

Research on the Transformation Path of the Government Administrative Management Model from the Perspective of New Public Management

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Abstract: Centering on service orientation, marketization, performance orientation, and refinement, the New Public Management theory provides important theoretical support for government administrative reforms worldwide and serves as a vital guiding paradigm for the modernization and transformation of government administrative management in China. At present, the drawbacks of China's traditional bureaucratic administrative management model have gradually become prominent, including misplaced administrative functions, rigid work procedures, imperfect performance mechanisms, insufficient digital empowerment, and inadequate diversified governance, which can hardly meet the development needs of governance modernization in the new era. From the perspective of New Public Management, this paper sorts out the adaptive logic of administrative transformation, systematically analyzes the practical dilemmas restricting the transformation of current administrative management, and proposes localized and implementable transformation paths from five dimensions: function reshaping, process reengineering, performance innovation, digital empowerment, and multi-dimensional collaboration. The research aims to promote the transformation of government from a control-oriented model to a service-oriented, efficient, and intelligent one and comprehensively improve the efficiency of public governance.

Keywords: New Public Management; Government administration; Management model; Transformation path

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1. Core connotation of New Public Management theory and adaptive logic of administrative transformation

1.1. Core connotation of New Public Management theory

The New Public Management theory subverts the traditional Weberian bureaucratic administrative paradigm and reconstructs the value orientation and operational mode of government public management, whose core connotation can be summarized into five dimensions. First, customer orientation. It breaks the traditional government-centric control thinking, regards the public and market entities as the "customers" of public services, optimizes public service supply based on public demands, and eliminates formalized and ineffective

administrative behaviors. Second, market-oriented operation. It introduces market competition mechanisms to break the government's monopoly over public service supply, stimulates the vitality of the public service market through government procurement of services and public-private cooperation, and improves the efficiency of resource allocation. Third, performance accountability orientation. Abandoning the traditional process-oriented rather than result-oriented management mode, it establishes a quantitative and assessable performance evaluation system, takes administrative efficiency, public satisfaction, and governance outcomes as core assessment indicators, and implements administrative accountability mechanisms. Fourth, decentralized flat management. It streamlines the cumbersome vertical hierarchical management system, promotes the devolution of administrative power, weakens hierarchical control, strengthens inter-departmental collaboration, and improves the flexibility of administrative decision-making and implementation. Fifth, enterprise-based refined management. It draws on modern enterprise concepts of cost control, process optimization, and refined operations to standardize government administrative behaviors, reduce the waste of administrative resources, and enhance the professionalism of public management.

1.2. Adaptive logic between New Public Management and China's administrative transformation

The core goal of the transformation of China's government administrative management model is to realize governance modernization, with the core demands of quality improvement, efficiency enhancement, and people's benefit, which is highly consistent with the core concepts of New Public Management. Firstly, the service orientation of New Public Management adapts to the goal of building a service-oriented government in China, promotes the transformation of government from "manager" to "servant," and conforms to the people-centered development ideology. Secondly, marketization and performance-oriented concepts fit the core requirements of the reform of streamlining administration, delegating power, improving regulation, and optimizing services, which can solve the problems of government functional offside, absence, and dislocation, optimize the business environment, and stimulate the vitality of market entities. Thirdly, flat and refined management concepts adapt to the refined governance needs of modern society, solve the pain points of rigid administrative processes, low efficiency, and lagging supervision, and enable the government administrative system to adapt to the rhythm of modern governance. Meanwhile, China's administrative transformation is based on local national conditions, abandons the drawbacks of excessive marketization and weakened government public responsibility in Western New Public Management theories, adheres to the principle of public interest priority, and realizes the organic balance between efficiency and fairness as well as market and government.

2. Current situation of government administrative management from the perspective of New Public Management

2.1. Continuous deepening of administrative reforms and steady improvement of governance efficiency

In recent years, China has continuously deepened the reform of the administrative system, comprehensively promoted the reform of streamlining administration and delegating power, digital government construction and standardized government service reform, and constantly optimized the administrative management model. Governments at all levels have continuously streamlined administrative approval items, delegated

administrative authority, simplified work procedures, and implemented convenient measures such as “one-stop online service” and “one-time handling at most,” which have greatly improved the efficiency of government services. At the same time, the government has gradually introduced mechanisms such as performance management, government affairs openness, and social supervision, breaking the traditional closed governance model. Channels for public participation in governance have been continuously expanded, public service supply has become more refined and convenient, and the level of governance modernization has been steadily improved.

2.2. Gradual transformation of governance concepts and initial establishment of service orientation

Guided by the New Public Management concept and national reform policies, governments at all levels have gradually abandoned the traditional bureaucratic and control-oriented governance thinking and established a people-centered governance concept. The focus of government work has gradually shifted from simple social control and policy implementation to public service supply, people’s livelihood guarantee, and social governance optimization. Governments pay more attention to responding to public demands, solving people’s livelihood problems, and improving public satisfaction. Phased achievements have been made in the construction of a service-oriented government, and the publicity and people’s livelihood orientation of administrative governance have been continuously highlighted ^[1].

2.3. Initial formation of a diversified governance pattern

With the advancement of social governance innovation, the government has gradually broken the single governance pattern and actively guided social organizations, market entities, and the public to participate in public services and social governance. Through government procurement of services, government-enterprise cooperation, and social co-governance, the market-oriented and diversified supply of public services has been realized, which effectively makes up for the resource shortcomings of single government supply and improves the coverage and flexibility of public services.

3. Existing problems of government administrative management model from the perspective of New Public Management

3.1. Lagging governance concepts and persistent bureaucratic thinking

At present, some grassroots governments have not completely gotten rid of the traditional hierarchical governance thinking, and bureaucratic formalism still exists. Some administrative staff prioritize power over service and control over people’s livelihoods, focusing on completing superiors’ tasks while ignoring the real needs of the public, lacking the “customer orientation” advocated by New Public Management. In addition, some regions have rigid thinking, relying excessively on institutional procedures and hierarchical approval and lacking innovation and service awareness. Administrative work is rigid and passive, failing to actively respond to new problems and demands in social governance and restricting the progress of administrative transformation ^[2].

3.2. Vague power and responsibility system and unscientific functional allocation

In accordance with the core requirements of streamlining efficiency and clarifying power and responsibility in New Public Management, there are still many deficiencies in the current government power and responsibility

system. First, there are overlapping powers and responsibilities at different levels and overlapping functions, resulting in multi-party management and repeated approval for some administrative matters, while supervision gaps and responsibility evasion exist in some people's livelihood governance fields. Second, the implementation of streamlining administration and delegating power is inadequate, with incomplete authority delegation and imperfect supporting mechanisms, leading to unequal power and responsibility at the grassroots level and the phenomenon of "limited power but heavy responsibility." Third, the boundary between government, market, and society is ambiguous. The government excessively intervenes in the market and undertakes excessive public affairs, making it difficult to give play to the advantages of market-oriented and socialized governance and violating the multi-governance concept of New Public Management.

3.3. Imperfect performance governance system and insufficient efficiency orientation

New Public Management emphasizes performance-centered quantitative governance, while China's current government performance management has obvious shortcomings. Firstly, the setting of assessment indicators is unreasonable, prioritizing quantity over quality and political achievements over people's livelihood. It focuses on economic indicators and the completion rate of administrative tasks while ignoring core indicators such as public service quality, public satisfaction, and social governance effectiveness. Secondly, the assessment process is formalistic, dominated by internal government assessment with insufficient external evaluation from the public and social organizations, resulting in inadequate objectivity and comprehensiveness of assessment results. Thirdly, the performance reward and punishment mechanism is imperfect. The assessment results are poorly connected with job promotion, reward and punishment incentives, as well as departmental rectification, leading to the phenomenon of "disconnection between assessment and application." It fails to force the improvement of governance efficiency through performance management and runs counter to the efficiency priority principle of New Public Management.

3.4. Solidified public service supply and low marketization degree

New Public Management advocates introducing market competition mechanisms to realize diversified supply of public services and break the government monopoly. However, the supply of public services in China is still government-led with insufficient market and social participation. In people's livelihood fields such as education, medical care, elderly care, and community services, the government undertakes excessive affairs with limited participation space for market entities and social organizations. Meanwhile, the public service supply adopts a one-size-fits-all model with serious homogenization, failing to provide targeted services according to the differentiated needs of different groups and regions. Some government service procurement projects have non-standard processes and imperfect competition mechanisms, resulting in disguised monopoly and uneven service quality, which makes it difficult to improve the quality and efficiency of public service supply through market mechanisms ^[3].

3.5. Insufficient digital governance empowerment and lack of governance refinement

Digital government construction is an important starting point for administrative transformation in the new era and a modern practice of the efficient governance concept of New Public Management. Although governments at all levels have built government service platforms and big data governance systems, the application of digitalization remains superficial. On the one hand, departmental data barriers have not been completely broken.

Data from various departments are stored independently without interconnection, resulting in repeated data collection and resource waste and restricting data-based collaborative governance. On the other hand, digital applications are formalistic. Some government platforms have single functions and lagging updates, with low coverage and completion rates of online services, failing to realize practical burden reduction and efficiency improvement. In addition, grassroots digital governance capacity is weak, and staff lack digital literacy, making it difficult to rely on big data to carry out accurate judgment, refined governance, and targeted services. The refinement and intelligence of governance need to be further improved ^[4].

3.6. Single supervision and evaluation mechanism and weak governance restraint

A comprehensive governance supervision system is indispensable for complete administrative governance. Current government administrative supervision is still dominated by internal disciplinary supervision and hierarchical supervision, while external supervision channels such as people's congress supervision, social supervision, media supervision, and public supervision are not smooth, and a diversified supervision pattern has not been fully established. Supervision mainly focuses on post-event accountability, with insufficient pre-prevention and in-process control, making it difficult to avoid administrative inefficiency, service absence, and abnormal power and responsibility from the source. Meanwhile, the disclosure of supervision results is incomplete, and rectification feedback is not timely, weakening the binding force of supervision and failing to optimize administrative work style and governance efficiency.

4. Transformation paths of government administrative management model from the perspective of New Public Management

4.1. Innovating governance concepts and establishing customer-oriented and efficiency-oriented thinking

The transformation of governance concepts is the primary premise of administrative model reform. Guided by the core theories of New Public Management, it is necessary to completely eliminate traditional bureaucratic and control-oriented thinking. First, establish customer-oriented thinking, adhere to the people-centered governance philosophy, take public demands and people's satisfaction as the starting point and goal of administrative work, abandon the bureaucratic thinking of prioritizing power over service, and actively respond to public demands and solve people's livelihood problems. Second, establish efficiency-oriented governance thinking, abandon the formalistic style of prioritizing procedures over practical results, focus on quality and efficiency improvement, streamline redundant links, shorten work cycles, and reduce administrative operation costs. Third, establish diversified co-governance thinking, break the single government governance model, actively connect market and social forces, and build an open, collaborative, and efficient modern governance thinking system to lay a solid ideological foundation for administrative model transformation ^[5].

4.2. Reconstructing power and responsibility system and promoting scientific functional allocation

In accordance with the principles of streamlining efficiency and clarifying power and responsibility in New Public Management, the government should further optimize functional allocation and clarify governance boundaries. First, further deepen the reform of streamlining administration and delegating power, accurately delegate administrative authority with strong grassroots adaptability and high convenience, sort out the

power and responsibility lists at provincial, municipal, and county levels, eliminate overlapping powers and responsibilities and supervision gaps, and realize equal power and responsibility with an institutional basis. Second, scientifically divide the governance boundaries among government, market, and society. The government should weaken micro-intervention and strengthen macro-supervision, transfer marketable and socializable public services to market entities and social organizations, and focus on core functions such as public management, people's livelihood guarantee, and market supervision. Third, improve the dynamic adjustment mechanism of power and responsibility, timely optimize functional allocation in response to new situations and problems in social governance, avoid functional solidification and governance lag, and build a scientific, standardized and efficient government functional system.

4.3. Improving performance system and building a quantitative and diversified assessment mechanism

Based on the performance governance theory of New Public Management, the government should reconstruct a scientific, diversified, and quantifiable performance evaluation system. First, optimize the design of assessment indicators, reduce the weight of single economic and task indicators, increase core indicators such as public service quality, public satisfaction, social governance effectiveness, and people's livelihood improvement, and balance process and results as well as quality and efficiency. Second, diversify assessment subjects, break the single internal assessment model, and introduce external evaluation forces, including public evaluation, social organization assessment, third-party institutional evaluation, and media supervision, to enhance the objectivity and fairness of assessment results. Third, improve the integration mechanism of assessment and practical application, closely link performance results with department evaluation, cadre promotion, performance reward and punishment, and rectification and improvement, supervise and rectify departments and individuals with inefficient performance and service absence, give full play to the incentive and restraining effect of performance assessment, and form a governance closed loop of promoting efficiency and improvement through performance assessment ^[6].

4.4. Optimizing service modes and promoting marketization and diversification of public services

Based on the marketization governance concept of New Public Management, the government should break the monopoly of public services and build a diversified and collaborative public service supply system. First, standardize the government service procurement mechanism, fully introduce market competition in fields such as elderly care, childcare, community governance, and public culture, and select high-quality service providers through public bidding and competitive procurement to improve the professionalism of public services. Second, promote precise and differentiated service supply, sort out service demands of different regions and groups based on big data, customize exclusive services for the elderly, teenagers, and special vulnerable groups, and solve the problem of homogenized public services. Third, support the development of social organizations, improve supporting policies, guide social organizations to participate in social governance and public services in a standardized manner, enrich grassroots governance forces, form a multi-service supply pattern dominated by the government, operated by the market and participated by society, and comprehensively improve the quality and efficiency of public services.

4.5. Deepening digital empowerment and building an intelligent and efficient governance system

In combination with the requirements of digital government construction, intelligent and refined governance is adopted to empower the transformation of administrative models and realize the efficient governance goals of New Public Management. First, break departmental data barriers, integrate various data resources of government services, people's livelihood guarantee, market supervision, and social governance, build a unified government big data platform, realize data interconnection, resource sharing, and collaborative office work, reduce repeated work, and improve administrative efficiency. Second, optimize online government services, improve one-stop online service and mobile service channels, simplify online work procedures, increase the full online handling rate of high-frequency services, and truly realize convenience for the public. Third, strengthen grassroots digital capacity building, carry out digital skill training for administrative staff, improve their digital governance level, carry out accurate judgment, dynamic supervision and intelligent services based on big data, and promote the transformation of administrative management from extensive governance to refined and intelligent governance.

4.6. Improving supervision system and building an all-round governance restraint mechanism

Build an all-dimensional supervision system with internal and external linkage and full-process coverage to ensure the standardized implementation of administrative transformation. On the one hand, optimize internal government supervision, improve hierarchical supervision, disciplinary supervision, and audit supervision mechanisms, strengthen full-process supervision of pre-prevention, in-process control, and post-event accountability, and rectify problems such as administrative inaction, slow action, and irregular action in a timely manner. On the other hand, smooth external supervision channels, improve the government affairs openness system, actively disclose administrative procedures, work results and performance conditions, and guarantee the right to know and supervise of the public, media and social organizations. Build an integrated online and offline complaint and feedback platform to respond to public supervision demands in a timely manner, form a three-dimensional supervision pattern of internal management and control, external constraints and public supervision, and force the standardization and efficiency improvement of administrative management.

5. Conclusion

The New Public Management theory breaks the inherent limitations of traditional administrative models. Its concepts of efficiency priority, customer orientation, performance accountability, and multi-party co-governance are highly consistent with the development direction of China's administrative system reform and service-oriented government construction. This study finds that although China has achieved phased results in government administrative transformation, the progress is still restricted by traditional control-oriented thinking, rigid administrative processes, and lagging performance systems. Therefore, the government should dialectically absorb the advantages of New Public Management theory, adapt to China's national governance conditions, optimize and innovate from multiple dimensions, including functions, processes, performance, digitalization, and governance subjects, and avoid the drawbacks of excessive marketization of Western theories. By comprehensively optimizing the administrative management system, solving transformation bottlenecks, and continuously improving administrative service quality and governance level, it can steadily

promote the modernization of the national governance system and governance capacity.

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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