

# Why is the Burden Reduction Work at the Grassroots Level "Often Reduced with Often Negative"? Take X Community in Yibin City as an Example

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## ABSTRACT

Based on the explanatory framework of structural functionalism, the case analysis of community grassroots burden reduction shows that the problem of "constant reduction and constant negative" of grassroots work is rooted in environmental adaptation, goal achievement, integration and coordination and model maintenance, the external environment increases the work pressure through the adjustment of organizational goals, and the work objectives are transmitted to the grassroots organizations layer by layer, and the functional integration and coordination within the organization increases the burden on the grassroots to a certain extent, and the feedback mode of the assessment of the superior department and external supervision increases the workload of the grassroots level, thus forming a model cycle of "constant reduction and constant negative". Based on this, grassroots organizations should strengthen the level of environmental capacity adaptation, straighten out the relationship between lines and powers, optimize organizational integration and coordination functions, and build an effective model maintenance mechanism, so as to reduce the burden on the grassroots level.

## KEYWORDS

Community Governance; Grassroots Burden Reduction; Structural Functionalism; Path Dependence.

## 1. ASK QUESTIONS

As an important means to solve the unhealthy trend of formalism and traceism in grassroots work, to achieve the optimal allocation of grassroots resources and improve the effectiveness of policy implementation, grassroots burden reduction has become the normalization of grassroots governance, and a series of effective mechanisms such as grassroots burden reduction ledgers have been established. The 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China proposed that we should continue to deepen the picketing of the "four winds", focus on correcting formalism and bureaucracy, practice the practical actions of the "two safeguards", more unswervingly strengthen the construction of work style, and reduce the burden on the grassroots by deepening and expanding the rectification of formalism[1].

After several reforms, there is still a long way to go in grassroots governance. With the advancement of modern work at the grassroots level, the matters undertaken by the grassroots governance units, docking departments, work content, and ownership of responsibilities have increased, and the work of reducing the burden at the grassroots level itself has become a matter that needs to be promoted[2].

Based on this, this paper takes X community in Yibin City as an example and uses the theory of structural functionalism to study the following questions: What are the main contents of grassroots burden? Why is the burden reduction at the grassroots level "more and more burdensome"? What are the ways to alleviate the dilemma of "less and more burden"? This study takes the case of burden reduction in community X as the starting point for analysis, sorts out the current situation and existing problems of grassroots burden reduction, discusses the sources of pressure burden of community workers and the existence logic of "constant reduction and constant burden" of grassroots work in the context of "grassroots burden reduction", and puts forward solutions to further promote the work of grassroots burden reduction.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND ANALYSIS FRAMEWORK**

Grassroots burden reduction is not only a hot topic in the mainstream media, but also attracts the attention of the academic community. In recent years, many scholars have focused on the issue of burden reduction at the grassroots level, carried out various forms of investigation and research, and achieved rich research results.

### **2.1. Causes and Countermeasures for Grassroots Burden Reduction**

A large number of studies have been conducted on the governance burden of grassroots governments, which can be divided into three categories: the performance and causes of the burden of grassroots governments, the dilemma of reducing the burden of grassroots governments, and the measures to improve the burden reduction of grassroots governments. Regarding the dilemma of reducing the burden on grassroots governments, the current research mainly includes the perspectives of responsibility isomorphism, pressure system, supervision mechanism, and decentralization at the grassroots level. Responsibilities are isomorphic[2]The burden on the grassroots mainly comes from the isomorphic system of internal responsibilities of the government. The mainstream explanation of the burden on the grassroots under the pressure-based system is that under the influence of the adjustment of dual factors such as interest motives, incentives and constraints, the pressure transmitted by the superior to the subordinate through the indicator tool becomes the main source of pressure[5]; Within the supervision mechanism, the decision-making level with the power of supervision and examination is constrained by the conditions of the main body, and in the process of supervision and implementation, problems such as low scientificity, too high frequency, and too detailed indicators may occur, increasing the burden of grassroots governance[6]; From the perspective of decentralization at the grassroots level, the political tasks assigned by the superiors are gradually increasing, and they are normalizing, including important tasks at the central level such as rural revitalization, ecological and environmental protection, and grassroots party building, as well as political tasks superimposed by regular department leaders, and the accumulation of tasks at the grassroots level has increased and the pressure has increased[7]. At this stage, the relevant research has responded to the question of "where the burden on the grassroots comes from" to a certain extent, but there is still room for discussion on why the burden on the grassroots work is "decreasing and becoming more and more burdensome" and how to solve it.

As a research tool, the structural perspective is widely used in the research of grassroots governance, Cao Yinshan believes that structure regulates the actions of grassroots cadres, and cadres actively seek breakthroughs and avoidance, and the interaction between structure and individuals causes various difficulties in reducing the burden on grassroots level[8]. Based on case research, Sun Baiying analyzes the operation logic of the authoritative management system and the behavior selection logic of grassroots "agents", and explores why the "de-administrative" reform in the structure is difficult to achieve[10]. Lu Fuying and Dai Bingjie used the structural theory to analyze the limitations of the functions of grassroots organizations in terms of subject, content, and mode, and should shift from the number increase and decrease type of rectification to the system integration type of innovation[12].

Structuring theory emphasizes that the society as a whole is in an absolutely dominant position over the individual, and the structure is the rules and resources required by the society in the production process, and the resources provide the conditions for the rules, and the rules are applied to the process of social practice according to the conditions. The practice of the structure and the implementation of the system require the intervention of actors. The structure has the ability to regulate institutional and non-institutional resources to achieve the basic order and specific goals, while the actors are responsible for exploring the institutional boundaries in the specific implementation, optimizing the relationship between the existing institutional framework and the subject, and then adjusting or fundamentally changing the structure[13]. Based on the above literature review, this paper uses the structure-function interpretation framework to analyze the causes and manifestations of grassroots burden in X community.

## **2.2. Analytical Framework: A Systematic Model for Grassroots Burden Maintenance**

Structural functionalism is an important theoretical school in modern Western sociology, which was developed from social organism theory and early functionalism[14]. From the perspective of structure and function, the connection and unity between the two, this paper analyzes and discusses a series of issues related to the social system[11]. It is a sociological theory that analyzes the institutional structure of a social system. Its main representative point of view is that the reason why society can maintain its operation is to find a suitable structure to meet the needs of people's lives, that is, the realization of functions. Talcott Parsons developed social structure into a vast system theory that tries to explain all human actions from the perspective of system-functional differentiation[12]. The main contents include: social action theory, social system theory, structure-function model, social change thought and "differentiation" theory, dichotomy theory and model variable theory, etc. He believes that the basic unit of social action is "unit action", and the social action system constructed from this is divided into four parts, namely, the behavioral organic system, the personality system, the social system and the cultural system[13]. At the same time, the social system can meet four functional conditions to keep itself running and sustaining, that is, the famous "AGIL diagram"[14], corresponding to the adaptive function, the goal realization function, the integration function, and the latent mode maintenance function.

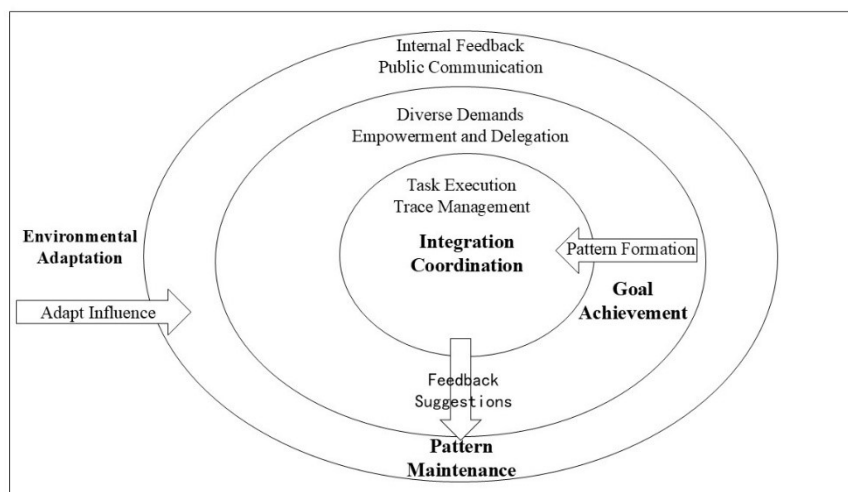
This case takes the community as the object of discussion, uses Parsons's social action theory and social system theory to establish a structure-function explanatory framework that includes four dimensions: environmental adaptation, goal achievement, integration and coordination, and model maintenance.

At the level of environmental adaptation, as China's social governance is facing multiple social needs and severe governance challenges, the importance of the grassroots in social governance is gradually increasing, and complex governance tasks are transmitted to the grassroots organizations through hierarchical transmission and line sinking[15].

At the level of goal achievement, as far as the organization is concerned, the higher-level departments have put forward diversified goals for grassroots work, grassroots governance has become an important part of the work, the optimization and improvement of government functions have promoted the downward shift of the focus of social governance, and townships, streets and communities have assumed the function of achieving multiple social governance goals, which is a new test for grassroots work. With the gradual improvement of the work of "decentralization and empowerment", the government affairs undertaken by the grassroots level and the departments and institutions are also increasing, and the higher-level departments have gradually changed from the original executive body to the main body of work division, assignment and supervision, while the grassroots governance unit has undertaken the function of different departments to implement and handle the functions. The transformation of the organizational structure has become one of the sources of burden at the grassroots level.

At the level of integration and coordination, at this stage, the grassroots work has higher requirements for multi-departmental collaboration, and the work approval needs to be approved by multiple departments. In the work of reducing the burden, the staff need to complete a variety of accounts, data, reports and other "traces" records that reflect the development of the burden reduction work at the grassroots level, and also need to provide inspection materials when accepting the inspection of the superior department, and prove that the grassroots department has well implemented the burden reduction policy through additional "traces" work. In the organizational structure, with the development of trace management, the higher-level departments distribute the work at the same time, supplemented by the arrangement of inspection and assessment, evaluation and accountability, which further increases the burden on the grassroots staff[16].

At the level of model maintenance, the grassroots burden reduction work not only requires the higher-level departments to supervise the development of the grassroots work, but also requires the grassroots subjects to feedback the implementation and optimization suggestions within the organization, build communication channels with the masses outside the organization, smooth dialogue channels and timely feedback on relevant opinions, establish a long-term operation, practical and accurate communication and feedback mechanism, and promote the stable, self-consistent and sustainable operation of the political system. The multi-level supervision mechanism has not only become a manifestation of model optimization, but also poses new challenges to grassroots staff.



**Figure 1.** Structure-function explanation framework

(Content source: author's self-made)

As shown in the figure, based on the research perspective of structural functionalism, this paper analyzes why grassroots work is "decreasing and becoming more and more negative" from four perspectives: environmental adaptation, goal achievement, integration and coordination, and model maintenance. The external environment increases the work pressure through the adjustment of the organizational goals, the work objectives are transmitted to the grassroots organizations layer by layer, the integration and coordination of functions within the organization increases the burden on the grassroots to a certain extent, and the optimization of the mode of assessment and external supervision of the superior departments increases the workload of the grassroots level, thus forming a circular mechanism of "constant reduction and constant negative".

### 3. CASE PRESENTATION

Since 2019, Yibin City has introduced a series of specific measures to reduce the burden at the grassroots level in response to the central government's call for "grassroots burden reduction". Implemented in X community, the grassroots burden reduction ledger, list and related work system have been established. However, with the decline in the focus of governance, the impact of the external environment and internal requirements such as the new crown epidemic and grassroots empowerment, the work content and work requirements faced by the grassroots have increased instead of decreasing, and it is required to leave traces in the whole process and effectively implement grassroots governance matters, so as to enhance the sense of gain, participation and satisfaction of the masses, and the responsibilities and functions of the grassroots government have been continuously increased and the workload has been increasing. At the same time, the assessment of the grass-roots work of the higher-level departments has been strengthened, from "result-oriented" to "whole-process management", emphasizing the equal emphasis on the management process and governance effect, which puts forward higher requirements for the work energy and ability of the grass-roots staff.

X community is located in Xuzhou District, Yibin City, Sichuan Province, with a community area of about 0.67 square kilometers, 10 community grids, a permanent population of 5,238 people, 45 residential communities within the jurisdiction, 5 administrative and career staff on the post, 2 public welfare post employees, responsible for the grassroots governance work in the community and the tasks assigned by the superior departments, X community staff has been undertaking high-intensity work tasks[19].

#### 3.1. Performance of community work burden: mismatch of rights and responsibilities

There is a mismatch between rights and responsibilities in community X, which belongs to the burden of the environmental dimension, which is embodied in the practice of food safety inspection and off-site management. In terms of food safety inspection, this matter is led by the Yibin Municipal Market Supervision and Administration Bureau, which requires the community to investigate the safety production of relevant enterprises and production units within its jurisdiction, and carry out policy transmission, supervision and inspection of production units within its jurisdiction. After the completion of the community food safety inspection, the community staff must enter the information of the community safety production subject and food safety inspection in the internal system.

*"I stay up late every day, I have never made relevant materials, and I need to grope for it a little bit." (A20230321)[20]*

At the same time, as the main body of enforcement, the community did not obtain the law enforcement power granted by the higher authorities, and the community staff only participated in the two-day food safety inspection training, and had limited knowledge of food safety.

*"We are not professionals, and we can only look at whether the store produces in accordance with food safety standards and regulations, and although we have participated in the training, we cannot guarantee that we have mastered the relevant knowledge. Inspections can only be based on persuasion, after all, we do not have the power to enforce the law, nor can we effectively supervise the shops." (D20230804)*

In the practice of off-site management, the current site of the community party and mass service center covers an area of more than 500 square meters, with a work area, a display wall, a dance practice room, a book lending area, a community activity room and a "Yimei Yibin" special agricultural products exhibition booth. However, the actual jurisdiction of the community belongs to the "old community in the old city", and whether the non-local office can respond to the governance needs of the jurisdiction in a timely manner, effectively solve the problems of residents in the jurisdiction, and effectively carry out community activities and services has become a serious

challenge. It is difficult for community workers to constantly travel back and forth between the office and the community under their jurisdiction to deal with residents' problems, carry out building inspections, and mobilize residents to participate in community activities in the activity center.

*"Don't look at the construction of our office location so well, our real service users live in the old community, if there is any problem, we will have to rush to it in 20 minutes at the earliest, and it is very difficult to manage." (B20230512)*

### **3.2. Matters are Not Fixed**

There are non-fixed problems in community X, which belongs to the work burden of the goal achievement dimension, and the specific performance is mainly the work of community sealing. With the sinking of the governance center and the increase in the number of matters that need to be approved by the community in the context of "decentralization and empowerment", the work of community sealing has become a matter that occupies a large part of the staff's energy. As a grassroots mass autonomous organization, the community does not undertake actual government affairs functions, nor does it have the right to "affix an official seal", but the community needs to issue a certificate and affix an official seal when applying for various matters such as the certificate of kinship of residents in the jurisdiction, the certificate of economic situation, the license of the business area of the enterprise, the certificate of lack of civil capacity, the development of social organization activities, the certificate of non-marriage allowance, and the certificate of community volunteering. Community work is complex and detailed, and community staff need to respond to residents' needs in a timely manner, and dealing with such "irregular" matters takes up part of their energy. At the same time, it is difficult for the staff themselves to fully grasp the coverage of the issuance of community certificates and the specific matters of stamping the official seal, and in many cases, it is necessary to decide whether the certificate can be issued and whether the official seal is stamped, and the pressure of responsibility is greater.

*"Someone came to us to issue a certificate of non-marriage subsidy, and we didn't know if it was issued by the community, but if they couldn't do it, they would complain to us, and we could only stamp some stamps, hoping that there would be no problems while covering." (C20230623)*

### **3.3. High Activity Intensity**

At this stage, due to the frequent development of various community special activities, community workers need to cooperate with social organizations to participate in the planning and holding of community activities and the training and education carried out by social organizations. The frequency of thematic activities in community X is once a week, and the participation of residents is good. Community activities are mainly in the form of short-term sports, mainly multi-project co-organized, with rapid theme changes and lack of systematic activity planning.

*"There is a lack of financial guarantee for community normalization publicity activities, so community activities are mainly multi-theme and multi-project co-organized, and project planning, activity notice, list, press release, activity summary and so on need to be submitted before the event is held, and the activity intensity is high." (D20230804)*

In terms of social work training, X community has carried out a series of professional training activities for community workers, such as "family educators" and "youth psychological counseling". This kind of training mostly occupies weekends and off-duty time, and adopts management methods such as punching in and signing in, submitting notes, etc., which occupies more of the off-work time of community workers. At the same time, it takes time and practice to master the professional knowledge of community work, and it is difficult to achieve results in a short period of time without the coordination and improvement of multiple departments.

*"Our training has all the requirements, all aspects are difficult to dredge the problem, learning these knowledge is a quick sight, a special training is a week or two, it is difficult to master all in such a short time." (D20230804)*

### **3.4. Smart Governance is Difficult**

At this stage, the community has achieved 100% coverage of the smart platform, and grid members and community management workers can skillfully use WeChat groups to contact the masses, issue notices, carry out information updates and daily maintenance, and use online apps and WeChat applets to take photos and summarize problems. However, the community staff is limited, and it is difficult to realize the special management at this stage, and the staff responsible for the operation of the smart platform can dock multiple tasks at the same time, and the task is heavy.

*"We don't lack people who find problems, but people who solve problems, and the masses report the problems, and if they don't solve it after waiting for two or three days, the dissatisfaction will be even more serious." (B20230512)*

Even if the community grid members find the situation and report it during the daily inspection, the solution to the problem still requires the cooperation of multiple parties, and the community not only lacks the material resources to deal with these problems, but also lacks the legitimacy of implementation, and the multi-party cooperation often takes a certain amount of time, and the failure to immediately eliminate the problem will undoubtedly reduce the satisfaction of the public.

*"There are a lot of matters to be dealt with at the same time, and it takes time for multi-party coordination, and some matters cannot be resolved as soon as they are reported." (Superior Department). (A20230321)*

In the end, the pressure to deal with the problem is concentrated at the community level, and the community needs to face inquiries from both the higher departments and the masses, and there are many difficulties in the development of the smart platform.

On the whole, community X, as the epitome of grassroots community governance, has universal and special points. Based on the actual survey of the community, the staff showed a state of "tiredness", not because they were burned out or avoided from their work, but because they were trying their best to complete their work, but they were in a state of "encouragement to maintain". This state is unconsciously generated, imperceptible, contrary to the stereotype of idle community work in the past, and truly reflects the impact of grassroots work on community workers.

## **4. CASE ANALYSIS: EXPLORATION OF CLUES: "CONSTANT REDUCTION AND CONSTANT NEGATIVE".**

### **4.1. Demand Upgrade: The External Environment Governance Requirements are Improved**

The modernization of governance capacity and governance level requires grassroots governance units to undertake tasks such as implementing various governance work, responding to the diversified needs of residents, comprehensively improving governance methods, and promoting grassroots management innovation. In the context of line sinking, multi-type, multi-subject, and multi-requirement work tasks are transmitted to grassroots governance units. With the deepening of the work of "decentralization and empowerment", the scope and connotation of some work functions of grassroots governance organizations have been expanded. The X community has the responsibility of food safety supervision, the large-scale management responsibility of the non-local office, etc., and the multiple subjects expect the grassroots governance subject to assume more functions and play a greater role, which has not yet reached a coordination and unity with the development of the grassroots burden reduction work, and has constrained each other, and the grassroots "often reduce and often negative" situation has been formed.

## 4.2. Obstructed Goals: Blockages and Constraints in Organizational Governance Practices

### 4.2.1. Difficulties in the Implementation of External Governance Objectives

The main reason for the burden at the grassroots level comes from the assignment of tasks and assessment pressure by the higher-level departments, and in the context of the sinking of the line, the governance pressure is transmitted to the grassroots executive departments layer by layer, and the grassroots organization departments have problems such as insufficient planning and misalignment of rights and responsibilities.

First of all, in the process of goal planning, the short-term sports tasks assigned by the superior departments are the majority, and it is usually difficult for the community to plan in advance and form a full understanding of the overall situation of the task when receiving such tasks, and the community itself lacks the authority to carry out task planning, and it is difficult to decide when and how to carry out the task, so it can only passively accept the assigned tasks with the higher-level goals as the core. Insufficient planning in the early stage will lead to the community being unable to form a correct understanding of the workload in the early stage of undertaking the work task, and there may be methods to be improved in the selection of task implementation methods, over-reliance on previous work experience, etc., and the completion of the task may deviate from the expected goal, resulting in task stacking, resulting in community staff always "turning around", and at the same time coping with various sports projects with different requirements but a short time limit. This type of model has not been substantially changed since the grassroots burden reduction work was carried out in 2019, and with the increase in the tasks assigned by departments at all levels, the grassroots burden reduction has shown a trend of becoming more and more negative.

Secondly, in the process of goal implementation, there is a problem of mismatch of rights and responsibilities in the community in the process of task implementation. With the improvement and expansion of the functions of grassroots organizations and the advancement of the sinking of social governance work, all higher-level departments will assign multi-departmental, multi-time, and multi-dimensional work tasks to grassroots staff. However, the delegation of work tasks does not mean that the law enforcement power and the adjudication power are assigned together, and the community often plays the role of the task executor, but it does not have the power to choose and optimize the task itself, and in the process of implementing the task, it also lacks the legitimate law enforcement power, and it is difficult to effectively complete the work task.

### 4.2.2. The Practice of internal optimization objectives Has Stagnated

From the perspective of the sinking of government work tasks, the burden of grassroots governance is rooted in organization, system, resources and culture, and the obstacles of mechanism and standard dimensions lead to the increasingly prominent problem of inconsistent rights and responsibilities of grassroots communities.

First of all, there are obstacles in the organizational mechanism, and at this stage, the establishment of the mechanism tends to cultivate the sense of responsibility through the construction model and guide the grassroots organizations to take the initiative to assume governance responsibilities. With the development of the higher-level supervision and evaluation mechanism, the accountability mechanism has gradually generalized, which has increased the work pressure and psychological pressure of grassroots personnel in achieving governance tasks.

*"Public welfare activities such as Sunshine Family undertaken by our community need to be applied for and reported in advance, and summarized and reviewed afterwards, and an activity involves several departments, and everyone must be responsible for this activity."(B20230512)*

At the same time, the imbalance between governance authority and responsibility leads to unclear boundaries of responsibility, which promotes the tendency to focus on avoiding responsibility and

working for inspection rather than focusing on the quality of work. The sense of responsibility cultivated under this model is biased towards instrumental rationality rather than value rationality, which ultimately leads to an "artificial burden" that pays for "inspection" and invests a lot of energy. The organizational incentive mechanism needs to be improved, because the grassroots organizations have neglected the emotional incentive itself for a long time, the emotional incentive for the staff is not in place, the staff generally have low expectations for the situation of "completing the work and obtaining the emotional incentive", and the emotional incentive corresponding to the workload can not be obtained, which will make the work pressure and emotional management of the grass-roots staff difficult to be effectively released and guided, affect the willingness to work, reduce work efficiency, and ultimately hinder the solution of the problem of grass-roots burden.

*Secondly, the assessment standards need to be improved, with the "integration of supervision and examination" model is becoming more and more mature, the frequency and intensity of supervision of higher departments have been continuously strengthened.*

*"It's only been three months in 2023, and the community has already welcomed the inspection twice, and each time we meet the inspection, we need to work overtime to sort out the inspection materials, which is very stressful." (A20230321)*

However, the higher-level government has not clearly stipulated that the supervision work should perform its duties, the scope of supervision, and the time when it should be carried out, etc., resulting in the difficulty of personnel to clarify and unify the supervision and standardization process in the specific practice process. At this stage of the supervision work, there are problems such as formalization, cumbersomeness, and excessive traces of supervision steps, unclear generalization of supervision subjects, and difficulty in implementing supervision matters. At the same time, in the process of assigning policy tasks, the higher-level government constantly exerts supervision pressure on the subordinates, and the exercise of its rights makes the supervision behavior frequent and repeated, and the supervision and accountability continue to increase. In order to alleviate the work pressure given by the higher authorities, the grassroots officials use various coping methods and strategies to cope with the assessment of the higher departments. Under the huge pressure of performance appraisal, the lower-level departments shifted the focus of their work to whether they left traces of work and whether they could cope with the performance appraisal of their superiors rather than whether they effectively implemented their work tasks, and the work of reducing the burden at the grassroots level did not achieve substantial progress.

### **4.3. Poor Coordination: The Organizational Integration and Coordination Mechanism is Blocked**

The problem of poor integration and coordination is mainly manifested in the process of specific policy implementation and organizational allocation, which is easy to lead to the lack of effective development strategies and long-term comprehensive planning and grasp of the work, and promotes the "step-by-step increase" of grassroots tasks[11] However, the trend of differentiation in the division of labor within the grass-roots organization team in the organization distribution and coordination will lead to the situation of "the busy are busier and the idler are more idle".

#### **4.3.1. The Execution Mechanism is Not Working Smoothly**

The poor operation of the enforcement mechanism is manifested in three levels: the subject, the content and the means.

First of all, for the implementation of the main body, because the reform of the governance mechanism has exceeded the development speed of the reform of the grassroots organizations, the higher-level government departments in the process of task setting and distribution, detached from the actual situation of the grassroots work, at the same time, the difference in the allocation of resources of the grassroots organizations and the limited scale of staff and other problems are

superimposed, and the distribution and implementation of the grassroots governance work has produced "layer by layer" and "distribution chaos".

*"Food safety inspection is not our daily responsibility, but due to the dispatch of superiors and the need for full coverage in a short period of time, we also have to rush ducks to the shelves." (C20230623)*

At the same time, the work assessment standards from the city to the district and then to the street continue to improve, to the grassroots level, it is necessary to take the food safety inspection work as the core work of the stage to promote in order to complete the inspection objectives, which greatly increases the pressure of the grassroots work, reduces the burden on the grassroots level, and is full of difficulties.

Secondly, for the implementation of the content, the design and planning of the grass-roots work lacks professionalism and overall thinking, and the assessment and supervision mechanism of the higher-level departments tends to require the work of the grass-roots departments to "leave traces everywhere", and the work at the grass-roots level is no exception. For the X community, the burden of leaving traces has been heavier, for the food safety inspection work, the community personnel are "laymen", need to temporarily learn food safety related professional knowledge, the implementation of the content and the staff of the professional does not match, which undoubtedly further increases the burden on the grassroots, reduce the burden of work, and carry out difficult.

Finally, for the means of implementation, assisting the government work through information technology applications should be an important measure to reduce the burden on the grassroots, but in actual operation, the "formalism on the fingertips" has emerged, and the one-sided understanding of the technical means by the higher departments has led to the need for grassroots organizations to achieve "double standards", "double certification" and "double traces" on paper and procedures in actual operation. In the eyes of grassroots workers, some applications are not tools to reduce work, but become an important part of quantitative assessment, and become a "shackle" to transform personal work into numbers.

#### 4.3.2. The Design of the Distribution Mechanism is Uneven

The shortcomings of the design of the organizational distribution mechanism are mainly reflected in the mismatch of personnel and posts and the uneven distribution of opportunities.

First of all, under the current working mechanism, the government supernumerary personnel have become a relief for the work pressure of the grass-roots government, and a large number of non-staff personnel have been hired, so that the grass-roots work can be carried out in an orderly manner, but at the same time, this measure has organizational and management problems such as intensified financial burden and chaotic personnel management, which has triggered a series of problems such as "non-staffing" and "supernumerary expansion" in the distribution and undertaking of grass-roots work, making it difficult to achieve "integration of people and posts" in the work arrangement, the number of staff members is inconsistent with the actual number of people on duty, and the number of non-staff personnel exceeds the approved number. Oversaturation and other phenomena occur. This kind of phenomenon has hindered the orderly development of grassroots work, aggravated the differentiation between in-staff personnel and non-staff personnel, and the tasks of grass-roots governance work have the characteristics of large volume, wide scope, many types, and relatively trivial. The differentiation of the staff of grass-roots organizations and the mismatch between personnel and posts have caused a differentiated situation of "the busier the busier and the more idle", resulting in the uneven distribution of governance tasks and the failure to implement the burden reduction work at the grass-roots level[13].

Second, there is an uneven distribution of opportunities within grassroots organizations. Under the premise of limited promotion opportunities, there is a significant difference in promotion opportunities between personnel in the establishment and those outside the establishment, and the increase in job accountability strengthens the opportunity difference. For staff who are willing to be

promoted, taking on more work can improve their work ability, increase their understanding of grassroots work, obtain more achievements, and gain an advantage in the competition. For workers who are not willing to be promoted, the staff who are difficult to be promoted within the staff lack the willingness and enthusiasm to undertake the work tasks, and the establishment gives such staff the support to choose to be lazy and "lie down and rot", and the non-staff staff lack the motivation to take the initiative to take on more work. The emergence of such a situation has led to the transfer of the already increasing number of grassroots work tasks to those who have the possibility and willingness to be promoted in the civil service team, and there is an imbalance in the distribution of work tasks[15]. At the same time, in the reality of the mismatch between work treatment and work tasks, staff members are facing greater psychological pressure and accountability burden while undertaking excessive work tasks, and the imposition of several pressures has caused the burden of grassroots staff to increase.

#### **4.4. Lack of Feedback: The Feedback Mechanism for the Organization to Exit is Incomplete**

There are problems in the management process of grassroots organization teams, and in the current closed-loop management mechanisms such as planning, deployment, execution, supervision, and feedback, the exit mechanism and feedback mechanism are incomplete. Under the influence of information asymmetry and other factors, the staff screened by the exit mechanism deviate from the expected goals, and some staff with a large workload and high quality may be screened and perform poorly in the performance evaluation[13]. This further leads to the fact that some community staff are less motivated in the process of holding activities, and have a tendency to rely on third-party organizations to initiate activities, and it is difficult for communities to carry out high-quality community activities in the context of insufficient funds and limited personnel incentives.

The operation of the feedback mechanism can be divided into two channels: mass feedback and internal feedback, and at this stage, the community supervision channel is affected by physical distance and psychological distance, and the practical effect is poor. The construction of the platform is still incomplete, and the management scope and problem-solving ability are limited; The management rules and regulations are not sound, and the practical effect is not as expected; The feedback mechanism of the masses has not yet been established, let alone timely feedback and improvement according to the needs of the masses. At the same time, in the process of practice, the grass-roots staff focus on planning and implementation, and pay less attention to the establishment of terminal mechanisms such as supervision and feedback, and it is difficult for the feedback mechanism to achieve the construction goal. However, the lack of feedback mechanism not only makes it difficult to play the role of the whole process management mechanism, but also has a negative impact on the completion of the overall task, and the burden on the grassroots cannot be alleviated, and the problem is prominent.

### **5. CASE SUMMARY: HOW TO CRACK "CONSTANT REDUCTION AND CONSTANT NEGATIVE"**

Through the investigation and analysis of the process of burden reduction in community X, as well as the research of relevant scholars on the burden of the grassroots, this paper finds that the solution to the failure of the burden reduction at the grassroots level should be adjusted and reformed from the current institutional structure and the four dimensions of structural functionalism.

#### **5.1. Strengthen the Level of Environmental Capacity Adaptation**

In view of the current situation of grassroots organizations undertaking multiple work tasks, the needs of the external environment should be clarified first. In the context of decentralization of governance

rights and responsibilities and diversified needs of the masses, in the process of carrying out grassroots work, it is necessary to strengthen grassroots capacity building and improve grassroots governance methods to cope with the escalating management requirements. In the process of modernizing the grassroots governance system and governance capacity, the grassroots need to strengthen the governance capacity of administrative implementation, service for the people, deliberation and consultation, and safety construction, and strengthen the ability level to adapt to the environment.

## **5.2. Straighten Out the Relationship between the Power and the Target of the Line**

In view of the relationship between governance power and responsibility, the higher-level departments should ensure the synchronization of functions and powers while assigning work tasks to the grassroots organizations, "delegating power" and "empowering" in parallel, and straightening out the relationship between affairs and powers, so as to clarify the division of responsibilities of departments at all levels and ensure the effective performance of functions. First, a list of responsibilities should be established to clarify the scope of responsibilities of grassroots organizations and strengthen the scope of performance of duties<sup>[8]</sup>.

On the one hand, promote the formation of "de-embedded" collaboration between the grassroots governance system and the current section-level system, and endow the grassroots governance units with administrative, service, and governance functions, so as to better meet the needs of the masses. On the other hand, it is necessary to fully release the vitality of governance at the grassroots level, promote the continuous innovation of grassroots governance methods and methods, and continuously deepen and strengthen the work concept, so as to avoid the governance dilemma caused by the ambiguity and rigidity of the line of affairs. Finally, higher-level departments should adopt flexible assessment methods to inspect grassroots governance work, avoid excessive attention to "indicators" and "traces" caused by "excessive indexing" of grassroots work, and guide grassroots organizations to focus on effectively improving the quality of governance and public satisfaction.

## **5.3. Optimize the Organization, Integration and Coordination Functions**

First of all, in the operation of the organization, it is necessary to strengthen the construction of grassroots organizations, improve the overall quality of grass-roots staff, bridge the internal differences of staff, solve the problems related to the "mismatch between personnel and posts" caused by the establishment reform, give full play to the endogenous power of the grass-roots governance team, improve the organizational operation mechanism, and improve the efficiency of organizational operation.

Secondly, in the construction of the system, a scientific and reasonable grassroots performance appraisal system should be adopted, and feasible performance appraisal indicators should be established to realize the relative connection between the appraisal indicators and the work content. Advocate a practical and effective trace management system, adopt scientific and accurate whole-process management technology, realize equal emphasis on "traces" and "achievements", and release the vitality of grassroots organization governance.

Finally, in the design of the incentive mechanism, we should give full play to the multiple incentive roles of material incentives, promotion incentives and emotional incentives, advocate more work and more rewards in material incentives and promotion incentives, and provide more opportunities and platforms for those who are aspiring and promising. In terms of emotional incentives, it is necessary to strengthen the positive guidance of emotional incentives, strengthen the emotional support and encouragement of multi-laborers, cultivate and guide the emotional management and stress management of grassroots staff, devote themselves to work with better emotions, and improve the efficiency of grassroots work<sup>[12]</sup>.

## 5.4. Build an Effective Model Maintenance Mechanism

In view of the optimization of the grassroots governance mechanism, a smooth and effective communication mechanism should be built to strengthen the deployment function of higher-level departments. First of all, in the process of internal feedback of the organization, it is necessary to improve the assessment and supervision of the superior departments and the "promotion-elimination" mechanism, enhance the scientific and standard selection of personnel, enhance the positive feedback of superior supervision, and mobilize the enthusiasm and initiative of staff within the organization. Secondly, in the design of the external feedback mechanism of the organization, the role and role of the higher-level government departments and the public should be strengthened, the channels of social supervision and public feedback should be unblocked, and the masses should be widely recruited to participate in the process of grassroots governance and supervision, so as to improve the governance ability and level of grassroots organizations. Finally, the quality assessment of the grassroots communication and feedback mechanism should be carried out on a regular basis, the vitality, validity and perfection of the feedback mechanism should be checked.

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- [20] (A20230321) is the interview case code of this study, which indicates the interview subject A in this case, and the collection time of this case is March 21, 2023, which is similar in the text.