

**Master's Research Report**

**Theoretical Analysis of Local Governments' Weak Implementation in  
the People's Republic of China**

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## **Abstract**

According to the government work report delivered at the fifth session of the 12th National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China on March 5, 2017, China has continuously made huge progress in its economic development with its GDP reaching 74.4 trillion yuan in 2016 thanks to the leadership of the Communist Part of China. However, there are still many problems in the local governments' implementation, which not only forms a great resistance to further economic structural reform, but also tarnishes the good image of the government. That's why China reiterates on a number of occasions that it is imperative to transform government functions and improve government performance so as to deliver better services to the people. Therefore, the research on improvement of local governments' implementing capability is of theoretical and practical significance to realize the Chinese Dream of national rejuvenation, and build China into a moderately prosperous society in all respects and a modern socialist country that is prosperous, strong, democratic, culturally advanced.

The research methods adopted in this report mainly include comparative analysis and qualitative analysis of documents and archives using relative theoretical frameworks. This report starts from the description of key concepts as well as theoretical frameworks which are used as a basis for later analysis. Then, the report describes and summarizes various forms of weak implementation, and put them into nine categories according to the specific characteristic of each different case. The causes of weak implementation are analyzed from four elements of implementation, which are diverse and complex, namely, the flaws of public policy itself; the incompetent

implementers; the imperfect administrative system; lack of administrative mechanisms of communication, supervision, evaluation, and accountability. Finally, based on the above analysis, the report puts forward comprehensive and concrete countermeasures to improve local governments' implementing capability from the following aspects: decision-making, personnel management, mediation, evaluation, oversight, and culture.

Due to limited time and knowledge, this report has its own limitations. More practical researches are required: an in-depth research should be carried out on the comprehensiveness and feasibility of enhancing local governments' implementing capability; further research should be made on whether the theoretical policy measures are effective.

**Key Words: implementation, local government, capability**

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## **Certification**

I, ZHANG Yong (51216617) hereby declare that the contents of this Research Report are original and true, and have not been submitted at any other university or educational institution for the award of degree or diploma.

All the information derived from other published or unpublished sources has been cited and acknowledged appropriately.

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2017/08/04

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# INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Research Background

In the Government Work Report delivered at the Fourth Session of the Tenth National People's Congress (NPC) of the People's Republic of China (PRC) on March 5, 2006, former premier Wen Jiabao first officially mentioned the importance of government's implementing capability with the following emphasis: "We will accelerate reform of the administrative system and further transform government functions. ... We will establish a sound administrative accountability system, improve the government's ability to perform its duties and strengthen public trust." (WEN, Jiabao, 2006)

Since 2006, improving the government's implementing capability has always been the core of administration. Ten years later, premier Li Keqiang reiterated: "We will ensure that officials perform their duties diligently, that government decisions are fully implemented, and that the government's public credibility is improved. Government workers must take an active approach to their work, carry out effective planning and decisive implementation, fulfill all their duties, and work tirelessly in service of the public. We will ... improve conduct and competence in order to become a contingent of top-performing public servants with a good command of professional expertise. We will improve and strictly enforce the work responsibility system and fully execute all policies and tasks without fail." (LI, Keqiang, 2016)

On March 5, 2017, premier Li Keqiang once again emphasized: "Governments at all levels and all government employees must make it our priority to get things done. In performing duties, we should work hard, in a down-to-earth way; and we should be



innovative as actual conditions allow. Implementing decisions made at meetings of higher-level authorities and contained in the documents they issue does not mean just holding more meetings and issuing more documents. It's no good to just push paper and pay lip service. We need to keep both the central government and local governments fully motivated, and encourage local governments to work according to local circumstances and be bold in their explorations, so that together we are all promoting sustainable and balanced development. We will strictly enforce the responsibility systems, particularly those for implementing key tasks. We must see responsibilities are fulfilled without fail, that pressure is felt at every level of government, and that implementation is carried out to the letter.” (LI, Keqiang, 2017)

Unfortunately, there is still a large amount of work needed to be done for local governments. The inadequacies of local governments result in some reforms, policies, and measures not being fully implemented. What's worse, a minority of government employees either do not or are unable to fulfill their duties, or behave irresponsibly. The weak implementation of local governments has such various manifestations as the corruption and misconduct in some sectors, the executions which go after profits and avoid disadvantages, sluggish self-reform and transformation of government functions, inadequate social management and public services, ineffective coordination among some departments, backward management practices, ignorance of law, while implementing policies, mechanical and rigid implementation, severe problems of formalism, bureaucracy, dishonesty, extravagance and waste, etc. also exist. This severely hampers the transformation from national policy into the expected outcomes. Numerous social problems and accidents occur due to the dysfunction of local governments, e.g. notable imbalances between government revenue and expenditures,

problems in medical care, education, elderly care, food and medicine safety, income distribution, and urban management that are of concern to the people, environmental pollution as severe smog as well as water and soil pollution, and so on.

Implementation is one of the key elements of government work. To improve the implementing capability of governments at all levels is an urgent task now in China. Nearly all current hot and difficult social issues of public concern are more or less related with the weak implementation of government. In 2006, the State Council promulgated “*the Special Regulations for Preventing Coalmine Accidents*”. However, major coalmine accidents still occurred frequently, which made Li Yizhong, director of State Administration of Work Safety, denounce the intolerable situation where the lax execution of laws, decrees and regulations is so rampant in some localities and government departments. In some cities, there has been the existence of two forces of the game in commercial housing market: on the one hand, the central government tries to stabilize house prices, by making the control policies and measures more and more concrete, and putting more and more efforts of implementation; on the other hand, some local officials do everything possible to maximize local interest and ignore the central government’s policies, which results in the continuous growth of the city housing prices. Some local governments disregard the environmental protection law to attract investment with low “threshold” or “localized policies”, which seriously hinders the implementation of the environmental protection law. The problem of weak implementation is prevalent in many other areas as well. A variety of security incidents in recent years are frequent due to the mistakes or deviations of the government implementation: from the crisis of SARS to series of coal mining accidents, from the incident of shoddy milk powder to incidents of fake rice and rotten cotton, from the

incident of the sinking of the cruise ship Oriental Star on the Yangtze River to the massive explosion in Tianjin Port, etc. We can't help asking why the central government's policies and measures failed to be fully implemented. We have to admit that there are problems with our government implementation. As Premier Li Keiqang (2017) states, "We still see problems of laws and regulations being enforced in a non-standard, unfair, or uncivil way. A small number of government employees are lazy and neglectful of their duties or shirk responsibility. Corruption often occurs in some sectors." Efficient and effective implementation will help China to complete the building of a moderately prosperous society in all respects, to transform China into a modern socialist country that is prosperous, strong, democratic, culturally advanced, and harmonious, and to realize the Chinese Dream of national rejuvenation. Therefore, a scientific and systematic research on implementation is of strategic and epoch-making significance.

## 1.2 Methods of Research

In social science, it is possible to draw different conclusions by using different strategies and corresponding approaches. Generally speaking, a research paradigm includes three parts: ontology, epistemology, and methodology. Ontology is the philosophical study of the nature of reality, namely, what is out there? Epistemology is about the relationship between the researcher and the reality; namely, is the reality objective and independent of the researcher, or subjective and inalienable of the researcher? Methodology is a systematic study of a set of methods applied in a specific field. Different worldview and theoretical perspective may lead to different analysis of the same problem, that is, positivism of objective account of the world; interpretivism of

understanding meanings; and constructivism of local and specific realities. The following briefly describes the theoretical perspective as well as its corresponding methods.

There are many different perspectives of government implementation. Traditional dichotomy of politics and administration believes that implementation is synonymous to administration. Accordingly, the government implementing capability is equivalent to the administrative capacity of the government, and in this sense the implementation is reflected at all levels of government. In the history of the administration of industrial countries, the separation of implementation from policy first occurred when the decision function of the legislature is separated from the executive function of administration, and occurred again in the administrative process. This evolution embodies the significant transition from the initial implementation of the state will and laws to the implementation of administrative decision-making, specially the more common implementation of policies.

The government implementation can be studied from two major perspectives: the executive body and the source of execution. The executive body refers to government at all levels and their respective executive divisions. China's government at all levels has formed a huge pyramid-type execution network. This crisscross, hierarchical implementation network determines the final effect of government implementation through its organizational structure, operational mechanisms, information exchange, and communication collaboration. The source of execution can be divided into: the ruling party, the people's congress at the corresponding level and its Standing Committee, higher level government, higher people's congress and its Standing Committee, local

government, the judiciary, public opinion feedback, public appeal, etc. Therefore, the implementation includes: 1) route, principle, policy, strategy, and planning proposed by the ruling party; 2) policies, regulations, orders, and instructions from superior government; 3) policies, decisions, and regulations circulated by People's Congress; 4) instructions, decisions, rules, regulations, and the daily affairs of the government at the corresponding level; 5) the public will be embodied in laws and regulations; 6) judgments made by the judiciary that are legally binding by the executive; 7) public opinions and responses to strong social conditions; etc.

The core issue of this paper is to describe the current situation of local governments' implementation of public policy, to find out the key problems as well as their causes, and to provide possible solutions for the improvement of implementation. This paper mainly contains four parts: firstly, to provide theoretical analysis of components of local government implementation, and various models; secondly, to provide practical analysis of the current situation of local governments' implementation, and to precisely locate the real problems; thirdly, to further analyze the deep causes of local governments' weak implementation based on previous models; and finally, to put forward the countermeasures to improve the implementation of local governments.

This paper combines the methods of system analysis, behavior analysis, theory and practice, social investigation, and document retrieval. A large number of data come from the library, government archives, news newspapers, databases, networks, and other related channels, which include academic papers, research reports, works, yearbook, county annals, leaders' speeches, government work reports, statistical reports, news media interviews, programs, articles, reports, etc.

### 1.3 Significance of Research

Government implementation is the missing part of China's government operating system. Policies and regulations against SARS were procrastinated at its early stage; Prime Minister was asked to help migrant workers get their salaries; the environment protection has become a basic national policy; sustainable development strategy has been proposed for more than a decade while the environment is still deteriorating; government corruption is getting worse and worse, and so on. All these problems are closely associated with various weak implementations such as 'more words, less actions,' ignoring policies and decrees, implementing distorted policies, arbitrary implementation of local governments, etc. This consequently eliminates the synergies of the overall goal, makes many social problems pending, and hinders the progress of reform and construction. Once the national laws and regulations are enacted, and the central policies are made, only with strict implementation will they be effective. Whether laws and policies are fully implemented depends much on the strict implementation of local governments at all levels.

Government implementation is a new concept; it is different from the administrative capability in the traditional administrative law; it is also different from the ruling capacity mentioned in the central document. The government implementation first demands that the decisions of the Central Committee are carried out effectively and correctly. Governments at all levels must abide by the Constitution as well as its principles, firmly uphold the leadership of the Central Government, strictly implement the laws and regulations of the state and the central policy decisions, and resolutely eliminate countermeasures and obedience in disguise. At the same time, implementation

does not mean passive execution and literal translation of policies. The real implementation requires all local governments and officials to thoroughly grasp the spirit of laws and policies, understand the superior government's intention and demands of the public. The real implementation opposes all forms of cheat and sabotage.

Therefore, the study of government implementation is of great significance. In the theoretical sense, this is a long-neglected problem; the upsurge of business execution and the reflection on the execution of the government can arouse the attention of the masses, scholars and the government to open up a new academic research field. In the practical sense, China is in the period of institutional transition, where economic system reform must be accompanied by political reform, and government implementation is the part that cannot be ignored in the political system reform. Only by taking proactive measures and improving the implementing capability of governments at all levels, we can speed up the process of political democratization in our country and the interests of the people can be fundamentally safeguarded. In short, to explore how to improve the government's implementation is an urgent research topic in public administration. It is urgent for China to strengthen the study of government implementation and analyze the causes of various weak implementations. It is also the inevitable development of the implementation theory to establish concrete and operational mechanism to enhance the government's implementing capability. The following part is a solid proof that China needs urgently a systematic and scientific research on how to enhance government's implementing capability.

In the report to the Eighteenth National Congress of the Communist Party of China on November 8, 2012, former General Secretary of the Communist Party of

China (CPC) Central Committee and former President of PRC Hu Jintao elaborated the utmost importance of government's implementing capability with a large part as following:

“We should maintain the Party's advanced nature and purity, strengthen its creativity, cohesiveness and capability and enhance its capacity to govern in a scientific and democratic way and in accordance with the law.

The reform of the political structure is an important part of China's overall reform. We must continue to make both active and prudent efforts to carry out the reform of the political structure, and make people's democracy more extensive, fuller in scope and sounder in practice.

We should place greater emphasis on improving the way the Party exercises leadership and governance to ensure that it leads the people in effectively governing the country. We should attach greater importance to improving the system of democracy and diversifying the forms of democracy to ensure that the people conduct democratic elections, decision-making, administration and oversight in accordance with the law.

We should make all-around efforts to strengthen the Party theoretically and organizationally and improve its conduct.”



## LITERATURE REVIEW

The earliest study and exploration of the executive power began in the legal field, and then gradually developed on the basis of continuously drawing on the research results of the enterprise execution. With the growing function of government, more and more scholars pay increasing attention to research on the implementation of local governments. Therefore, the following literature review mainly focuses on implementation.

American scholar Bartak analyzes the government's implementation through game theory, and accordingly establishes the model of game implementation. He advocates that the government's implementation is like a game, which consists of six factors influencing the implementation: 1) contestants (implementers and implementees); 2) interest relations (the reason for the contest); 3) contest resources (soft resources as strategy and technology, and hard resources as finance and authority); 4) contest rules (fair competition); 5) communication styles among contestants; 6) degree of stability of the outcomes.

American policy scientist M. Rein and F. F. Rabinovitz put forward the model of circularity. They believe that under the influence of environmental conditions, policy implementation needs to go through three stages, and follow three principles, that is, the stages of making decisions, allocating resources, and supervision; the principles of legality, rationality, and consensus. The model of cycle implementation is formed by the interaction of various elements of the implementation, and stresses that supervision has a decisive role in fulfilling the ultimate goal of government implementation.

American scholar Thomas B. Smith believes that under the premise of correct public policy, the government implementation should focus on the process, and thus he put forward the model of policy implementation process. He points out that the effective implementation of public policy must have a series of relevant prerequisites: idealized policy, implementing agency, target group, and environment. Specifically, they are the form of policy, the type of policy, the origin, scope and support of the policy, the impression of society on the policy, the structure and personnel of the executive body, the manner and skill of the supervisor, the ability and confidence to carry out, the receptibility of the target group, the previous policy experience, cultural, socio-economic and political environment, etc.

American scholar Mclaughlin proposes a model of implementation as mutual adaptation, which regards the implementation as a process of mutual adaptation between implementers and the affected group in terms of goals and means.

American scholars D. A. Mazmanian and P. Sabatier put forward the model of implementing variables, which regards implementation as a complex dynamic process where a number of variables interact with each other.

These series of research results provide both various research approaches and rich reference materials for further study on local government's implementation.

A wide range of diverse forms of research on local governments' implementation has long been carried out in China. In 2004, it's the first time that a government implementation research appeared in China's academia. The ensuing researches gradually became diversified in perspective and specified in contents, thus making a

great academic contribution. Chinese scholar Mo Yongbo makes in-depth study of government's implementing daily affairs, especially the implementing capability of central and local governments in performing daily tasks. Mo also refines the necessary resources required by implementation, including property, information, law, system; and decisions, decrees, strategies, and plans for reaching the goals of implementation. Another Chinese scholar Yao Keli points out that generative elements are key factors to government implementation, which is the conclusion he draws from his own in-depth study of generative mechanism for the government implementation. Yao also believes that government implementation is not a simple combination of elements, but an integrated force from the interactions among elements, and between internal elements and external reality. In addition, some scholars are inspired by corporate culture, and try to research on improving government's implementation from the perspective of administrative culture. There are a few scholars focusing on local governments only and trying to explore the causes of weak implementation of local governments.

## 2.1 Definition of Key Concepts

### 2.1.1 Government and Governance

Government is defined as a political system in Britannica Concise Encyclopedia (2006), which is used to regulate and administer a group of people. The controlling system of a government is usually realized through legislators, administrators, and arbitrators. Generally speaking, the government of a state consists of different levels with typically corresponding responsibilities. The legislative, executive, and judicial powers of governments at different levels may have various ways of combination to suit actual needs within specific regions.

In China, the Central Government is responsible for enforcing state policies, while the local governments are responsible for implementing state policies with limited freedom of adjustment to adapt to the local economic, social, and cultural realities. The hierarchy of China's local governments requires each government of lower levels to be supervised and overseen by its higher-level government, and all local governments should work under the guidance of the Central government.

Government, in its essence, is a form of governance by means of political systems and institutions. According to Britannica Concise Encyclopedia (2006), governments are involved in various aspects of society, "some also control the religious affairs of their people; others avoid any involvement with religion. Political forms at the national level determine the powers exercised at the subnational levels; these have included autocracy, democracy, fascism, monarchy, oligarchy, plutocracy (government by the wealthy), theocracy, and totalitarianism."

Governance is a complicated concept which can be defined broadly to refer to any type of controlling and managing patterns such as public governance, environmental governance, multilevel governance, etc. Governance can also be used to refer to the process of state governing by means of interaction and implementing policies. Governance may be influenced by both internal rules and external factors such as media, lobbies, and so on.

Governance is different from politics in that governance includes the administrative and process-oriented elements of governing. Generally, governance takes place in three channels: public-private collaboration, market mechanism, and top-down bureaucracy.

### 2.1.2 Public Administration

Although public administration distinguishes itself from private administration, there's also a debate concerning the category of public administration as whether public administration belongs to the political science or falls into the field of administrative science. This debate originates from the rigid dichotomy of politics and administration. Just as Rosenbloom D.H. (2015) stated "it was pointed out some time ago that any one-paragraph or even one-sentence definition of public administration may prove temporarily mind-paralyzing. This is because "public administration" as a category is so abstract and varied that it can be described only in vague, general, and somewhat competing terms." Here is a list of various definitions of public administration among the most serious and influential efforts:

- 1) "Public administration ... is the action part of government, the means by which the purposes and goals of government are realized."
- 2) "Public administration as a field is mainly concerned with the means for implementing political values. ..."
- 3) "... Public administration can be best identified with the executive branch of government."
- 4) "The process of public administration consists of the actions involved in effecting the intent or desire of a government. It is thus the continuously active, 'business' part of government, concerned with carrying out the law, as made by legislative bodies (or other authoritative agents) and interpreted by the courts, through the processes of organization and

management.”

- 5) “Public administration: (a) is a cooperative group of effort in a public setting; (b) covers all three branches – executive, legislative, and judicial – and their interrelationships; (c) has an important role in the formulation of public policy, and is thus part of the political process; (d) is different in significant ways from private administration; and (e) is closely associated with numerous private groups and individuals.” (Rosenbloom, D.H., Kravchuk, R.S., & Clerkin, R.M., 2015)

Based on the above definitions, Rosenbloom D.H. (2015) concluded that “public administration does involve activity, it is concerned with politics and policy making, it tends to be concentrated in the executive branch of government, it does differ from private administration, and it is concerned with implementing the law. ... Public administration is the use of managerial, political, and legal theories, practices, and processes to fulfill legislative, executive, and judicial mandates for the conduct of governmental regulatory and service functions.”

Putting aside the rigid debate concerning the category of public administration, it is universally agreed that one of the fundamental goals of public administration is to facilitate the implementation so that government can function properly. Therefore, in this sense, public administration has to professionally manage the relations between policies and public sectors.

### 2.1.3 Implementation

Implementation is used in many fields to refer to the practice of transforming

ideas into physical realities. In political science, it is the carrying out of public policy. Usually, the implementation process of public servants in a government consists of decision-making, executive practices and adjudication. According to Wikipedia (2017), “factors impacting implementation include the legislative intent, the administrative capacity of the implementing bureaucracy, interest group activity and opposition, and presidential or executive support.”

## 2.2 Components of Implementation

Everything is a coordinated system of small elements that interact and cooperate with each other to function as a whole. Implementation is not an exception. Generally speaking, the implementing capability of a government is a united force that integrates all governmental inner forces as well as implementers, resources, environment, executive tools, etc. The existence and effectiveness of a governmental implementing capability are closely pertinent and even constrained to the indispensable components of implementation as well as their property, operating mechanism, and external environment. The major components of implementation include executive body, executive institutions, target group, executive resources, and implementing environment. The following are detailed explanation of each component mentioned above.

### 2.2.1 Executive Body

Executive body is the most fundamental and proactive element among all components of implementation, which directly determines the ultimate outcome of implementation. Executive body may be as small as an individual, or as large as an organization and government. The implementing capability of local governments is

different from that of an individual, which is not a simple addition and accumulation of individual implementing capability. A systematic function of all parts as a whole is far more effective than simply putting together the functions of each individual.

In the People's Republic of China, local governments usually base their local public policies on local realities and public policies from higher governments. The implementing schema of local public policies must be stipulated in the spirit of higher governments. Therefore, all the final public policies will inevitably possess a little bit different color of local characteristics. So many second-hand processing of original public policies will easily generate mistakes, misinterpretations, and misunderstandings, which will probably result in major subsequent problems in the outcomes of the implementation.

All in all, implementers of public policies are of crucial importance to the success and failure of implementation. If all the implementers can understand, interpret and grasp the real intent of higher governments' orders and policies with little distortion, there will be more chances of achieving the expected effect. Otherwise, there will be more failures and "discounts" of implementation.

The above mentioned problem comes from two main factors: 1) the individual practitioners; 2) the hierarchy of governments. It is obvious that policies will be implemented by practitioners in the end. On one hand, all is utmost important, those are, individual's professional knowledge, cognition style, learning competence, personality, compliance with laws, abiding by occupation rules, altruism, attitude, habit, etc. On the other hand, the complex structure of the hierarchy of governments as well as its inefficient operating mechanism and immoral organization culture is another block to



effective implementation. Generally speaking, the more complex the hierarchy of local governments is, the more possible the misinterpretation of information is. In addition, a scientific and rational operating mechanism, and upright and positive organization culture are necessary guarantee for the success of implementation.

### 2.2.2 Executive Institutions

Institutions are defined by Douglass North (1994) as “humanly devised constraints that structure political, economic and social interactions”. Institutions are just like the rules of games, which constrain people’s behaviors to try to form expected interpersonal relationships. According to North, there are two types of constraints, formal and informal. Formal constraints are also called formal institutions including constitutions, laws, property rights, political rules, economic rules, social contracts, etc. However, informal constraints (informal institutions) are taboos, sanctions, codes of conduct, value system, morality, customs, traditions, ideology, etc. Informal institutions are necessary complement and expansion of formal institutions, which are recognized as social norms and self-regulations to further support, illustrate, and modify formal institutions. Both formal and informal institutions are inalienable part of society for the perpetuation of safety and order. Whether the institutions are effective or not depends much on government’s coercive force and measures.

The executive institutions of local governments comprise organizing structure, operating mechanism, the allocation mechanism of government’s executive resources, performance assessment mechanism with reward and punish as appropriate, mechanism for inspecting and monitoring implementation, etc. The scientific and rational institutions as well as the coordinated mechanisms will ensure that all components of

implementation be integrated successfully and efficiently, thus making the united force more effective than expected. On the contrary, irrational institutions plus disordered organizing structure will make all components of implementation exert negative influence on one another, thus totally crippling the whole government's implementation.

### 2.2.3 Target Group

Target group refers to the public objects that are directly influenced during the implementation of public policies. Since public policy in essence is a tool of structural adjustments of public interest, the objective of implementing public policies is to identify, modify, allocate, and rearrange the public interest of certain groups by way of guiding, changing, and constraining public behaviors of these groups. In this sense, the process of implementation is an interaction between executive body and target group with the result of structural adjustments of public interests among different interest groups. Therefore, the efficacy and efficiency of implementation are not determined by executive body only, but are influenced by target group as well, and are especially interrelated with the compatibility between executive body and target group. In fact, the expected goal of public policies cannot be foreseen precisely by policy makers, and cannot be determined by policy implementers either. Target group may have influential impact on the outcome of implementation in three aspects: 1) the reaction from target group as well as the attitude of the target group towards the public policy concerned; 2) the scale and structure of target group; 3) the interest orientation of target group.

The target group's attitude and reaction actually reflect the degree to which the target group accepts the public policy. Usually the attitude of the target group towards the public policies exerted on them can be graded into three levels, namely, obedience,

recognition and internalization. If the target group can understand and comprehend the public policy very well, it will recognize and accept willingly, and the inner recognition will rise to the level of internalization, thus, it will take the initiative to accept the public policy so that the policy implementation will go smoothly. Factors that influence the attitude of the target group towards the policy include the knowledge structure of the target group, the level of awareness, the cultural background and the value orientation of the target group. All these will have important influence on whether the target group accepts the public policy.

The population structure and scale of the target group is another important factor influencing implementation. Generally speaking, the scale of the target group is inversely proportional to the degree of difficulty in the implementation of the policy, that is, the larger the size of the target group and the greater the number involved, the greater the difficulty of the implementation of the policy. On the contrary, the smaller the size of the target group and the less the number involved, relatively the less the difficulty of the implementation of the policy. In addition, the organizational structure of the target group has an impact on the effectiveness of policy implementation. Usually, the more complex the organizational structure of the target group is and the more complicated the public issues involved, the greater the difficulty of policy implementation is, and vice versa.

The interest orientation of the target group also plays an important role in the implementation. If the implementation of a public policy will damage the interests of the target group, it is likely that the target group will not accept the policy or even take confrontation against the implementation.

#### 2.2.4 Implementation Resources

In the eyes of economists, resources mainly refers to the sum of factors that are put into the production activities, e.g. capital, labor, technology, and natural resources. However, resources in the sense of political science include both the natural resources such as material instruments that govern the political system and the natural forces that can be used in the production process, and the authoritative resources such as power, legitimacy and effectiveness that dominate the exercise of the human activities in a political system.

Policy implementation resources refer to the sum of the various resources required to ensure the effective implementation of public policies, including human resources, material resources, information resources, management resources, authoritative resources, financial resources, power resources, implementation strategies, and implementation tools and implementation methods. Among them, human resources are the most active factors in the process of implementation since all public policies will be implemented by people. The material resource is the physical basis for the implementation of the policy. Only with sufficient financial support and technical support, will the implementation be smooth. Rich financial and material resources will enable the implementation of various requirements to be optimized. Information resources are important tools to ensure successful and effective communication between policy implementers and external environment, as well as between policies and systems. Effective transmission of information can improve work efficiency, promote information feedback during policy implementation, and make policy implementation plan more rational and feasible. Authoritative resources are the basis of the

government's implementation, and the sources of government power to acquire, command, and utilize all other resources. The level of honesty of the government directly determines the degree of trust of the public on the government, and good integrity has a very important impact on the construction of service-oriented and responsible government. The degree of richness of resources to a large extent determines the strength of the government implementation and indicates the level of government executive power.

Human resources are the most important resource for government implementation. The quality and quantity of human resources determine the efficiency and effect of government implementation. When there are far more government employees than the upper limit of job vacancies required by the government on the basis of real demands, there will be more internal frictions that lead to more waste and less efficiency. Therefore, the quality of human resources outweighs the quantity of human resources not only because certain quality can make up for the lack of quantity, but also because it directly affects the efficacy of other elements of government implementation.

With the advent of the information age, information resources will be increasingly important strategic resources among all government implementation resources. The policy itself is in the form of information, which is issued by policy makers and delivered to policy implementers and target groups. The effective implementation and acceptance of policy by policy implementers and target groups is based on the comprehensive grasp of policy information and the accurate understanding. Policy implementers should not only have sufficient information resources, but also to ensure that the information channels are unimpeded, otherwise it will be difficult to develop a

correct and feasible implementation plan, and to monitor the process of implementation. Facts have proved that some of the mistakes and difficulties of the implementers are often caused by the lack of necessary information by the implementers or improper handling of the information obtained. To a certain extent, the process of government implementation is the process of information collection, transmission, conversion and feedback. The flow of information regulates the quantity, quality, direction and speed of the material flow. Any obstruction of information flow will cause material flow disorder and interruption, and administrative functions may consequently not be achieved. Therefore, the information is both the central nervous system of the government system and the important resources of government implementation.

The reason why authority can become an important executive resource is that the authority itself has the following functions: to enhance the responsibility of the executive staff and to improve the enthusiasm of the executive staff; to easily carry out concerted actions; to motivate subordinates. Generally, an authoritative person has a certain degree of expertise and can provide a wealth of experience and expertise in implementation. Authority is the basis for job assignment, work instruction, and work control, the three of which are just the prerequisites for effective implementation. Authority is also a stimulus for reward and punishment, which will help improve the efficiency as well as efficacy of the government implementation if operated in a good manner.

The way of implementation is the means and method for the successful implementation of the government, mainly administrative, economic, legal and ideological approaches. The administrative mode mainly adopts the command,

instruction, etc. to carry out the implementation activities. The advantages of the administrative mode are binding, efficient, and flexible, but it is not conducive to mobilize the enthusiasm and creativity of the lower implementing agencies, and easily leads to “one size fits all” phenomenon. However, the economic approach overcomes the shortcomings of the administrative mode, but there is “market failure” phenomenon. Legal mode is highly normative and stable, but it requires high-level integrity and completeness of the legal system. Pedagogic method of ideological education is another way to promote the implementation of the government with low cost and lasting effect, but it functions slowly and is especially inefficient and ineffective in urgent social issues as well as issues of great controversy or needing prompt implementation. The above mentioned four ways have their own advantages and disadvantages, and should be flexible for the specific circumstances.

#### 2.2.5 Implementation Environment

According to the system theory, the government organization is an open system, and it should interact with the external environment. The government’s implementation activities transform the external environment proactively; while the external environment plays a decisive role of constraints by way of infiltrating the whole process of government implementation. A suitable environment is not only beneficial to government implementation, but provides less constraints and containments to the implementation of the government. What’s more, various external assistance from the environment may greatly enhance the efficacy of government implementation. On the contrary, an adverse environment will interfere, or even distort, the government implementation by a variety of external forces of containment, thus greatly weaken its

efficacy. The implementation environment is a combination of external elements that are directly or indirectly acting, affecting the implementation process and the course of its activities, the mode of activity and the outcome of the activity. These external elements are widely available in a variety of forms, from different levels to different perspectives. The environment can be divided into macro-environment, meso-environment and micro-environment according to its scale; it can also be divided into international environment and domestic environment according to the yardstick of national regions. With the standard of its function, the environment can be divided into the positive environment (benign environment) and the negative environment (malignant environment); while with the standard of its content, it can be divided into political environment, economic environment, cultural environment, social environment, natural environment and so on. In practice, the various categories are not completely independent and isolated, but they are crossed and integrated with each other. The constraining power of environment over the government implementation demonstrates on two salient aspects: first, the environment is the essential prerequisite to the existence and development of the government implementation; second, the environment determines the nature, status quo, as well as the development direction of the implementation of the government.

### 2.3 Theoretical Framework

This section briefly introduces some models that have been used for understanding and explaining implementation. The purpose of this section is to provide fundamentals that will be used to describe and analyze the current situation of implementation in China. The paper starts from describing the problems and then



analyzes the problems by integrating elements and ideas or even inspirations from each model as below.

### 2.3.1 Model of Policy Implementation Process

One of the significant representatives of the model of policy implementation process is American scholar Thomas B. Smith. There is an implicit assumption in most policy studies that once a policy has been formulated the policy will be implemented. American scholar T. B. Smith believes that governmental bureaucracies often lack the capacity for implementation. Interest groups, opposition parties, and affected individuals and groups often attempt to influence the implementation of policy rather than the formulation of policy. Smith argues that idealized policies, implementing agencies, target groups, and environmental factors are major factors involved in policy implementation. The idealized policy is the form of interaction that the policymaker attempts to pursue; the target group is the group or individual that is most directly influenced by the policy and must respond appropriately to the policy; the executing agency is the government agency or organization that is responsible for policy implementation; environmental factors are those factors that affect policy implementation and are also affected by policy implementation. In the year of 1973, T. B. Smith's "*The Policy Implementation Process*" was published on Policy Sciences. It is in the article that T. B. Smith first proposed the model of process to analyze the factors that affect the policy implementation. So, the model of policy implementation process is also called "Smith Model". T. B. Smith believes that public policy is a purposeful activity of the government. The implementation of the policy may lead to tension in the community or even lead to confrontation. Thus, Smith's implementation model does not

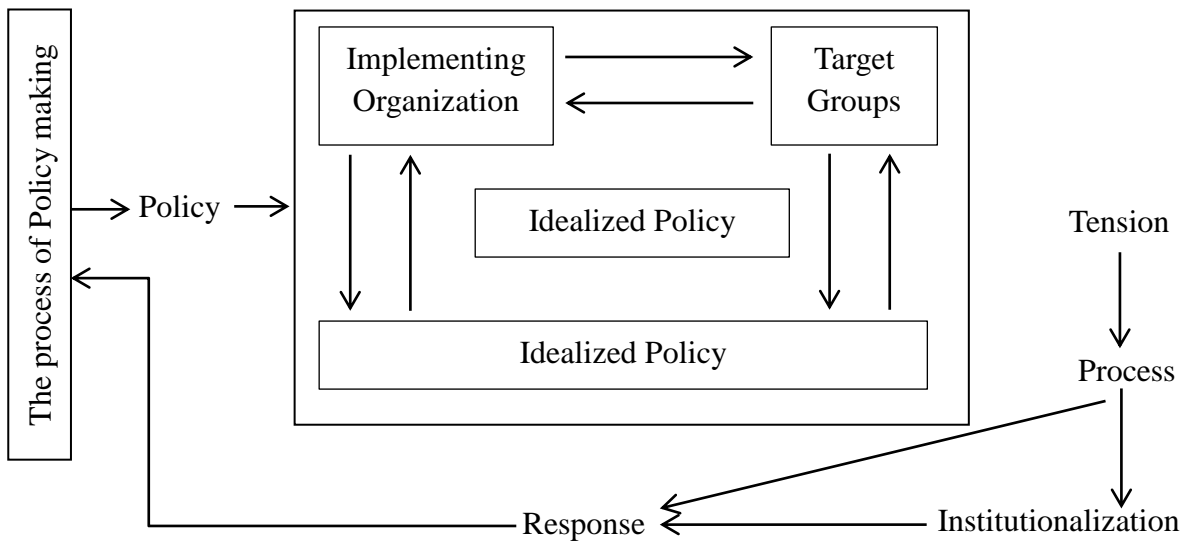
accept the traditional policy theory that each policy is an idealized policy that will not meet too much resistance or defiance. T. B. Smith believes that the policy implementation is actually a process in which all related factors interact with each other around the systematic framework of idealized policy to “process” tensions, stresses, and constraints.

Policy implementation is seen as a tension generating force in society. Tensions are generated between and within four components of the implementing process: idealized policy, implementing organization, target group and environmental factors. The tensions result in transaction patterns which may or may not match the expectations of outcome of the policy formulators. The transaction patterns may become crystallized into institutions. Both the transaction patterns and the institutions may generate tensions which, by feedback to the policymakers and implementers, may support or reject further implementation of the policy. By application of the model, policymakers can attempt to minimize disruptive tensions which can result in the failure of policy outcomes to match policy expectations. T. B. Smith argues that there are many factors involved in policy implementation, but these four factors are the major variables.

- 1) Idealized Policy. It refers to the legal, reasonable, and feasible policy. It includes the form of policy, type, origin, scope, and social awareness of the policy. It is the ideal model of interaction that policy makers try to achieve.
- 2) Implementing Organization. Usually, it refers to the government specifically responsible for the implementation of the policy. It includes the power structure of the implementing agency, personnel provision and its work attitude, leadership model and skills, and the situation of the implementers.

- 3) Target Groups. It is the policy object, that is, a group of people whose behavior must be adjusted to a particular policy decision. It includes their degree of organization or institutionalization, awareness of leadership, and previous policy experience. It is made up of those who are influenced by policy and must take new forms of interaction. They are directly influenced by the policy and will respond to the government's policies by various reactions or even confrontations. Therefore, it is necessary to respond effectively to the various responses from the target groups so that the implementation of the policy can be carried out smoothly.
  
- 4) Environmental Factors. It refers to the factors associated with the living space of policy, including political environment, economic environment, cultural environment, historical environment and so on. T. B. Smith believes that environmental factors can be imagined as a constraint channel, and the implementation of the policy must go through this channel. Different cultural, social, political and economic conditions may play a dominant role in different policies. Smith cited examples of developing countries to illustrate his view that in developing countries, policies related to local autonomy may be constrained by the environmental factors of basic cultural life and social life at the village level.

The following chart describes the process of interactions among the four major variables as well as their interrelations during the policy implementation. Smith uses the term "processing" to represent the reaction to the relationship of tension, stress, and conflict among the various elements of policy implementation.



T. B. Smith's Model of Policy Implementation Process

### 2.3.2 Model of Implementation as Mutual Adaptation

Mutual adaptation refers to the model established by American scholar Milbrey Wallin Mclaughlin in her work *“Implementation as Mutual Adaptation: Change in Classroom Organization”* in 1976. According to M. W. Mclaughlin (1976), “implementation is a dynamic organization process that is shaped over time by interactions between project goals and methods, and the institutional setting.” American scholar M. W. Mclaughlin (1976) argues that the process of policy implementation is essentially an interactive process of mediating objectives and means between the policy implementers and the target groups. The success of the policy implementation depends fundamentally on the degree of behavioral adaptation between the policy implementers and the target groups. Furthermore, she describes the interactive model of policy implementation from four aspects:

First, in many cases, policymakers and policy recipients do not stand in the same position to look at a public policy, and there may be inconsistencies between them and their needs. But the policy will also affect the common interests of both sides, so the two sides need to make each other concessions and compromises, seeking the “benefit

and win-win” policy implementation.

Second, policy implementers take the initiative in the process of implementation, but the goals and means are flexible, which can be modified or even changed according to the requirements of environmental factors and policy recipients.

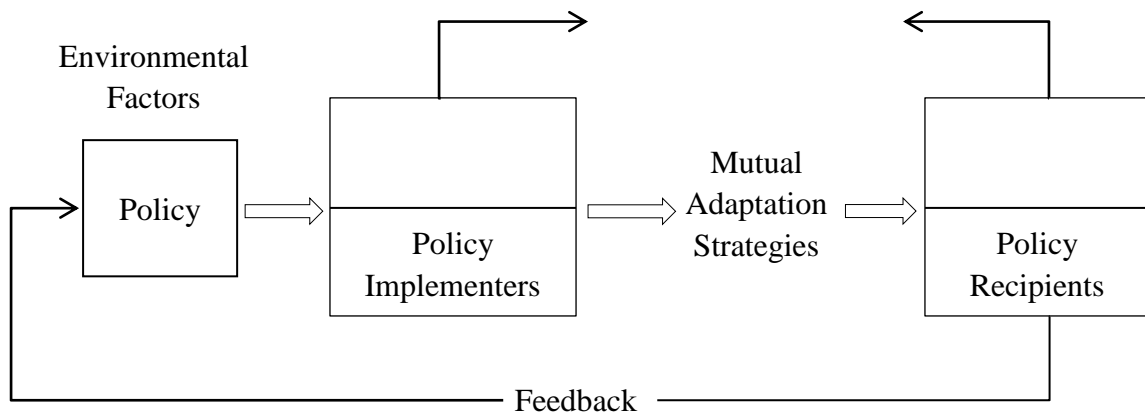
Third, the process of mutual adjustment between policy implementers and policy recipients is a two-way information exchange process, and both parties should be on an equal footing in the process of mutual adjustment. This is quite different from the one-way process that is traditionally known as “implement do orders”.

Four, the interests, values, ideologies, and the forms of feedback of policy recipients will determine the interests and values of the policy implementers. There are some differences between policy implementers and policy recipients, and the results of adaptation between both sides will serve as feedback to influence the policies that are formulated.

On this basis, M. W. McLaughlin concluded that the success of idealized policies depends on effective policy implementation, while effective policy implementation relies on successful intermodulation processes.

Public administration under a democratic atmosphere clearly advocates synergizing and sharing among the government, the market and the citizens, while one-way implementation of public policy in the modern public administration system will be less and less. A vivid example is the ban on urban fireworks during the Spring Festival. From the initial forced ban to trust and rely on the public’s choice in recent years, the government gradually lifted the ban. In turn, the public began to consciously

maintain the urban environment, and willingly accept the guidance of the government.



M. W. McLaughlin's Model of Mutual Adaptation

### 2.3.3 Model of Game Implementation

The model of game implementation is first proposed by Bartak who regards the implementation as a game. Bartak believes that the following concepts should be understood: 1) the policy implementers and the relevant personnel during the implementation, that is, contestants; 2) the degree of stake; 3) strategy and technology; 4) competition resources; 5) conditions for winning; 6) the rules of fair competition; 7) the characteristics of communication among contestants; 8) the degree of instability of the results. Bartak's implementation of the game means that all the relevant factors during the process of the policy implementation should be regarded as a whole, and these elements should be seen as a game. Bartak lists four of the most common implementations of the game: 1) decentralization of policy resources; 2) the deviation of the policy objectives; 3) the dilemma of the implementing agency; 4) the waste of the implementation resources.

Bartak pointed out that four competition methods led to the dispersion of policies and resources. The first is so called "cheap money game" that the individual or group

can easily get the money from government, but cannot produce the expected results. The second is called “budget game” referring to the phenomenon that the policy implementers in the administration pay special attention to the relationship with the budget officials. The closer the relationship is, the more chances to get more budgets are. The third is called “easy life game”. This refers to the fact that public servants have a natural inclination to improve the working environment for a comfortable life because of the limited income. The fourth kind of game is called “competition”, which means the political game caused in getting the central grant by local governments.

The policy objectives may change to some extent during process of the policy implementation, because the policy connotation is unclear, or because the basis of policy consensus is not solid at all. Meanwhile, there is a frequent call for the maintenance of the public interest during the policy implementation. So, the policy after social negotiation will return to the starting point, or be distorted, or simply cannot produce any effect. Bartak believes that policy implementation is a continuation of the policy by using other means.

The implementing agencies may face difficult dilemma when the public flatter or boycott the policy implementation. In addition, the implementation of the policy will be hindered if there are more social changes, or if there is a lack of consciousness of cooperation, or if the public are less competent. Bartak believes that although management knowledge can be used in the government implementation, but there are many uncontrollable factors in the management system. So, he argues that “management of the game” is not easy to win.

Bartak believes that the waste of implementation resources can be caused by

many factors such as the incompetent, stubborn, and selfish implementers, the overlapping management power, shirking duties, etc.

In view of the long process of the policy implementation, Bartak believes that the most difficult problem in the implementation process is delay. The delay here refers to the unintentional delay, which often occurs in the process of planning and the process of collective decision making. The delay in the planning process is due to the choice of the two sides, the communication and the decision made by the parties. The delay in the collective decision-making refers to delaying the work of the preliminary draft out of the coordination and speculation of the decision-making participants. In fact, both the delay in the plan and the delay in the collective decision-making are not out of the implementation of the game. It can be said that the two cases of delay are actually two kinds of games. However, Bartak believes that only through the careful negotiations of the relevant personnel will the problem of delay be solved. Bartak's important inspiration is that in the implementation of the policy, the implementing strategies and techniques are very critical, and the strategies and techniques are designed in an unstable situation.

All in all, implementation, according to Bartak, is a dynamic process like a competing game involving contestants, benefits and risks, tactics and strategies, advantageous resources available, requisites to win, rules for fair play, communicating styles among contestants, and uncertain forecasts.

#### 2.3.4 Model of Circularity

The model of circularity is proposed by American policy scientist M. Rein and F.



F. Rabinovitz in their co-authored book, *“Implementation: A Theoretical Perspective”*, in 1978. The traditional policy implementation research is based on the principles of administrative organization to analyze the policy issues, where the boundary between administration and policy is rather vague. However, the model of circularity tries to overcome the above drawbacks and pays attention to the dynamic orientation of policy research, and to find, in the dynamic process of policy, some elements particularly enough to explain the policy operation, which may become the focus policy study. At the same time, the model is influenced by the political system theory of the famous American political scholar Easton, and puts the concept of “feedback” in the system theory into the policy process research, thus putting forward the “principle of circularity”. In the traditional policy implementation study, the distinction between administrator and policy boundaries is not obvious, while the circular model emphasizes the dynamic orientation of policy research, and tries to explore some of the elements of policy operation in the dynamic process of policy.

The model divides the policy implementation process into three stages: guideline development, resource distribution, and oversight. And these three stages are a process of the cycle and follow three principles: legal imperative, rational and bureaucratic imperative, and consensual imperative. The legal imperative of policy implementation means that policy implementers must act according to the law. The legal imperative is influenced by four factors, namely, the level of power and status of public opinion, the degree of technical feasibility, the scope of dispute and the degree of clarification of legislation, and the extent to which the legislator and the implementer support the law. The principle of bureaucratic rationality in policy implementation means that the implementers must agree that the policy to be implemented is reasonable in terms of

ethics, nature and action. The principle of bureaucratic rationality includes two characteristics: one is the principle of consistency; the second is the principle of practice. The principle of consensus is that the influential implementers can only be successful if they reach a consensus on a controversial issue.

The cycle model of policy implementation is a process of “implementing compulsory orders from the superior” and “notifying the superior of the circumstance of the inferiors”. The most typical feature is that the policy implementation process is regarded as a dynamic process of mutual circulation and unremitting communication. Therefore, we attach great importance to the analysis of the repeated influence or circularity of policy implementation factors, while emphasizing the importance of monitoring in the implementation of the policy.

The circular theory of policy implementation suggests that we need to pay attention to analyze the repeated influence of policy implementation factors in the process of policy implementation. We must see that the impact of environmental factors on policy implementation process is also repeatable.

### 2.3.5 Model of Implementation of Intergovernmental Policies

Donald S. Van Meter and Carl E. Van Horn (1975) believe that the effectiveness and efficiency of implementation depend on the degree of pertinence among factors that influence policy making. In the book of *“The Policy Implementation Process: A Conceptual Framework”*, D. S. Van Meter and C. E. Van Horn divide policy into two types: one is based on the magnitude of the policy change; the other is determined by the participant’s degree of consensus on the goal. They argue that the magnitude of the

policy changes and the level of consensus with the target level, affect both the form of policy and the effectiveness of policy implementation. Four rules are generated accordingly:

- 1) The smaller the policy change, and the higher the goal consensus, the more successful the effect of the implementation;
- 2) The greater the policy change, and the lower the goal consensus, the less obvious the effect of the implementation;
- 3) The greater the policy change, and the higher the goal consensus, the better the effect of the implementation;
- 4) The smaller the policy change, and the lower the goal consensus, the worse the effect of the implementation.

From the above assumptions we can see that the impact of the goal consensus on policy is stronger than policy changes. In the model of implementation of intergovernmental policies, D. S. Van Meter and C. E. Van Horn identify six variables that relate to the link between policy and implementation, which include the policy standards and objectives; the resources of the policy; communication and effective implementation of the organization; characteristics of the implementing agencies; economic, social and political conditions; and the intention of implementers. The purpose of determining policy standards or objectives is to clarify the ambiguities in the decision-making process. The policy resource is an important variable because the effective implementation of the policy necessitates to fully mobilize the favorable factors. Inter-organizational communication can influence the intention of policy

implementers. The economic, social and political environment faced by implementing agencies also has a strong impact on the implementation process.

The contribution of D. S. Van Meter and C. E. Van Horn lies in finding a number of valuable factors, establishing the relationship between policy and implementation, and illustrating the relationship between the variables. The model gives us the following inspirations:

First, the success of policy implementation depends in part on the effective communication among implementing agencies. Policy objectives and standards as the inanimate information must first be communicated to the practitioner through the communication system. If there is a communication problem in the implementation, the solution to the problem can be found in the interactive relationship among the objectives and standards of the policy, the communication between organizations and the implementation activities, the characteristics of the implementing agencies, and the intention of the performers.

Second, the quality of public policy depends in part on the administrative capacity of the implementing agency. The main external characteristic of the incompetent government lies in its incompetence in public policy and implementation. In this model, the administrative capacity of the implementing agency shall be examined from the political resources, organizational communications and implementation activities, the characteristics of the implementing agencies, and the interactions in political, economic and social environment.

Third, the success of policy implementation requires not only the implementer's

understanding of policy objectives and standards as well as certain administrative capacity, but also the greatest degree of recognition of policies. There are usually four intentions of implementers in the process of implementation: the first is the selective awareness of policy; the second is the unwillingness to implement the policy that they do not agree; the third is little or no knowledge of some policies because of their limitations; the fourth is negative attitude to and lack of enthusiasm for implementation. These four kinds of intentions lead to varying degrees of rejection of implementing public policy. The reason for refusal is nothing more than a violation of their personal values, self-interest, organizational identity, or preferable interpersonal relationships. This problem still needs to find a solution in the political resources, organizational communications and implementation activities, the characteristics of the implementing agencies, and the interactions in political, economic and social environment.

### 2.3.6 Model of Implementing Variables

Public policy scholars generally believe that the policy process consists of three interrelated policy environments, namely, the environment for policy formulation, the environment for policy implementation, and the environment for policy assessment. Each environment has its function, and there are many conditions in the policy-making environment that can influence the implementation and evaluation of the policy. In the process of policy implementation and evaluation, the conditions that affect policy formulation and evaluation can also be produced. D. A. Mazmanian and P. Sabatier are two scholars who focus on the environmental impact on policy implementation. The difference between their policy environment model and the others' is that the two scholars view the policy implementation process as the dependent variable of the model,

while regard the environment factors as an independent variable which has a continuous influence in the process of policy implementation. Therefore, they believe that an ideal policy implementation model must continue to be associated with environment factors. D. A. Mazmanian and P. Sabatier divide the implementation process into five stages: 1) the policy output of the implementing agency; 2) the obedience of the target group; 3) the actual impact of policy output; 4) the perceived impact from authorities and service groups; 5) changes and adjustments to regulations. The variables that affect the various stages of policy implementation can be divided into the manageability of the problem, the statutory regulating capacity of the policy itself, and the legal variables other than the policy.

First, the manageability of the problem is whether the issues of policy itself have the nature to be handled and processed, which includes four aspects: 1) the existing effective theory and technology and its degree of difficulty; 2) the diversity of target groups; 3) the percentage of target groups; 4) the magnitude of the target group's behavior.

Second, the statutory regulating capacity of the policy itself is whether the resources, status, objectives or instructions of the policy itself can regulate the policy implementation. This capacity can be divided into seven parts: 1) clear and consistent policy objectives; 2) the reasonable causal relationship within policy itself; 3) adequate financial resources; 4) the internal and external integration of the implementing agencies; 5) the decision-making rules of the implementing agencies; 6) the staff recruitment of the implementing agencies; 7) the actual participation of people outside the implementing agencies.

Third, the legal variables other than the policy refers to the non-policy factors that can affect policy implementation, namely, 1) social and economic conditions and technology; 2) public support; 3) mass media attention to policy issues; 4) attitudes and resources of support groups; 5) support of authorities; 6) enthusiasm and leadership strategy of implementing staff.

Model of implementing variables tells us that if policy implementation is placed in a broad scope of study, there will be many variables involved, and the study of policy implementation must examine a series of variable relationships. The different stages of policy implementation are affected by various variables.

### 2.3.7 Model of Macro and Micro Implementation

The macro and micro implementation model is proposed by P. Berman in his work: *“Macro and Microcosmic Implementation Studies”*. P. Berman argues that policy implementation is divided into the macro implementation of the federal government level and the microscopic implementation of the local government level in the context of the institutional system, which is of theoretical and practical significance to the decentralization of the United States.

First, the macro implementation of the US federal government must implement a national policy. Macro-implementation is based on the entire political system, so the executive authorities, courts at all levels, interest groups, and local governments may affect the effectiveness of macro implementation. As the actors involved in the macro implementation play their role respectively, the structure of the actual macro implementation organizations is quite loose. This has also created many obstacles that

impede the achievement of policy objectives. This is mainly attributable to the following four reasons: 1) the objectives of the implementation of the policy participants are inconsistent or even conflicting; 2) the power of the participants is not balanced, which is prone to competition and conflict for the pursuit of interest; 3) policy resources are always scarce, so the allocation of policy resources is difficult to be satisfactory; 4) it is difficult to carry out mutual communication because of too many contradicting values, ideas, and positions coming from a large quantity of implementing agencies.

Berman also pointed out that macro policy implementation can be divided into four stages: 1) the administrative stage during which the government will transform the authority into a specific government plan. At this stage, the more vague the government policy is, the more discretionary the implementing agency is and the greater the impact on the policy is; 2) the adoption stage during which the government plans are accepted by local governments and put into practice, which may lead to a disjoint between the program and the implementation policy; 3) micro-implementation stage referring to the local government's response and adjustment to the central government so as to determine the implementation plan and put into practice; 4) the stage of technical effectiveness during which local governments' actual implementation has an impact on the outcome of policy.

Second, the micro-implementation refers to the local government's own implementation of the policy after deliberate response to the policies of the central government. Berman believes that micro-implementation means the process of mutual adaptation between the characteristics of organizations and the implementation plans. In



this process three basic characteristics are obvious: 1) interaction. There is a bilateral interaction between the implementers of public policies and the beneficiaries of the implementation, rather than the one-way. Therefore, micro-implementation may change its implementation practice due to the feedback from beneficiaries; 2) conflict. The social services provided at the local level tend to appear pluralistic and conflicting, and the objectives of local government's public policy tend to be unmeasurable, which result in a lack of an open relationship between the local government and the environment. The effect of micro-implementation is often abated by the impact of uncertainties that this open relationship brings. Berman points out that the micro implementation has three stages: 1) mobilization; 2) adaptation; and 3) institutionalization. During the mobilization phase, the local government mobilizes all the political resources to carry out the implementation plan. At this stage, there must be a well-designed and detailed implementation plan, and the implementation plan should be standardized as part of the organization's standard operating procedures. The phase of adaptation occurs before the real implementation. At this stage, the practitioner can take four different adaptation methods, namely, no implementation, collaboration, technical training and mutual adjustment. During the stage of institutionalization, the local government will transform the implementation policy into a binding criterion. The micro implementation of the local level must be institutionalized in order to produce the desired policy effect. Although Berman divides the micro implementation into three stages, and he thinks it is only a conceptual division, while in fact these three stages are interrelated, and cannot be separated.

As the three stages of micro implementation are conceptually separate, micro implementation and macro implementation are also inseparable and mutually adaptable.

Berman emphasizes the practicality of the model of macro and micro implementation in dealing with implementation relations between central government and local governments. The greatest revelation of P. Berman's model is that major issues of national significance need to be addressed with macro policies, which requires the integrity and consistency of implementation. However, the success of the macro implementation depends on the micro implementation, and the distinctive micro-implementation is included in the macro implementation. Successful policy implementation has both macro implementation and micro implementation, and both implementations should be compatible and coordinated in nature.

## FORMS OF WEAK IMPLEMENTATION

Since the reform and opening up, the implementing capability of local governments has been significantly improved, especially with the national reform in depth after the convening of the Third Plenary Session of the Eighteenth Party Central Committee, and the successful experiences in dealing with SARS, earthquakes, and other public crisis. However, China is in a critical period of social transformation and reform, and the construction of a responsible and service-oriented government requires improvement in implementing capability.

The structural reform of government promotes enhancement of local government's implementing capability. The reform has both a top-down promotion and a local government's spontaneous advancement. The major achievements of reform include: partly streamlined administration, clearer responsibilities, relatively transparent decision-making and personnel management, standardized implementation, promulgation of a series of rules and regulations such as "Administrative Permission Law", "Party and Government Cadres Selection and Appointment Regulations", "Civil Service Law", etc., and the establishment as well as improvement of a number of system specifications such as system of blame and resignation, system of cadres appointment, system of discipline inspection and supervision, and so on.

Local governments are forced to enhance their implementing capability by public crises. Over the past decades, China has experienced SARS, severe snowstorm in 2008, Wenchuan earthquake, Wenzhou EMU train accident, Kunming terrorist incidents, etc. Local governments continue to learn lessons from the public crises; gradually establish open, transparent, smooth, and authoritative communication channels; quickly publicize

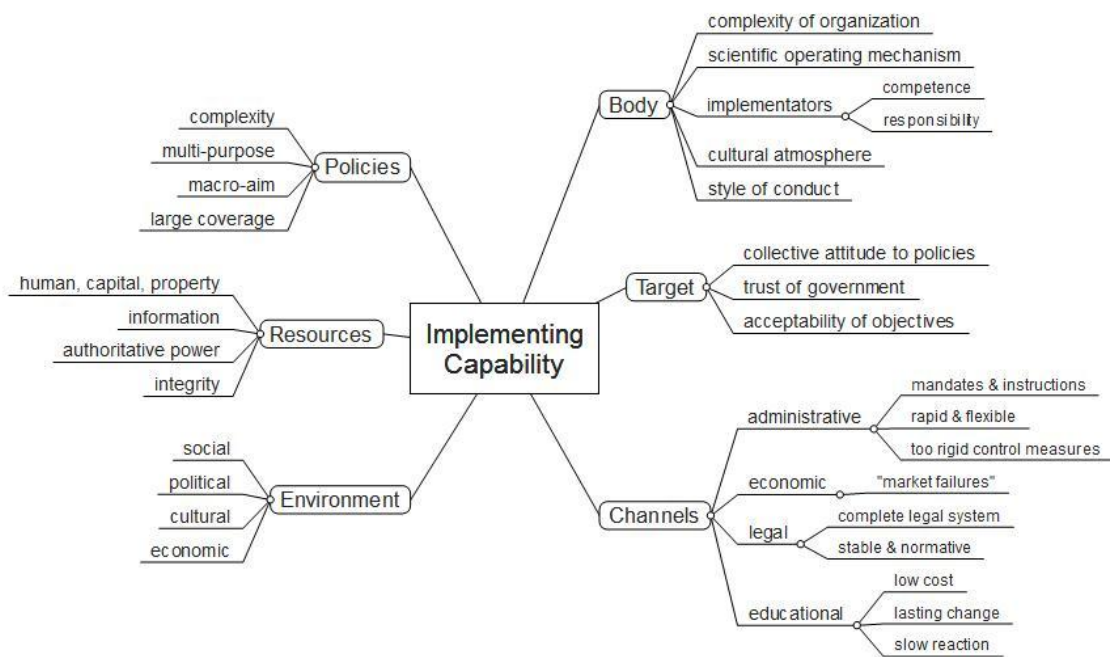
the truth as well as process the incidents; fully empower people to know; and finally win widespread public support. During the crisis, local governments call on coordinated forces of all parties, organize and deploy various resources, and maximize the integration of social resources in the shortest time. Strong implementing capability fully utilizes government's macro regulation and resource integration.

The implementation of the local government is of great significance to ensure that the decisions of the Central Committee are carried out effectively, to realize the balanced development of the whole country, to implement policies for improving living standards, and to advance in finishing building a moderately prosperous society in all respects. There is a strong public dissatisfaction about the current weak implementation of some local governments, such as discretionary change of policies. This will inevitably lead to social contradictions, and finally affect social harmony and stability of the overall situation if there's no rectification to strengthen the implementing capability. For example, a series of policies were issued recently for the regulation of housing prices, especially after "An Announcement about Continuous Work on Regulating Real Estate Market by the General Office of the State Council". However, the effect of the policy implementation is unsatisfactory. Weak implementations were shown concerning the real estate policy except Guangdong province that developed corresponding implementation details.

China's local governments are not only inefficient in implementing policies, but also weak in the implementation of specific matters, especially in the daily work. Some local government officials are motivated by profit in their daily work. The lack of responsibility and dedication as well as work ethic leads to a distorted attitude of taking

only passive countermeasures. Short-sighted outlook on economic development, abnormal view of political performance, and passive attitude of slacking are all “tumors” in the implementation by local governments. For example, in March 2013, Yang Lijun, a 21-year-old female college student in Changsha, lost her life in a storm by falling into the uncapped sewer. The same tragedy occurred again on another girl in 2014 in Guangdong. The popular question on the internet—”Who is responsible for the missing manholes?” reflects local governments’ neglect of implementation of daily work.

Implementation is part of a complicated system, which determines the complexity of implementing capability as illustrated in the following chart.



Factors influencing the implementing capability

### 3.1 Profit-oriented

The executive subject generally refers to a rational individual who often maximizes his own economic interests under certain constraints. Policy implementers

not only represent the interests of the state and the people, but also try to safeguard the local government's organizational interests. In addition, as an ordinary socio-economic person, they will have more or less their own interests to pursue. The game of competing interests tends to weaken the implementation of local governments.

Some leaders and cadres in local governments are in blind pursuit of their own interests by implementing policies that are filtered and screened, or even intentionally misinterpreted through loopholes. The favorable policies will be fully implemented, while the unfavorable ones will be twisted and misinterpreted for personal benefit. For the policies with coexisting benefits and harms, selective implementation will be taken to maximize personal benefit. Such a maximization of benefit is the yardstick for policy implementation to protect local and personal interests while ignoring the overall interests.

For example, some local governments intentionally distort the family planning policy in the implementation with the purpose of getting the "violators" fine. What's worse, some local governments sell birth permits by auction. Some local leaders tend to implement policies that are easy to produce effects and to avoid policies that effective in the long run in order to obtain recognition from higher officials within their period of administration, which completely deviates from the starting point of public policy and the ultimate goal.

### 3.2 Perfunctory

The perfunctory implementation of public policy can also be called a symbolic implementation of public policy. This kind of superficial implementation is no

implementation at all in that the policies are just publicity and have never been transformed into specific operational measures. The manifestation of perfunctory implementation is endless conferences and documents and at most propaganda in the form of implementation. The reason is that the policy is detrimental to the interests of the executive body. The perfunctory implementation makes the policy empty words, which wastes public resources and undermines the seriousness and authority of public policy.

For example, in recent years, some local governments took perfunctory implementation of policies from the central government to shut down private small and medium-sized coal mine for rectifying security problems. As there is an inextricable economic link between the majority of local government cadres and coal mine operators, perfunctory implementation is inevitable. Implementers just carry out symbolical inspections and symbolically issued a notice of closure and rectification. However, a large number of small and medium-sized coal mines continue to manufacture illegally although they never meet the national requirements, thus resulting in frequent major accidents.

### 3.3 Falsification

If a policy has no good or bad towards the local government and its staff, there will be falsification in the process of implementation. Policy finally becomes a publicity gimmick because of falsification, no matter how scientific and reasonable it is, even if it is conducive to social development. Falsification makes public policy a flashy castle in the air, leading to a lot of waste of public resources and severe damage to the central government's authority and credibility. When policy is delivered to the implementing

agencies, falsification has two manifestations: 1) inadequate implementation under high pressure; 2) formalism with lip service and indifferent attitude towards ultimate effect. Some scholars point out that falsification is substantially a secret breach of policies from higher levels in the form of verbal and written recognition while taking countermeasures in the process of implementation.

In recent years, food safety problems happen frequently. How does the insecure food pass so smoothly through all the quality inspection sectors and finally appear on the market? Why are fake and shoddy products so rampant in the market though the central government attaches great importance to this issue and puts repeated emphasis on fighting against fake and shoddy products? Why do migrant workers continue to beg salaries by extreme means such as violence and suicide after the central government issued a series of policies and regulations to protect migrant workers' rights and interests? Obviously, this is closely related with local governments' falsification.

### 3.4 Ossification

Ossification refers to a rigid implementation due to misunderstanding and lack of flexibility. Some implementers seldom accurately grasp the essence of public policy as well as appropriate implementing style out of the limitations of their values, outlook on life, expertise, and comprehension of policies, which leads to misunderstanding public policies, mechanical operations, and the ultimate failure of implementation. Some public policies cannot be implemented in time because the divisions of local government are fragmented, resulting in disagreement, prevarication, chaos, and disorder. Some public policies cannot achieve the expected effect just because they often miss the right time for implementation resulting from ossification.



Local government officials are accustomed to a single mechanical work method due to the long-established bureaucratic working style. They implement policies and orders mechanically because they are used to viewing problems from a single perspective and often ignoring the real situation and external environment. Quite a few good policies lose their intrinsic value or produce opposite effect because the rigid implementation hardly makes adjustments according to the specific environment, the changes and conditions in each different development stage. Ossification in the policy implementation will inevitably bring unpredictable consequences.

Ossification in the rigid and mechanical implementation has the following manifestations: first, simple implementation, which means the crude copying and conveying of superior's policies and instructions by way of countless meetings, notices, teleconferences, etc. while putting aside the actual requirements and real effects, ignoring supervision and inspection, wasting manpower, material and financial resources, and damaging local governments' implementing capability; second, rude implementation, which signifies the fixed and immutable means of implementation by utilizing coercive measures of administrative orders while seldom considering flexible means of legal procedures and economic regulations. For example, when implementing the policy of the transformation of old city, some implementers just focus on measures to demolish old structures and expel local residents such as seizure of the residents' compensation and forced removal, which causes various tragedies, exacerbates the conflict between government and public, and affects government's credibility; third, isolated implementation, which means rare cooperation and joint efforts in the implementation. The effective implementation of public policy is a large and systematic project, often involving a number of relevant departments. It is rare to see unified action

and joint law enforcement by several relevant departments, which is doomed to fail in the implementation.

### 3.5 Free will

Free will means the arbitrary implementation of public policy based on implementers' own interests and needs, which is actually the abuse of power, also known as the implementation of improper abuse of discretion. Free will dichotomizes superiors' policy on the basis of personal benefit, that is, to fully implement the favorable policy or the favorable part of the policy, and to intercept, distort, or even abandon the policy that has little benefit. Specifically, local governments usually choose to implement local policies if both central and local policies coexist; a central policy that is conducive to local interests among a number of central policies; and the part of a central policy that is beneficial to local interests within a central policy. The arbitrary implementation is contrary to the principle of administrative rationality of the performance by making decisions with unlawful purpose, unrelated consideration and unreasonable content.

For example, local governments tend to focus on industrial policy for the benefit of local economy when there is a contradiction between the industrial policy and environmental policy formulated by the central government. Take the central government's policy of reducing the burden on farmers for example, some local governments take advantage of farmers' illiteracy as well as lack of legal and democratic awareness to conceal most part of farmer-assistance policies, and to intercept financial allocations and relief supplies from the central government so that the central policy is broken down and fails to be fully implemented.

### 3.6 Procrastination

The criteria for measuring government implementation will not only focus on inputs, but also on outputs and outcomes. In reality, often the government invested heavily, but the effect is minimal, resulting in high costs of implementation. Procrastinated implementation of public policies mainly appears in the following forms:

- 1) Implementing resistance. In February 2004, the newly elected governor of Hainan Province Wei Liucheng said that he only finished two work instructions out of a total of 57 in his first month of office. He exclaimed: “This is simply unreasonable!” That’s why he proposed to introduce the culture of corporate implementation into the government. The problem of “fast approval from mayors, slow implementation from section chiefs” is not uncommon, which is the consequence of deeply-rooted idea of “the supremacy of government officials”. Another resistance comes from the imperfect implementation mechanism, which has no clear incentive for reward and punishment. Therefore, most policies just become words in the documents, notice on the wall, emphasis from the mouth, and discussion at the conference.
- 2) High cost of implementation. At present, China’s administrative costs ranked first in the world. From 1978 to 2003, China’s fiscal revenue increased from 113.2 billion to 3 trillion, about 28 times; over the same period administrative costs from less than 5 billion to 700 billion, an increase of 87 times, and in recent years the average annual growth of 23%. The proportion of administrative expenses to total fiscal expenditure rose to 19.03% in 2003, much higher than Japan’s 2.38%, UK 4.19%, Korea’s 5.06%, 6.5% in France,

7.1% in Canada, 9.9% in the United States. According to statistics from the relevant departments: from 1986 to 2005, China's per capita annual administrative expenses rise from 20.5 yuan to 498 yuan, an increase of 23 times, while the per capita GDP growth is 14.6 times, the per capita fiscal revenue and expenditure increased by 12.3 times and 12.7 times. The excessive growth of administrative costs in China is related to the government extravagance. Some governments go thousands of miles away to scenic area, resort, or hot spring city for conference instead of their own well-equipped conference room in their own luxury office building.

### 3.7 Substitution

Substitution refers to the fact that when there is a contradiction between policy and local interest, the executive body tends to substitute the original policy with one that is seemingly in agreement but actually at odds under the pretext of local peculiarities. On the surface, the time and space of the policy implementation have not changed, but the substantive content of the policy has changed, which not only affects the realization of policy objectives, but also deteriorates the policy implementation environment, leaving the original policy issues unsolved, and adding more new policy issues at the same time. Substitution tarnishes the image of the central government, reduces the credibility of the central government, and damages the integration of policy implementation.

To give a typical example, the central government repeatedly stresses the need for separation of government functions from enterprise management with the purpose of revitalizing state-owned enterprises and promoting economic development. In the

document of *“To Transform the Economic Mechanism of State-owned Enterprises”* issued in 1992, there is a detailed list of basic powers delegated to enterprises from central government. However, most of them are cut off by local governments, leaving little power actually given to enterprises. Although the central government has repeatedly stressed the separation of government functions from enterprise management, some government departments still exercise the power of direct management of enterprises by way of administrative companies, or take back the management power from enterprises by establishing Group Companies.

### 3.8 Supplementation

Supplementation means the intentional enlargement of object, scope, intensity, and objectives of public policy in the process of implementation for the maximization of local interests. This sort of additional implementation of public policy often advocates holding high the banner of fully implementing superior’s policy, but always misinterprets the real spirit of superior’s policy to make it seemingly rational to add local policies and regulations to the original policy.

Taking China’s Family Planning Policy as an example, the implementation of Family Planning Policy is to control the population and improve the quality of the population. However, in some places, the violator’s fine becomes an important source of income for the township government. Therefore, some local governments deliberately add their local policies of regulating birth rate to national family planning policy with the purpose of getting more fine rather than inhibiting population growth, which increases the national burden and results in worse social impact.

### 3.9 Defiance

Defiance means that the executive body takes all possible measures to conceal the truth and fact, and refuse to implement superior's policies unless there are no other alternatives. This kind of implementation clings obstinately to its own course with a very strange idea that all mistakes of implementation will disappear naturally out of sheer luck. This extremely audacious behavior turns a deaf ear to the public interest, and seriously damages the image of the government.

The notorious incident of Sanlu Milk Powder is typical example of defiance by the local government, who focuses solely on revenue from local food enterprises regardless of food safety and public health. This negligence of supervision seriously endangered people's life and property. As early as the end of 2007, Sanlu Group received complaints about the quality of milk powder from consumers. In May 2008, after the enterprise self-examination, the Group reported the melamine contamination to the city government of Shijiazhuang, who decided not to recall the sold products, but to replace the contaminated products from the dealers. Meanwhile, the melamine-contaminated raw milk was still transported to the liquid milk production factory for production. The local government concealed the truth until the paper can't hold the fire. According to the Ministry of Health, this major food safety accident caused 289,594 infants and young children to suffer from abnormal urinary system, of whom six were killed and 891 were severely hurt.

## CAUSES OF WEAK IMPLEMENTATION

The weak implementation of local governments is caused by many interwoven factors. This paper will analyze the causes of weak implementation from four aspects based on the previous theoretical framework.

### 4.1 Policy

Policy is the primary factor affecting the implementation of local governments. Scientific decision-making is a necessary prerequisite for achieving the desired effect. Any decision should meet the following requirements: economically justified, technically possible, operationally viable, and of practically objective. But in reality, there are many problems concerning policy:

First, lack of feasibility. The ultimate purpose of policy is to be implemented. Implementation must be carried out with system, material and value expectation. If lacking relevant resources, the local government is difficult to guarantee its implementation. The economic base, resources, environment and technology vary greatly in different parts of China. Central policy is often holistic, global, and guiding. Therefore, local governments should fully consider their local situation in the implementation of central policy. At present, the decision-making system of our government is not perfect. Some decision makers are not fully qualified for their work. Some make decisions theoretically regardless of the feasibility, which leads to the failure of implementation.

Second, lack of operability. Some policies win little support from the public due to lack of communication with the public when making policies. Great resistance from

the public usually makes it difficult for local governments to implement the policies, thus leading to ineffective implementation. Some policies are too general and vague that implementers can't fully understand the real intention of policies and fail to carry out effective and efficient implementation. Sometimes the objectives of some policies are far beyond the limits of environment and resources, and they are doomed to failure. But if the objectives are set too low, the smooth realization of them does not provide any benefit to the solution to the actual problem.

Third, lack of continuity. Most national policies are long-term, which requires a relatively long period of implementation to completely reach the ultimate goals. In this process, a series of specific policies should be stipulated corresponding to the real situations. Otherwise it is almost impossible to realize the ultimate goals. Therefore, policy makers should be guided by the Scientific Outlook on Development, base themselves on actual conditions, conduct full investigation and analysis of both macro and micro environment, and ensure the policies are scientific, feasible, and operational.

#### 4.2 Body

After the promulgation of good policies, the realization of expected goals will depend much on the quality of the executive body. The attitude and behavior of the implementers directly determines the implementing capability of local governments. There are two factors concerning the executive body:

One, the attitude. Some implementers disregard or take countermeasures against superior's policies with irresponsible attitude and distorted values and views of their performance, which produces various illegal activities as indifference, incompetence,



negligence, inertia, procrastination, perfunctoriness, and arbitrariness. Some implementers start their work with a selfish purpose of taking advantage of their power for individual interest, which overtakes the bottom line of morality and law, thus making the implementation ineffective.

Two, the competence. On the one hand, some implementers misinterpret or misunderstand superior's policies due to lack of expertise and cognitive skills. The policy tends to be partly or mistakenly or mechanically implemented out of implementers' incomplete subjective interpretation or dogmatic understanding of the policy. On the other hand, some implementers do not know how to carry out the implementation of some professional policies because they have little knowledge of finance and law, nor do they have relevant IT skills and operational skills. This has become one of the important constraints for local government implementation.

In short, there are many unexpected resisting factors affecting the implementation as incomplete conditions, shortage of funds, technical backwardness, and refusal from target group, etc. However, the fundamental determining factors are from the executive body, namely, implementers. If implementers have little confidence, no responsibility, and decadent morality, they will easily give up or go after profits only.

#### 4.3 Target

The resistance of the target group is also an influential factor in the process of implementation. In fact, any policy will involve target groups that are directly or indirectly affected by policy objectives during implementation. The relationship between target group and the implementing capability can be analyzed from two

perspectives: the size of the target group and the extent of impact on the target group. Generally, the larger the population of the target group, and the more affected their interests, then the more obvious the resistance and non-cooperation of the target group, and the more difficult the implementation. The failure to understand and safeguard their own rights by the target group, the ignorance of what is deserved interest and what is inappropriate interest, and the incompetence of supervising, suing and prosecuting those lawbreakers and illegal activities in the process of implementation, will all lead to inactive participation, indifference, and resistance from the part of target group, which subsequently result in inefficient implementation.

Target group is the direct object of policy implementation. A good interaction between the target group and the implementers determines the success of policy implementation and the realization of policy objectives. Whether a policy can be fully implemented depends much on whether the target group is willing to accept it. Only when the majority of the target group understand, accept, and willingly obey, will the policy be implemented smoothly, effectively, and successfully. Otherwise, the non-cooperation or even confrontation from the target group will make it difficult or even impossible to carry out the implementation.

The key to efficient and effective implementation of public policy is that the maximization of social welfare and public interests must be guaranteed, the policy interest must be coordinated and allocated fair and square, and the needs of the target group must be satisfied. Otherwise, the target group will tend to refuse to cooperate. For example, most implementers find it difficult to implement the policy of demolition of urban residential buildings and expropriation of farmland when there's little

consideration of compensating and relocating displaced inhabitants and protecting the legitimate rights and interests of the affected farmers. According to the survey of 255 farmers in Zhejiang province, the current compensation for farmland expropriation is not enough to ensure that the farmers maintain the same living standard as before the loss of land.

#### 4.4 Environment

The environment is the external conditions of the public policy operation, and a good environment is the prerequisite for realizing public policy objectives. The environment includes the political environment, the economic environment, and the cultural environment. The characteristics as complexity, diversity, difference and variability of the environment make it difficult for implementation and thus pose a challenge to the implementing capability.

The political environment influences both the acceptance of policies by the target group and the activities of policy implementers. Generally, the political environment can be discussed from two aspects: political system and current political situation both within and outside China. First, political system refers to the overall structure as well as its internal relationships and power allocations of all government organs, institutions, and enterprises. The existing political system constitutes an important external environment that constrains all implementation activities. Even a good policy cannot be effectively implemented if the system is neither sound nor reasonable. That's the reason why premier Li Keqiang reiterates the importance of transforming government functions in his work report of 2017. Second, the stability of the domestic political environment is the basic prerequisite for the smooth implementation of any policy.

However, the world today has formed an open giant system in which all nations are interdependent. Due to the development of transportation and information technology, the influence of one country on another is more obvious and faster. Meanwhile, globalization requires that any domestic policy as well as its implementation should be made with full consideration of the international political situation. Nowadays, nearly every state's policy and its implementation can be easily influenced by any instability in the international political situation such as the outbreak of war, and the international competitions of military forces, economy, intelligence, knowledge, information, etc.

The economic base determines the superstructure. As a political phenomenon, the implementation of policies is subject to the constraints and effects of the economic environment. Changes in the economic environment are, more often than not, likely to affect how much the target group, the general public, the mass media, and even the implementers concern about the policy, and also affect the implementation efficiency and policy objectives. Generally, the dynamic economy is conducive to the effective implementation of policy. On the contrary, the bad economic environment will easily cause negative recognition, emotion, and evaluation. In addition, the necessary funding is the material basis for policy implementation. Lack of financial and material support usually leads to inefficient and ineffective implementation. One of the important reasons why many of our policies are difficult to implement is the lack of funds. For example, the biggest difficulty in rural tax reform is that the policy puts pressure on the operation of the rural grassroots regime and the source of rural compulsory education funds, while the central government cannot fill the funding gap temporarily.

The cultural environment mainly refers to the role of ideology, ideas, morality,

beliefs and so on that act on decision-making. The influence of cultural environment on the implementation is slow but lasting. Influenced by thousands of years of feudalism, China has formed a deep-rooted “bureaucracy culture” with Chinese characteristics. This culture tends to produce bureaucratism among government officials, resulting in the excessive concentration of power and the ideology of “supremacy of government officials”. Another outcome of “bureaucracy culture” is psychology of obedience to superior officials, which will easily lead to people’s political indifference, reduced political sense of mission and responsibility. This culture will make it difficult for the public to supervise and report implementers’ illegal activities through a legitimate way.

## STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

This chapter mainly talks about how to improve local governments' implementing capability theoretically by utilizing and integrating theoretical frameworks and data analysis.

### 5.1 Decision-making

Continuous effort has been made by government at all levels to construct a scientific, democratic, and objective policy-making mechanism. Most local governments have built a basic scientific and rational decision-making mechanism. However, some local governments still have deviations or even mistakes in decision-making. This has led to the difficult implementation, hampering the enhancement of local governments' implementing capability, great loss to the national resources and the economy. What's worse, the urgent social issues consequently become acute social conflicts, affecting social stability and harmony. The following measures are proposed to help improve this situation.

First, decision-making should be made scientifically by way of expert consultation mechanism. The increasingly complex policy environment makes it impossible to rely solely on individual intelligence when making decisions or collective wisdom of government agencies. Decision-making must borrow the wisdom of researchers and experts from all fields. Professional knowledge in decision-making must be fully understood through symposiums, seminars, and conferences, etc., or letting experts participate in decision-making.

Second, decision-making should be made democratically by establishing social

hearing system and facilitating channels for public opinion. Public opinion is the basis of effective implementation because decision-making itself is a process of interaction between government and society by which social issues of public interest and desire are reflected to the government, fully discussed by the government, and finally solved through government's implementation of public policy. Therefore, a real scientific decision must be made democratically. A democratic decision-making must reflect the fundamental interest of the overwhelming majority of the public. Just as former premier Zhu Rongji states in his work report of 2003 that "government officials at all levels should go to the people in their neighborhoods and homes, listen to their views, care about their hardships and promptly attend to their grievances." Social hearing system and public opinion collecting mechanism are not only beneficial to the efficacy of implementation, but also to the public supervision of implementation.

## 5.2 Personnel Management

One of the most important resources for implementation is human resource, namely, the public servants in local governments. They are the main force of public administration of the government, and bear all the implementation tasks of public affairs. Therefore, it is of vital importance to improve the overall quality of public servants, just as premier Li Keqiang emphasizes in his work report of 2016 that "we will... improve conduct and competence in order to become a contingent of top-performing public servants with a good command of professional expertise." In order to achieve this, it is imperative to improve the personnel management from the following three aspects:

First, we need to achieve the transformation from single management of human resource to diversified management. This means that personnel management should

introduce more elements into its system to improve the overall quality of public servants. For example, long-term construction of intelligence team and intelligence reservoir, comprehensive research on HR development in a specific region, cost-benefit analysis mechanism, performance evaluation mechanism, mechanism for appointment and promotion, etc.

Second, we need to change the focus from “human” to “resource”. Public servants should not be viewed as separated individuals but valuable resource with great potential. We need to improve the mechanism for training, employing, evaluating, and giving incentives to talented personnel. We need to optimize the HR configuration, and value the importance of long-term development for each public servant. We should respect the legitimate rights and interests of every public servant, and build a fair platform for them to motivate themselves and to tap their full potential.

Third, we need to establish a comprehensive learning and training mechanism. We are now in an era of “information explosion” during which information and knowledge change and update rather rapidly. In order to keep pace with the time, local government implementers should keep learning to improve their expertises and professional skills such as integrated management, language proficiency, communicating capability, interpersonal relationship processing, computer operations, archives management, conflict handling, interview skills, drafting policies, innovative thinking, the arts of leadership, etc.

### 5.3 Mediation

Since the reform and opening up, China’s social structure has undergone



enormous changes. There are conflicts of interest everywhere in a society of diversified interests. The objective existence of interest has a profound impact on the implementation of public policy and the realization of public policy objectives. The differentiation of interests poses a great challenge to the enhancement of local governments' implementing capability. We must establish a scientific and rational mechanism for the integration of interests to coordinate the interests of various policy stakeholders, so that a benign pattern of interests will emerge. We must adhere to the principle of giving priority to efficiency with due consideration to fairness when optimizing the integration of various implementing interests. We should establish and improve a variety of forms of distribution mechanism, and make full use of market mechanisms to coordinate interests together with the government's macro-regulation.

We need to handle social issues concerning interests of members from both advantaged and disadvantaged groups. Any legitimate and reasonable rights should be protected, meanwhile giving special assistance to vulnerable groups in light of equality and equity. We should try to avoid, mitigate and even eliminate the conflict and negative effects caused by the imbalanced interest structure. The formulation of policies must take into account the interests of all policy stakeholders in common, trying to find the balance of various interests.

In addition to mediating the diversified interests of various target groups, we should also properly handle the interest relationship between central government and local governments, and among local governments by establishing a mechanism for benign competition.

Lastly, the interest relationship between target groups and local governments

should be dealt with in a proper way as well. The response of target groups to public policy implementation directly affects the effectiveness of implementation. Their interest relationship can be mediated by building interest guidance and participation mechanism for target groups. Its essence is the introduction of market regulating force into the implementation, which subsequently involves policy stakeholders in the process of implementation and supervision.

#### 5.4 Evaluation

Former premier Wen Jiabao says in his work report of 2013 that “we took steps to put in place a system of performance-based management of government officials, established and earnestly enforced the system of governance accountability focusing on leading government officials, and improved efficiency in governance.”

Performance-based evaluation is a comprehensive reflection of the effectiveness of the implementation. The key to the evaluation of local governments’ performance is the establishment of a system that unifies local governments’ power, responsibility, and interest, which aims to upgrade the implementing capability. The primary conditions for strengthening performance management are to specify the local government’s implementing tasks and objectives, establish a result-oriented and customer-guided concept, build a management system combining social, economic, and environmental interests, take scientific and sophisticated performance appraisal methods, integrate quantitative and qualitative indicators. We need to combine the results of performance evaluation and the mechanism of incentives and accountability.

The system of performance-based evaluation must be scientific. To achieve this:

first, the index system of performance-based evaluation should be rationalized; second, the main body of performance evaluation should be diversified. The local government performance evaluation is a very complex system, which needs clear, concrete and scientific evaluation objectives. We should evaluate local governments' implementing capability from three dimensions: one, the local community, the population and the impact of environment; two, local government growth rate, market supervision, social management, public services and state-owned assets management functions; three, a clean and efficient government that satisfies the public. The evaluating body should include the local government, mass media and the public.

In addition, performance-based evaluation should be institutionalized and legalized. Evaluation should be conducted through the whole process of performance. Last but not the least, the results of evaluation must be used as important factor in the mechanisms of incentives and accountability. The selection and appointment of officials must be based on the evaluation of their performance.

## 5.5 Oversight

Hu Jintao, former general secretary of the Central Committee of CPC, said at the 18th CPC National Congress that “The Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference should improve systems of political consultation, democratic oversight, and participation in the deliberation and administration of state affairs...” Effective implementation of public policy requires balanced allocation of public resources, transparency of implementation, and perfect supervision and control mechanism. In order to achieve this, we need to establish a supervision and control network, and independent supervision institutions.

First, the supervision and control network should combine both the internal supervision from special supervisory and auditing departments, and the external supervision from NPC, CPPCC, and some social forces such as mass media and government websites. In addition, the internal supervision requires mutual supervision between superiors and subordinates; and the external supervision should improve the press system, adhere to the principle of being open and transparent, facilitate smooth communication channels, and finally ensure free public comments.

Second, local governments need to establish specialized and independent institutions as well as relevant rules and operating procedures. To guarantee the independence of the institution, we need to grant it power, realize its financial independence and personnel autonomy. We also need to improve relevant supervision laws and regulations, and mechanism for coordination and mediation. The purpose of such institutions is not only to supervise the implementation process, but also to prevent and rectify any errors in the process of implementation, thus to ensure the effective implementation.

## 5.6 Culture

Former general secretary Hu Jintao said at the 17th CPC National Congress that “We should accelerate the reform of the administrative system and build a service-oriented government.”

The reform of the administrative system is a complicated project, which should be facilitated by a good cultural environment. The key to a good cultural environment is the establishment of a mechanism for balanced powers, which is realized by shifting

government functions and straightening out inter-government and inter-division relations with a service-oriented attitude. A good cultural environment is also of great significance to the enhancement of implementing capability. Culture has special power in upgrading the overall quality of implementers. Culture is an invisible hand, displaying subtle influence on decision-making activities and implementing efficiencies. Culture provides implementers with persistent and powerful inner motivations. We need to build a good cultural environment for implementation by cultivating and optimizing the implementation culture, which is beneficial to sustained and steady improvement of local governments' implementing capability in the long run.

First of all, we must abandon the traditional deep-rooted official standard thinking, while keeping the essence of traditional administrative culture. We need to free government officials from the old idea of official standards through propaganda, education, democratic life and individual conversation, etc. We need to put an end to all formalism, and to remove bureaucratic style and the phenomena of ruling without law. We need to strengthen the government officials' democratic consciousness, sense of service and legal consciousness.

China's administrative culture has a long history, among which the ideas of people-oriented governance and benevolent administration are still of constructing significance to today's implementation culture. We should learn from the essence of traditional administrative culture, abandon its dregs, and create a new implementation culture on the basis of optimization and innovation to meet the actual requirements of modern society.

## CONCLUSION

The implementing capability not only determines the efficiency of implementation, but also supports the establishment of service-oriented government. The local government acts as a bridge between the central government and the public; its public policy implementing capability directly affects the national development and people's livelihood. Therefore, to improve the local governments' implementing capability is the general trend of the times and the basic requirement of building a moderately prosperous society in all respects.

With the reform of political and economic system, local governments' implementing capability has been greatly improved. It is obvious that the central government is paying more and more attention to the improvement of implementing capability. We can see much progress has been achieved, while admitting that there are still many problems concerning implementation such as the implementers' incompetence, inertia, and negligence; problems of laws and regulations being enforced in a non-standard, unfair, or uncivil way; and a small number of government employees being lazy and neglectful of their duties or shirking their responsibility.

The reasons causing the local government's weak implementation are diverse and complex, and it is necessary to carry out a comprehensive and systematic analysis. Specifically, the factors that influence the implementation include the flaws of public policy itself; the incompetent implementers; the imperfect administrative system; lack of administrative mechanisms of communication, supervision, evaluation, and accountability.

This paper starts from the conceptual interpretation of implementation as well as various theoretical models, then describes and analyzes the problems as well as the causes of weak implementation, and finally, based on the above analysis, puts forward comprehensive and concrete countermeasures to improve local governments' implementing capability.

This paper seeks to find suggestions to improve the local governments' implementation of public policy. However, there are still some shortcomings of this paper due to the limited knowledge and understanding of existing problems. For example, an in-depth research should be carried out on the comprehensiveness and feasibility of enhancing local governments' implementing capability; further research should be made on whether the theoretical policy measures are effective.

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