

Research on the Path Construction of Multi-Subject Synergistic Governance in Rural Areas of High Altitude Pastoral Regions

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Abstract: Rural governance is a fundamental project of the national governance system and a core proposition for the modernization of grassroots governance in border and ethnic minority areas. With the requirements of building a new socialist and the need for the full implementation of the rural revitalization strategy, the main body of rural governance in the pastoral areas has evolved from a single subject in the past to the current “one core and multiple parties” collaborative governance model centered on the “grassroots Party organization”. Due to the limitations of geographical, cultural and historical conditions, there exist problems in the rural governance of the northern Xi zang pastoral areas, such as unclear rights and responsibilities of multiple subjects, imperfect collaborative governance mechanisms among subjects, and an insufficiently rigorous overall supervision system in rural areas. To solve these problems, it is urgent to optimize the legal system and mechanism guarantee for the collaborative governance of multiple subjects in practice, consolidate the governance foundation, strengthen the supervision of subjects, improve the collaborative guarantee mechanism, and build a multi-party co-governance path that suits the development stage and particularity of the pastoral areas.

Keywords: Rural governance, Multiple subjects, Collaborative governance, Pastoral area.

1. Introduction

Rural governance is the cornerstone of the national governance system and an important guarantee for achieving the comprehensive revitalization of rural areas. With the rapid development of China's social economy, the subjects of rural governance have undergone profound changes from being single to diverse, gradually forming a new pattern of multi-party collaborative governance. The report of the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China clearly points out that rural governance is one of the most arduous tasks in building a modern socialist country. It also proposes to “improve the social governance system featuring joint construction, joint governance and shared benefits, and enhance the efficiency of social governance”, and “smooth and standardize the channels for the expression of people's demands, coordination of interests and protection of rights and interests”. “Build a community of social governance where everyone has responsibilities, fulfills their duties and enjoys the benefits.” This important statement marks a profound transformation of rural governance in our country from the traditional single administrative dominance to multi-party collaborative governance. The pastoral area in northern Tibet, as an important ecological security barrier and a base for characteristic animal husbandry in China, the effectiveness of its rural governance is directly related to regional ecological security, sustainable economic development and the improvement of the living standards of herdsmen. With the in-depth implementation of the rural revitalization strategy, the role of the multi-subject collaborative governance model in rural governance has become increasingly prominent. The existing literature provides rich perspectives for the construction of the collaborative governance path of multiple subjects in rural governance in the pastoral areas of northern Xi zang. Gan Zhu Zabu et al. (2019) focused on the synergy between ecology and animal husbandry in the northern Xi zang Plateau, providing an ecological economic foundation for governance

[1]. Qipeng Bai (2024) emphasized the interaction of multiple subjects under the leadership of the Party building [2]. Wenbin Wang (2024) proposed that the synergy of elements should promote the modernization of rural governance [3]. Rongzhuo Chen (2022) took Xingguang Village as an example to demonstrate the significance of interest aggregation and action coordination. Wen Mei et al [4]. (2024) revealed the conditions for the collaborative governance between farmers' cooperatives and village “two committees” through game analysis [5]. Zhimin Du (2021) and Yiliang Liu (2022) respectively conducted research on multi-subject collaborative governance and ecological governance approaches [6][7]. ZeKui Ning (2025) evaluated the impact of village cadres' behavior on governance effectiveness [8]. Li Yuan (2024) emphasizes the whole-process people's democracy in the modernization of rural governance [9]. Liping Wang (2019) explored the transformation of elements and fine governance in rural and pastoral social governance [10]. Xiao Yang (2024) systematically analyzed the coordinated co-governance of multiple subjects in rural China [11], while Jinxing Wu (2024) conducted a case study on the role of resident village cadres in rural governance, jointly providing theoretical and practical support for this research [12].

2. The Bearer of Rural Governance: Collaborative Governance by Multiple Entities

Under the dual impetus of the rural revitalization strategy and socialist modernization, the rural governance in the pastoral areas of northern Xi zang has formed a collaborative network centered on “Party building leadership-administrative coordination-self-governance consultation-industrial support-technological empowerment-public participation” (see Figure 1).

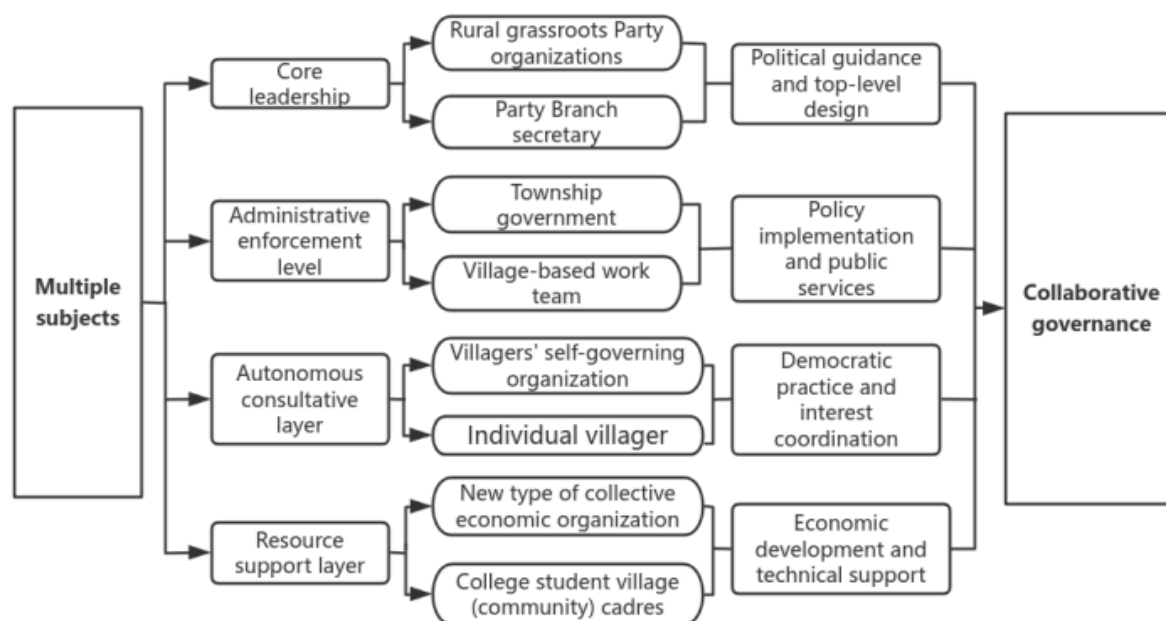


Figure 1: The collaborative governance of multiple subjects in rural areas of the northern Xi zang pastoral region

2.1 Rural Grassroots Party Organizations: Political Guidance and Collaborative Hubs

As the “political axis” of the governance system in the pastoral areas of northern Tibet, the rural grassroots Party organizations have solved the problem of decentralized governance in the pastoral areas by building a dynamic organizational network of “village-linked Party committees - tent Party branches”. Take the lead in handling major affairs such as grassland rights confirmation and ecological industry planning, incorporate Party member education into localized scenarios like “Party lessons on Horseback”, and strengthen the foundation of governance in border areas. Its core functions are reflected in three aspects: 1) Adapting the characteristics of nomadic migration with the “Four-Season Party building” model; 2) Coordinate the policy of balancing grass and livestock with traditional cultural taboos; 3) Through the “Party Member Central Household” grid, full coverage of governance reach is achieved, forming a “mobile red fortress”.

2.2 Township Government: The Center for Policy Implementation and Resource Allocation

As the core subject of the governance system in the pastoral areas of northern Tibet, the township government implements the “Pastoral Chief System” reform relying on the five-level grid system (county-township-village-community-area), dynamically divides the management areas, and integrates the forces of grassland guardians, mediators, etc. Innovatively implement a dual-track mechanism of “Smart Pastoral Area Platform + Horseback Service Team”, which not only completes the digital monitoring of grasslands but also retains the traditional service model of “people following livestock”. It mainly undertakes three functions: 1) Infrastructure breakthrough (renovation of pastoral roads, construction of communication base stations); 2) Cross-regional resource coordination; 3) The transformation of policies for ecological protection and improvement of people’s livelihood provides institutional guarantees for the collaboration of multiple entities.

2.3 Villagers’ Self-governing Organization: The Implementing Subject of Democratic Consultation and Self-governance

As the core carrier of the governance system in the pastoral areas of northern Tibet, the villagers’ self-governing organization integrates the “Ten-Household Head” system with the democratic consultation mechanism, builds localized consultation platforms such as the “Herders’ Council” and the “Tent Mediation Meeting”, and activates the self-governing Relying on the dual-track mechanism of “rule by virtue + rule by law”, the ecological taboos of the Xi zang people and the tradition of rotational grazing on grasslands are transformed into village regulations and folk terms to standardize the behavior of herdsmen and pass on ecological ethics and culture. At the same time, the participation behavior of governance is quantified through a points system management and linked to the preferential policies for the people to stimulate internal motivation.

2.4 New Type of Collective Economic Organization: A Platform for Resource Integration and Risk Resistance

The new type of collective economic organization has restructured the allocation of production materials through the shareholding system reform of grasslands, forming a closed-loop mechanism of “seasonal rotation grazing plan - ecological assessment - collective decision-making”. Retain the traditional gene of “assistance and animal husbandry collaboration”, innovatively implement the labor quantitative assessment system, and allocate half of the collective income to the disaster relief and livestock protection fund. Its core value lies in: 1) Achieving large-scale breeding through livestock consignment; 2) Establish cold chain logistics nodes to break through the bottleneck of product circulation; 3) Undertake carbon sink trading projects in the form of “ecological cooperatives” to promote the capitalization transformation of resources.

2.5 Village Party Branch Secretary: The Executor of Party Building Leadership and the “Pioneer” of

Grassroots Development

The village Party branch secretary is the core force in rural governance in the pastoral areas of northern Tibet. With political guidance as its core function, he or she convenes branch meetings to convey the Party's policies and organize their implementation, ensuring that the decisions and plans of higher authorities effectively permeate the grassroots level. As the "pioneer", we extend the reach of the Party organization by building a grid system of "Party member central households + herding households" to ensure the implementation of policies at the grassroots level. Take the lead in revising village regulations and conventions that incorporate ecological ethics, incorporate matters such as grass and livestock balance into democratic consultation, and promote the integration of traditional wisdom and modern rule of law. Rely on the "red-gray-black list" points system to quantify the behavior of herders and stimulate the internal motivation for self-governance. The "bilingual night School" has broken through cultural constraints, consolidated the Party's governance legitimacy in border and ethnic minority areas, and become a key link between policies and the demands of the people.

2.6 The Village-based Work Team: the Hub for Policy Implementation and the Connector of External Resources

As a key external force in the governance system of the pastoral areas in northern Tibet, the village-based work teams (team leaders and first secretaries) are deeply embedded in grassroots governance in the dual roles of "policy transformation hubs" and "element connection Bridges". Through the "section chief system", the three governance levels of county, township and village are connected, and policies are transformed into localized plans such as "tent Party classes" and "horseback lectures". Take the lead in the repair of pastoral roads and the construction of communication base stations to break through the "breakpoints" in public services. Introduce e-commerce platforms and cold chain logistics to promote the market-oriented transformation of animal husbandry and coordinate the "cooperative + herders" industrial chain. Innovate the "paired assistance + local talent incubation" model, cultivate Tibetan youth to serve as technical backbones, and promote the transformation of governance forces from "external empowerment" to "internal drive".

2.7 College Student Village (Community) Specialists: Technology Enablers and Extending the Reach of Public Services

College student village (community) cadres (including cadres for rural revitalization, science and technology, and agriculture and rural areas) serve as a key force in the modernization of governance in the northern Tibet pastoral areas, driving innovation in grassroots governance through both technological empowerment and public services. Dual-track governance innovation driven by technology empowerment and public services: Specialized personnel for rural revitalization connect animal husbandry with cold chain logistics to solve the problem of product circulation. The technology specialist maintains the smart pastoral area platform and promotes the digital management of grasslands.

The agricultural and rural affairs specialist is responsible for coordinating the confirmation of grassland rights and the mediation of disputes. Three types of specialized cadres have worked together to form a "Horseback Service Team", extending services such as mobile medical care and bilingual legal education. By means of the "targeted training" mechanism to accumulate local technical talents and build a talent pool for information technology in pastoral areas, it has become the core node connecting the "last mile" of policies with the demands of the grassroots level.

2.8 Individual Villagers: Participants and Beneficiaries in Governance

Individual villagers, as the core dynamic force for governance in the pastoral areas of northern Tibet, integrate into the grassroots governance network through the grid-based participation mechanism. Directly participate in the consultation on grassland rights confirmation and ecological compensation through "Tent Consultation Meetings" and "Herders' Joint Discussions", promoting the integration of traditional wisdom and modern rules. Relying on the "Behavioral point incentive System", environmental protection actions are transformed into material exchanges to activate the internal driving force. Act as "mobile grid workers" and "ecological patrol sentries", use mobile terminals to provide real-time feedback on potential safety hazards, and build a co-governance pattern where "everyone is on duty". In response to liquidity constraints, a Tibetan voice interaction APP is utilized to open up a "fingertip discussion" channel, promoting the transformation from an experience-based participant to a digital governance subject.

3. The predicaments faced by the collaborative governance of multiple rural entities

The multi-subject collaborative governance in the pastoral areas of northern Tibet is confronted with the compound challenges of physical barriers, cultural collisions and lagging infrastructure. These structural predicaments not only magnify the governance costs in pastoral areas, but also hinder the coordinated advancement of ecological protection, improvement of people's livelihood and industrial development. Its core predicament is reflected in four structural contradictions:

3.1 The Blurring of the Boundaries of Rights and Responsibilities Overlaps with the Positioning of the Subjects

There exists a dual predicament of overlapping functions and responsibility vacuum among the multiple governance subjects in the pastoral areas of northern Tibet. The informal governance inertia formed by traditional nomadic societies has not been fully coupled with the modern hierarchical management system, resulting in structural ambiguity at the practical level in core functions such as the political guidance of grassroots Party organizations, the administrative coordination of township governments, and the consultation and decision-making of villagers' self-governing organizations. In cross-regional public affairs such as ecological protection and grassland rights confirmation, different entities often fall into "multi-headed management"

or “management blind spots” due to unclear division of rights and responsibilities. Meanwhile, individual herders face role cognition deviations when participating in governance. They not only have the residual collective consciousness in traditional tribal culture but also need to adapt to the rights and obligations under modern governance rules. The dual identity tension makes it difficult for them to effectively integrate into the collaborative network.

3.2 Fragmentation of the Collaborative Mechanism and Obstruction of Information Sharing

The physical feature of vast land and sparse population in the high-altitude and cold pastoral area in northern Xi zang leads to insufficient connection of systems such as the village liaison Party committee and the five-level grid, and there are faults in the information transmission chain. The integration of ecological taboos of the Xi zang ethnic group and the value of modern legal norms is insufficient. The local consultation mechanism and the dialogue of administrative tools have failed. There is a lack of integrated solutions to complex issues such as grassland disputes. The absence of data standards and sharing platforms has exacerbated the dissipation of key information such as ecological monitoring and the demands of herdsman.

3.3 The Virtualization of Supervision and Evaluation and the Breakage of the Accountability Chain

At present, the governance and supervision system in the pastoral areas of northern Xi zang shows a structural defect of “emphasizing form over effectiveness”. The power balance mechanism among multiple subjects has not yet been perfected. The policy implementation process of grassroots governments, the resource allocation decisions of collective economic organizations, and the democratic consultation results of villagers’ self-governing organizations lack transparent supervision channels, resulting in the difficulty for individual herdsman to exercise their right to know and supervise public affairs in a substantive manner. In areas such as the implementation effect assessment of ecological protection projects and the performance tracking of the implementation of policies benefiting the people, due to the lack of scientific quantitative indicators and third-party assessment mechanisms, formalism tendencies are prone to breed. This absence of supervision not only reduces the binding force of the governance subjects’ responsibilities, but also may trigger derivative problems such as unfair allocation of public resources and rent-seeking in ecological governance projects.

3.4 The Weakening of Infrastructure and the Decline in Governance Effectiveness

The special geographical environment and backward infrastructure construction in the pastoral areas of northern Xi zang form rigid constraints on the improvement of governance capacity. The extreme climate and complex landforms in high-altitude areas have led to insufficient coverage of the transportation network. The lagging repair of pastoral roads has made traditional governance methods such as “horseback propaganda” and “mobile service teams” inefficient, and there are temporal and spatial delays in policy communication and

public service supply. The sparse distribution of communication base stations and unstable power supply have made it difficult for the “Smart Pastoral Area” platform’s functions such as grass and livestock balance monitoring and emergency command to operate on a regular basis, leaving digital governance tools in a predicament of “having a platform but no effectiveness”. In addition, the shortage of public service facilities such as education and medical care has restricted the cultivation of herders’ awareness of the rule of law and their participation ability. Some remote grazing sites have become governance “islands” due to information isolation. The weakness of infrastructure not only magnifies the physical spatial barriers of pastoral area governance, but also restricts the innovation space of the multi-party collaborative governance model from the dimensions of technical support and human capital.

4. The Realization Path of Multi-subject Collaborative Governance in Rural Areas

The report of the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China proposes to “build a community of social governance where everyone has a responsibility, everyone fulfills their duties, and everyone enjoys the benefits.” The traditional single-subject governance model is difficult to coordinate the rigid constraints of ecological protection, the precise supply of public services and the sustainable demands of industrial transformation. It is necessary to achieve the organic coupling of political guidance, administrative resources, internal driving force and digital empowerment through the collaborative governance of grassroots Party organizations, township governments, self-governing organizations, individual herdsman and external technical forces.

4.1 Establish a Clear Mechanism of Rights and Responsibilities: Precisely Define the Main Functions

Break the deadlock of overlapping functions and responsibility vacuum with the framework of the rule of law, clarify the legal rights and responsibilities boundaries of core subjects such as grassroots Party organizations and township governments through local regulations, and refine the leading subjects and collaboration procedures for cross-domain affairs such as ecological protection. Establish a “dynamic function adaptation mechanism”, adjust the division of labor of the main body in combination with the cultural characteristics of pastoral areas, and promote the integration of traditional governance habits and the modern governance system. Compile the “Guide to the Rights and Obligations of Herdsman” in both Tibetan and Chinese, clarify the legal role of individuals in public affairs, rely on the platform for publicizing rights and responsibilities to achieve dynamic management of the list and traceability of execution, and build a closed loop of “legal duties-collaborative procedures-supervision and accountability” to ensure that multiple subjects achieve the maximization of collaborative efficiency under the framework of the rule of law.

4.2 Build a Collaborative Efficiency Platform: Integrate Information Sharing and Mechanism Innovation

Establish a three-dimensional collaborative platform of

“system-technology-culture” to solve the chronic problem of fragmented governance. At the institutional level, a joint discussion mechanism of “village Party committee + five-level grid + ten household heads” has been established to unify the standards for cross-subject collaboration. From a technical perspective, develop a “Smart Co-governance platform” for Utibetan voice interaction, integrating functions such as ecological monitoring and dispute early warning, to achieve offline data synchronization and real-time information intercommunication in extreme environments. At the cultural level, a “Cultural Translation Specialist” should be established to promote mutual interpretation of ecological taboos and environmental protection regulations, as well as the connection between tent mediation meetings and judicial procedures, to facilitate the localization and adaptation of policy tools. By integrating the entire process of “data intercommunication-decision-making consultation-action linkage” through the platform, a cross-level and cross-cultural collaborative governance closed loop is formed.

4.3 Design Supervision and Accountability Closed Loop: Integrating Multi-party Participation and Dynamic Evaluation

Build a dual-track supervision system of “rigid constraints + flexible incentives”. In terms of institutional design, a multi-subject supervision committee was established, and the policy implementation hearing and the “QR code Express” supervision system were implemented to ensure the substantive realization of herdsmen’s right to know. In terms of technological empowerment, blockchain technology is utilized to trace the flow of ecological compensation funds, and a “red, yellow and blue” three-color early warning model is established to dynamically track governance performance. In terms of cultural integration, the norms for rotational grazing on grasslands should be transformed into points-based indicators and linked to ecological compensation and the implementation of policies benefiting the people. Through the mechanisms of “online traceability + offline evaluation” and “moral incentives + legal accountability”, a full-chain closed loop of “problem discovery-assessment and accountability-rectification and feedback” is formed, enhancing the accuracy and deterrent effect of supervision and accountability.

4.4 Enhancing Infrastructure Resilience Network: Integrating Digital Empowerment and Governance Extension.

Implement a dual upgrade strategy of “physical infrastructure support + digital technology embedding”. At the physical level, we will promote the “hardening of pastoral roads + blind spot filling at base stations” project, build a three-level service network of “county-level hubs-mobile service stations- remote pastoral point stations”, and reduce the radius of policy dissemination and public services. At the digital level, develop a “smart pastoral area terminal” that is resistant to extreme cold and low in power consumption, integrating functions such as offline grass and livestock monitoring and emergency call, to ensure the continuous operation of governance tools in extreme environments. Simultaneously launch the “Local Digital Talent Incubation Program”, specifically cultivate Utibetan youth to serve as technical

specialists, promote the in-depth integration of cold chain logistics, e-commerce platforms and the livestock industry chain, form a resilient governance network of “infrastructure support-technology empowerment-human resource value-added”, and completely solve the isolated effect of governance in pastoral areas.

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