

# **The Promoting Path of my country's Urban Community Governance from the Perspective of Social Capital**

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**Abstract:** The spiritual characteristics of the community and the core content of social capital are logically consistent and closely related. The social capital accumulated by the universal trust, reciprocal norms and close networks among community residents is a valuable resource for advancing the governance of urban communities in our country, and it is also the vision guide and promotion path of community governance. Efforts should be made to promote community governance from the aspects of cultivating the public spirit of community residents, promoting the common interests of community residents, cultivating community non-governmental organizations, and establishing community trust networks and norms.

## **1. Introduction**

At present, with the increase in population, various problems encountered in community governance are also emerging one after another. First, in the process of urbanization, social conflicts in urban communities have become increasingly intensified. Issues such as population control, social security, and services for laid-off and unemployed workers continue to emerge, and traditional management methods can no longer adapt to the current urban development speed. Secondly, the level of community governance is still primitive. The governance structure of urban communities in China has developed relatively late compared with western cities. The current urban communities in our country still have the phenomenon of administrative factors infiltrating urban community organizations, community autonomy has not really been realized, the "rule by man" in the community is strong,<sup>[1]</sup> and the level of urban community governance needs to be further improved. Therefore, how to promote urban community governance has become particularly important.

## **2. Concept review of community governance**

Community governance refers to the handling of activities involving public interests and public affairs by the government, non-governmental organizations, and community residents in the community field, reflecting the form of management by different governance entities in the community using their own resources.<sup>[2]</sup> "Community governance can use institutional arrangements different from the state and the market to systematically realize the appropriate development and adjustment of certain public resources, and make up for certain deficiencies in the regulation and control process of the state and the market." The goal of community governance is to improve the happiness of community residents, improve the level of community autonomy, and enhance the community's sense of belonging and cohesion. According to the concept of governance and the content of governance theory, we can know that community governance has the following characteristics: 1. The diversification of community governance bodies; 2. Diversification of community governance methods and means; 3. Participation in community governance; 4. Networking of community governance.

## **3. An Analysis of the Concept of Social Capital**

At present, the academic circle has no unified conclusion on the definition of social capital. Different scholars have discussed the concept of social capital from different research perspectives.

In 1980, French sociologist P. Bourdieu formally put forward the concept of "social capital" and defined it as "social capital is a collection of actual or potential resources."<sup>[3]</sup> Those resources are related to the possession of a certain persistent network. This network is familiar and recognized by everyone, and it is a network of institutionalized relationships. On this basis, the American sociologist James Coleman defines social capital from a functional perspective: "Social capital is defined according to its function. It is not a separate entity, but a different entity with various forms."<sup>[4]</sup> It has two common characteristics: they are composed of the various elements that make up the social structure; they provide convenience for individual actions within the structure. Like other forms of capital, social capital is productive. Whether people own social capital determines whether it is possible for people to achieve certain goals. The American scholar Alejandro Portes defined social capital with a critical attitude towards Coleman. He pointed out: "Social capital refers to the ability of individuals in the network or broader social structure to mobilize scarce resources."<sup>[5]</sup> "This ability is not inherent to the individual, but an asset contained in the relationship between the individual and others. Social capital is the result of embedding." American sociology professor Ronald Burt summarized the thinking of Coleman, Potts and others, and pointed out: "Social capital refers to connections with friends, colleagues, and more general connections, through which you get the opportunity to use other forms of capital...The relationship within and between companies is social capital...it is the final deciding factor in the success of the competition."<sup>[6]</sup> Harvard University sociology professor Robert D. Putnam was the first person to introduce the concept of social capital into political studies. He believed: "Social capital refers to the characteristics of social organizations, such as Trust, norms, and networks, they can increase the efficiency of society by promoting cooperative behavior."<sup>[7]</sup> He made the concept of social capital truly aroused widespread concern.

#### **4. Determination of the relationship between community governance and social capital**

A community is a community of people, containing rich resources of social capital, and an important place for fostering social trust and cultivating civic spirit. The real development of a community begins with the creation of social capital. To maximize the public interest and realize effective governance of public affairs, the key to community governance is to build a participation network for coordination and cooperation among multiple subjects,<sup>[8]</sup> and promote continuous interaction and multilateral cooperation between the state and civil society. Specifically, all stakeholders in the community can finally maximize their own interests only when they consider the vital interests of others, and only when they work together can they get the benefits that meet the greatest common divisor of both parties. Therefore, in the process of its generation, cultivation and development, social capital has undergone repeated running-in and multiple games between altruism and self-interest, and finally sublimated to a mutually beneficial unity and then concluded into a mutually beneficial agreement and norms, which effectively promotes the occurrence of cooperation, effectively suppresses the occurrence of free-riding behavior, and ultimately can properly coordinate the contradiction between personal interests and public interests. In addition, for the analysis of the characteristics of community governance, we can see that the essence of community governance is cooperation and reciprocity based on following the principles of public interest, market principles, and value recognition. The relationship of community governance is embodied in the relationship of trust and reciprocity between members of the community, and trust and reciprocity are the core elements and important content of social capital theory.<sup>[9]</sup> Until now, the discussion also reveals the consistent relationship between the essential requirements of community governance and the core content of social capital.

Furthermore, the prerequisite for the development of community governance is the need for abundant social capital as support to promote the collaboration between the state and civil society. The abundance of social capital in the community is directly related to the cohesion and vitality of the community and the performance of community governance. In our country, the society of

acquaintances pays attention to emotional value judgments and the atmosphere of public opinion, and the community has been mixed with localized ethics, which is reflected in the strong relationship network, community trust and community norms. These are not only important elements to promote community development, but also vision guidelines for community governance. Therefore, when we further advance our community governance, we must continue to innovate research perspectives and theoretical paradigms, introduce social capital theories characterized by trust participation, network and reciprocity in a timely manner, and strive to cultivate community value recognition, civic participation in networks and behavioral norms.

## **5. Construction of social capital**

### **5.1. Nurturing the public spirit of community residents**

Public spirit is a kind of moral concept and value pursuit that is oriented by public interests and public needs and rooted in the public sphere.<sup>[12]</sup> The process of continuous accumulation of public spirit is also a process of gradual accumulation of community social capital stock. The government actively promotes the construction and maintenance of community governance cooperation networks, vigorously promotes the cooperation and co-governance of public power and social forces, and enhances mutual trust among community governance subjects. The value orientation of the public spirit will naturally become the value judgment and behavior mode of the residents. One of the important forms of community life includes participating in the decision-making of community public affairs and actual cooperative actions to deal with the dilemma of collective action in community public affairs.

### **5.2. Promote the communityization of the interests of community residents**

The benefit element is the key content of building a community relationship network. Only when the residents of the community realize that the development of the community is closely related to their own interests, will they take the initiative to share their network of relationships with the community. The gradual realization of the communityization of the interests of community residents is an important means to increase the social capital of the community. Therefore, on the one hand, we must continue to deepen the reform of the unit system and increase the awareness of the unit's independent legal person; on the other hand, it is necessary to gradually separate the dependent function of the unit under the old system, transfer part of the welfare protection function to the community, and gradually realize the communityization of the interests of community residents.

### **5.3. Vigorously develop community NGOs**

The main manifestation of social capital accumulation is community network, and the important carrier is non-governmental organization. NGOs with rich social capital are very important to the development of community governance. Diversified social organizations, dense network of relationships, and a high level of trust can reduce information barriers, reduce irregularities, and promote collective action and community governance. However, in our country's practice for a certain period, the government has done a lot of things that could have been done by neighbors with mutual assistance inhibiting the generation and cultivation of social capital.

Therefore, the restoration and construction of social networks should focus on the cultivation and development of community non-governmental organizations. The social network composed of social organizations inside and outside the community will become a medium for community members to communicate with each other, which is conducive to promoting collective action and the long-term development of the community.

### **5.4. Actively build a community trust network and norms**

The essence of social capital is the sum of equal and mutually beneficial relationships generated within the community. These intangible relationships are like superglue, bonding increasingly atomized individuals into community members in the community, which is undoubtedly beneficial to the governance of the community. The relationship of equality and reciprocity comes from the

formation of social networks, but in the actual life of the community, there is a lack of in-depth communication between community members, and the relationship is relatively weak. Therefore, community organizations must actively hold various community activities and normalize and institutionalize activities that residents like to hear and see. With the help of community activities, it promotes the understanding and communication between community members, enhances the sense of belonging of community members, and releases the enthusiasm of community members to participate in community affairs. In addition, the frequent interactions and long-term contacts between community members can generate some willingness to cooperate, arouse a sense of identity with the group, and ultimately promote the formation of equal and mutually beneficial trust and norms in the community.

## 6. Conclusion

Elements such as trust, network, reciprocity, and regulation are important content of social capital. For community governance, these elements are harmonious community interaction, an equal and mutually beneficial community cooperation mechanism, and a responsible community governance mechanism. The promotion of community governance must depend on the abundant social capital in the community. The total amount and distribution of social capital directly determine the creativity and cohesion of the community.

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