depth comprehension.

4.3Dimension of Capacity: Enhancing the Participation and Governance Capabilities of Members in the Social governance community

As was previously said, the social governance community uses negotiation as its main method of problem-solving. It is imperative to acknowledge that successful negotiation is contingent upon specific prerequisites, one of them being the possession of deliberative negotiating capacity. The capacity to bring people together, articulate opinions in a calm and reasonable manner, and provide solutions to problems all require equivalent skills. But not all governing bodies are born with these kinds of skills, which means that capacity building is necessary. Furthermore, the significance of improving governance participation capacities within the Social governance community is underscored by recurring difficulties like "weak negotiation willingness among social subjects" and "excessive intervention of public power in community negotiation governance".

Social entities are essential to establishing capability, and social organizations, as one of the representations, are quite powerful. These groups can act as both nurturing organizations and active participants in the social governance community. But fostering organizations like social groups need to be qualified in certain ways, such having professional techniques to teach rational participation and mobilization abilities to encourage the involvement of different governing bodies in public affairs. Hub-style social organizations—exemplified by professional social work service agencies—have become more significant actors in this space in recent years. Their innate professionalism gives them an advantage when it comes to developing thoughtful negotiating skills. These groups have also played a significant role in helping local governments innovate grassroots social governance by actively participating in initiatives like building social organization capacity and taking use of their expertise with local conditions. In the future, effective "social coordination" will depend on utilizing these organizations within the Social governance community, supporting their professional advantages, and providing training to build community capacity.

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5.Conclusion

Modernizing social governance is made possible in large part by the Social Governance Community. A significant requirement for accomplishing the modernization of social governance is, to a considerable degree, whether the Social Governance Community can be successfully constituted and carry out its planned functions. The Social Governance Community need to be more than just a lofty goal; it must become an actual, functioning community. As a result, correct promotion of its construction is required, with an emphasis on elements like carriers, mechanisms, and capacities, and based on a precise explanation of its meaning.

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