

Research Article

The Application Prospect of Governance Models of National Top 100 Counties-Taking Henan Province as an Example

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Abstract: In this study, we show that different counties in Henan have formed "prototypes" of some governance models and 4 governance models have their own application space and regions. Under the background of China promoting central and western development strategy and industrial transfer from eastern region, Henan should seize this critical opportunity and all county governments should select or build their appropriate governance model according to their own economic, social and environmental conditions, learn from and use various county governance models to improve their county governance levels; in the meantime, the government should also strive to shape and build new ways of governance or even governance models and form new governance models in addition to the four models in order to promote rapid economic development of the county, thus achieve a strong comprehensive competitiveness.

Keywords: Application, governance model, top 100 counties

INTRODUCTION

The main governance models of National top 100 counties' governments are cross-regional cooperation governance model, flat governance model, multi-center cooperation governance model and government-led-pluralistic participation governance model. As the scientific induction of governance experience of advanced experiences or pilot areas, its value should not just be useful theoretically; further thinking is needed to address the issue of how to apply these advanced experiences to the government governance of other counties other than national top 100 counties to improve governance level, capability and effectiveness of all counties nationwide.

Henan is now faced with important development opportunities; under the background of China promoting central and western development strategy and eastern industrial transfer, Henan should seize this critical opportunity and conduct vigorous development. In order to achieve county economic development by leaps and bounds, we must accelerate the transformation of government functions and build a new management mechanism (Hu and Zhang, 2009). Among these, county government has the most prominent role; as a bridge connecting municipal and agricultural affairs, county government bears a wide range of functions (Tang and Zhang, 2006), such as providing compulsory education, public health, public security, fire fighting and other public goods to rural and small urban residents,

maintaining political stability in rural areas, coordinating and communicating urban-rural relations and building the government's legitimacy. The county development is the result (Wang, 2009a) of extremely complex socio-economic phenomenon geographical differentiation, which is intertwined with various economic, political, social, technological and natural factors and organization law (He, 2006). In order to promote the development of counties in Henan, it is necessary to explore the possibility and feasibility of the application of various county governance models in Henan (Lu, 2009; Hu and Zhang, 2009; Chen, 2009; Ma and Dai, 2008; Zhang, 2008a; Wang, 2009b).

This study finds that different counties in Henan have formed "prototypes" of some governance models and 4 governance models have their own application space and regions. In the process of promoting and improving county governance models, Henan Province should select or breed a particular governance model according to the county's situation and develop and improve governance model as a dynamic process and evaluate pros and cons of a model with the people as the core (Zhao, 2009; Hu, 2008; Zhang, 2008b).

THE DEVELOPMENT STATUS QUO OF COUNTIES' GOVERNMENT GOVERNANCE IN HENAN PROVINCE

The innovation and forging of government governance models: Henan Province has ceaselessly

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made a series of exploration about the county governance model. In 1992, Henan selected top 18 counties with most economic strength to conduct special pilot experiments. Pilot contents consist of expanding the county's right of approval in economic development, stabilizing the tenure of top leader, putting secretaries and county magistrates under direct administration of Organization Department of Provincial Party Committee, reporting county projects directly to the provincial office for approval. But unfortunately, with the passage of time, these pilots are not strengthened, but gradually terminated (He, 2006). At present, eight counties in Henan are among the national top 100 cities and counties, they are Gongyi, Yanshi, Xinzheng, Xinyang, Xinmi, Yuzhou, Dengfeng and Yongcheng. Being located in the relatively backward area and being able to become members of the country's famous top 100 counties, these Central Plains Counties must have some noteworthy experiences and practices on government governance. Some of the Counties of Henan Province, such as Gongyi City and Dengfeng City, conducted governance innovation and reform in resource utilization and tourism development. Henan Province is also promoting the formation of top 100 counties' governance models; the name of these counties and cities suggests most of top 100 counties in Henan Province are county-level cities and these county-level cities have broader governance power and more preferential policies than other counties.

Henan Province is geographically located in the central part of China, the isolated hinterland which cannot be included in any regions in four directions, thus most county governments are not good at launching and carrying out pioneering work on governance; they are content with the current status and the government leaders and cadres lack advanced, open and innovative thinking. Therefore, from the perspective of overall situation, Henan didn't take too much action on innovation of county governance models. Compared with the innovation of grass-roots political governance in Sichuan, strengthening and expanding county's power in Zhejiang and county and township-oriented development in Jiangsu, Henan Province doesn't have too many noteworthy experiences and practices on county governance innovation. After observing the winners of "China Local Government Innovation Award", which can be considered as an important indicator of county governance innovation, it can be found that Henan is in a poor ranking position, for example, on the short list of the Fifth Local Government Innovation Award, there is no local government innovation cases from Henan Province. Since 2003, the economic strength of Henan

Province has ranked fifth in a row nationwide, but compared with the economic strength of the top four of Guangdong, Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Shandong; the counties' economic situation in Henan Province still has a long way to go (Lu, 2009).

The conditions and opportunities of conducting county governance innovation in henan province: As one of the multiple subjects of public affairs management, government must optimize the governance concept and the working path to conduct governance innovation (Hu and Zhang, 2009) with the development of society, politics, economy and culture, especially the change of government, society and market force. Nationally or provincially speaking, whether in the big environment or the small environment, Henan Province could've and should've done more about county governance innovation. At present, the national strategy on promoting rising of central China provides policy space and preference for various reforms of the central area and the differentiation authorization strategy that our country has been promoting in various regions with reform pilot sites as the core provides possibility for various local areas to conduct innovative reform.

Under the current industrial transfer trend, Henan could provide conditions for taking in new industries through the construction of various new governance systems of county governments and also provide support mechanisms and external capability for undertaking new industries. In order to achieve leap forward development, Henan Province is also promoting governance test at all levels, for example Henan Province is promoting to construct cultural reform pilot areas, Zhengdong New District and the Central Plains area. These reform planning and strategies provide favorable conditions for various counties in Henan Province to construct and build governance models.

THE APPLICABILITY OF GOVERNMENT GOVERNANCE MODELS OF NATIONAL TOP 100 COUNTIES TO COUNTY GOVERNANCE IN HENAN MERITS OF AGENT-ORIENTED MODELING

The applicability of cross-regional cooperation governance model: The cross-regional cooperation governance model of top 100 counties was developed in a particular city circle group and these areas have greater commonality, complementarily and other features in terms of resources, market, etc. The No. 1 of the Ninth National County Economy Top 100 Counties was together won by Jiangyin City of Jiangsu Province,

Kunshan City, Zhangjiagang City and Changshu City, four county-level cities that are geographically connected, as "Regional Strong Economic Counties Coordination Development Group".

At present, Henan Province is striving to build a Central Plains city group. As a regional framework system, the Central Plains city group will launch a diversified cooperation on all levels, such as transportation, communications, etc.; meanwhile, as a city cluster, Central Plains city group would provide external environment and space to carry out cross-regional cooperation for counties and cities in the cluster. From this perspective, the counties within the Central Plains city group can make more achievements on cross-regional cooperation governance of counties. Meanwhile, on the list of top 100 counties, Henan also earned a spot in relation to regional group, namely Central Plains group, including Yanshi city of Luoyang, Xinzheng City of Zhengzhou, Xingyang City of Zhengzhou, Xinmi City of Zhengzhou, Yuzhou City of Xuchang, Dengfeng City of Zhengzhou, etc. which indicates that Henan already has formed the basis for cross-regional cooperation governance. On one hand, various laws and regulations, policies and institutions, personnel structure or systems that are specifically designed to build or forge Central Plains city group provide a policy basis for cross-regional cooperation; on the other hand, the new cooperation mechanism explored or bred during the county governance provides possibilities and opportunities for the concrete realization of Central Plains city group. From the perspective of planning, Central Plains city group includes multiple zones; it's a system that has a wide coverage and it also contains plenty of internal counties and these counties already have a certain basis for cooperation; the building and forging of Central Plains city group provides greater opportunities and platforms for cross-county cooperation, which is conducive to the formation of core area of the central county group.

In addition, as an important transport hub, Henan Province has developed railway, highway, inland waterway transportation and the planning and formation of high-speed railway network provide more opportunities for exchange and integration of the region. Along some important transportation trunk lines, such as Beijing-Guangzhou line, Longhai line and Yellow River line, it has formed a series of areas with more contacts; cities and counties at the transport hub could do more in building cross-regional cooperation governance model, such as building cross-regional cooperation governance system during the process of exploring cross-basin governance along the Yellow River, building cross-regional cooperation governance system during the process of exploring cross-line

logistics along the railway line. Moreover, it's also necessary to strengthen economic ties and cooperation within the region, coordinate industrial direction of attracting investment within the region and project operation and coordinate industrial restructuring and interest relationships (Chen, 2009) during economic development within the region.

The applicability of flat governance model: At present, Henan is also vigorously promoting the reform of county government and some areas are also conducting test and attempt of strengthening the province's role in governing the county; it has accumulated a wealth of experience through the implementation of direct governance of counties by provincial finance. Direct governance of counties in finance by the province is an attempt of flat reform, after the implementation of provincial finance direct governance of counties, provincial administration direct governance of counties will be gradually implemented (Ma and Dai, 2008). Jiyuan City is a county-level city that's directly governed by Henan Province and this kind of direct governance model is quite rare even in the whole country. As a pilot area of direct governance, Jiyuan City has practiced a lot in relation to urban-rural integration construction and Jiyuan's direct governance test also provides samples or materials for Henan Province to promote the flat governance of counties. Henan Province could also strive for state support through a variety of ways to select more appropriate areas to conduct direct governance test. In addition to direct governance areas of urban-rural integration construction, we could also build a tourism direct governance area around the Shaolin Temple on the basis of Dengfeng City and build education direct governance areas in education well developed areas so as to provide the premise for fully implementing the flat governance model in future through various forms of direct governance tests. Just as the multiple layers of flattening flat governance covers, the county should, besides promoting flat governance on province-county level, promote flat governance in its internal areas. At present, some towns and villages in Henan are making active exploration in terms of reducing administration layers and diluting administration elements.

However, as a central province, the economic, social, cultural and other conditions of Henan Province still have a large gap compared with the developed areas. When it comes to the promotion of village autonomy, township autonomy, county controlling township's funds, province direct governance of counties as well as other forms of electronic governance and public service center-based one-stop governance, Henan Province does not go the extra miles to surpass

other provinces; some counties in Henan province not only didn't build a new mechanism of direct governance, but just took flat governance for the external "appearance" and still promoted the traditional hierarchical and centralized multi-layered vertical governance. Moreover, most counties and cities in Henan Province don't possess the conditions to implement flat governance. Therefore, the promotion of county flat governance in Henan Province is still being held back by many factors and most counties still don't possess the conditions and basis to implement flat governance.

The applicability of multi-center cooperation governance model: Under China's specific national conditions, local governance is still the power dominant governance pattern with government as the center in many places, superior-subordinate relation is formed around a power center among different levels of governments, local government and external subjects; thus single center, centralized governance system (Zhang, 2008a) emerges, in which lower local governments take absolute orders from higher local government, NGO and private organizations take absolute orders from the local government. This kind of governance pattern also exists in Henan; this government-led governance cannot give play to the enthusiasm of other subjects for governance, so it needs to be changed or improved. Under the guidance of multi-center governance concept, multiple subjects will be responsible for maintaining social order and coordinating social development, including governmental organizations and the NGO, for-profit organizations and non-profit organizations, individuals and interest groups and the governance action both involves governmental mobilization type and social operation type (Wang, 2009a).

Henan Province is a typical large agricultural province with more than 100 counties or county-level cities accommodating over 80% population of the province and county land area accounting for over 90% of the total area of the entire province. County economy is a comprehensive reflection of Zhao (2009) agriculture, farmers, rural economic strength and social development level. In the rural areas of Henan, various forms of social intermediary organizations in supporting agriculture, such as Water User Association, Agricultural Products Marketing Association, Livestock Raising Associations, Agricultural Technology Associations, etc. have all developed. In addition, rural enterprises and major agricultural families, the individuals or organizations developed around agriculture have also developed. In the fields of agricultural technology cooperation, agricultural

production cooperation and agricultural products processing, various forms of self-management, self-service organizations have been breeding and developing and it has formed a series of governance centers. From this feature or point of view, as a large province of developing modern agriculture, new type of agriculture and cooperative agriculture, Henan Province has the conditions and basis for multi-center governance.

In fact, from the perspective of foreign multi-center governance theory and practice, its source is mainly agricultural field. Therefore, a major agricultural province has a good foundation to implement or practice multi-center governance. Henan could promote multi-center governance in the agriculture-leading counties and try to develop various forms of governance mechanisms and cooperation network in the agricultural counties and form and improve all sorts of supporting agriculture agencies and enterprises and other non-governmental organizations. In practice, it could create agricultural production and operating mechanisms, improve the organization degree of agriculture and gradually make agricultural industry move towards large-scale, intensification and mercerization (Hu, 2008) through "company + farmers", "company + cooperative + farmer" and other forms. At present, some counties in Henan have already conducted autonomy tests on agriculture; there was rural construction test presided over by Liang Suming in history and now there is new rural construction test presided over by He Huili of Renmin University of China. A important content of these tests is to establish various cooperative organizations, to build multi-center governance subjects and to form multi-center governance network.

In addition to the multi-center governance test of the agricultural field, it could also build a variety of multi-center governance networks in other fields, such as in small town construction, city group building, etc. As an important economic growth pole, city group could also conduct tests or practices of multi-center governance model in addition to cross-regional cooperation governance. In city group, various non-governmental cooperation agencies continue to increase, which provides conditions for promoting multi-center governance; some foreign metropolitan area is generally typical area with multi-center governance; some small cities, towns and administrations within the metropolitan area conduct a variety of self-governance and service; but as a whole, governance differentiation and works division also exist within the metropolitan area. During the process of

building Central Plains city group, Henan Province could also consider bringing in multi-center governance model to make cities within the city group become relatively independent governance centers.

The applicability of government-led-pluralistic participation governance model: As a central province, Henan province's market economy development level is relatively weak compared with eastern coastal areas and the role of government in economy, society and other fields is still very prominent. The militarization and planning principles of "convenient for authorities", "easy to govern", etc., infiltrate into all aspects of administration and the phenomenon of society, corporations, individuals just being passive followers still exist (Zhang, 2008b). From the province's point of view, non-governmental economy and social subjects are still in the development and growth. Based on the fact that central region market and social autonomy function are not yet fully developed, so local governments are still the "catalyst" of local economic growth. In the development process of most counties in Henan province, traces of government-led economic development and social reform are still very obvious; therefore, the implementation of government-led county governance model will have a greater adaptability. In fact, the government-led-pluralistic participation top 100 counties governance model is mainly applied in the central region with middle economic and social development level; the development situation of these top 100 counties are quite similar to most counties in Henan Province.

However, government-led-pluralistic participation governance model is a transitional form of governance model and it will gradually develop into other forms, therefore, it might not be a wise choice for Henan counties who are trying to build a perfect governance model to learn from transitional form of governance model. Because once government-led-pluralistic participation governance model is applied in the county development and the sample type top 100 counties have abandoned or converted into other forms of governance models, then the counties who have implemented government-led governance model will lack role models to learn from, or like some particular top 100 counties, they will have to pay huge cost of transformation or rebuilding a new governance model. From this perspective, it is not the best choice to implement government-led-pluralistic participation governance model on a large scale.

As for the Henan counties who are striving to build government-led-pluralistic participation governance

model, great efforts need to be made to avoid the negative effects of government-led governance model and targeted measures need to be taken to optimize and compensate for the defects of government-led governance model; like in the process of government supporting intermediary organizations, we should reduce the government's direct intervention and reduce government intervention in the operation link and mainly build a pluralistic participation governance system through building system and cultivating staff awareness, qualities and abilities. In addition, in the process of cultivating pluralistic participation subjects, the government should also promote these subjects to obtain the ability of self-governance and development through a variety of ways.

CONCLUSION

The study found that different counties in Henan have formed "prototypes" of some governance models and 4 governance models have their own application space and regions. In the process of promoting and improving county governance models, Henan Province should select or breed a particular governance model according to the county's situation and develop and improve governance model as a dynamic process and evaluate pros and cons of a model with the people as the core.

Although the top 100 counties have developed a series of governance models and each governance model is bred and adapted to specific areas, in the governance process, Henan counties don't have to strictly copy a particular governance model and it's also not necessary to compare regional environment with a particular governance model. In the process of county governance or shaping governance models in Henan, on one hand, we could learn from and apply the advantages and features of various governance models to the governance process of our counties through an integration method; every county does not have to "get stuck" in the four existing governance models, but to utilize these four governance models through self-selection, choice, optimization and integration; on the other hand, don't turn the existing governance models into a "nest" for the innovation and reform of Henan counties' governance; in the process of county governance, counties in Henan could strive to shape and build new ways of governance or even governance models to form new governance models apart from the 4 models. If it's impossible for a particular county to breed a new governance model, try to conduct small innovations under a particular governance model and then try to achieve governance cumulative effect through a lot of subtle innovations.

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