

# Social Work Participation in the Community Governance Research under the Guidance of the Party Building

—Based on the Practice of the J Community in Sichuan Province

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## Abstract

Party building leading is an important mechanism of social governance in China, and community governance, as an important part of social governance, has problems such as the strong dependence of administrative power, weak sense of participation in the practice of governance, and it is difficult to meet the diverse needs of residents only by relying on unilateral power. This study with J community in Sichuan province as an example, using the method of field investigation, action research, introducing social work into the process of community governance, discusses how to play a professional role under the mechanism of the party leading, improve community governance ability, provide a new direction for community governance development, explore new path for professional research on social work.

## Keywords

Party Building Leading, Community Governance, Social Work

## 1. Introduction

Community governance is an important link in grassroots governance and also the “last mile” connecting the government and the people. The report of the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China pointed out that the governance of grassroots party organizations is an important fortress for realizing the leadership of the Party. How to effectively apply policies and guidelines to community governance is a question worth considering. At the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, Western countries gradually explored

community governance in the wave of industrialization and urbanization, and went through three stages: neoliberalism, communitarianism, and the “third way”. Its development has shown characteristics, such as clear government and community responsibilities, high degree of resident autonomy, and active participation of non-governmental organizations (Jiang, 2020; Mai, 2019; Zhai, 2023). In the context of social governance in the new era, domestic community governance has also begun to focus on the cooperation model of government led and community participation. Although some progress has been made under the guidance of Party building, there are still problems, such as unclear governance direction, estrangement of residents’ relationships, and closed community environment (Jiang, 2024). At the same time, the division of responsibilities between grassroots governments and communities is unclear, and community workers feel exhausted due to the heavy administrative workload (Yang, 2015). Social work, as a professional force, participates in community governance. Its work philosophy and methods can effectively enhance community autonomy and achieve the effect of 1 + 1 greater than 2. However, many communities, like the J community, focus their social work mainly on service functions, especially for vulnerable groups, lacking exploration of professional functions, such as resource linking, policy advocacy, and organizational mobilization.

This article collects relevant information and data through field investigations and action research, analyzes the interaction between community party organizations and residents, and explores how to better integrate social work and community governance under the leadership of the party, improve governance efficiency, and promote harmonious community development.

## **2. Status Quo of Social Work Participation in J Community Governance**

### **2.1. J Basic Information of the Community**

J community is located in the southeast of Sichuan Province, with more than 20,000 permanent residents. With the development of industrialization and urbanization, the heterogeneity among residents is increasing, the individualized trend increases, and the social interaction within communities is weakened. Of course, J community is also in line with the characteristics of this community. In the interview, the author learned that some residents of J community rarely participate in community activities, and even do not know where there are activities or when to hold activities. J Community governance is mostly done by the neighborhood committee to complete the tasks assigned by the superior, the frequency and depth of residents participation are not enough, and the overall autonomy of the community still needs to be strengthened.

#### **2.1.1. J Overview of Community Party Building Work**

J Community Party Committee has 241 party members. In addition to regular party day activities and party member meetings, it also organizes party building

activities such as micro party class study and red base visit. The configuration of community elements is basically perfect, with 1 service center, 2 party and mass service stations in the community, 1 new era civilization practice station and 2 new era civilization practice points. At the same time, J community and the units stationed in the district “jointly build”, with the in-service party members “double posts and double competition” as the starting point, strengthen the implementation of the target responsibility system in the district units, change the idea of simply carrying out entertainment activities in the past, and solve practical problems for the residents. In-service party members to the community to report to get the post system, service commitment system, change the in-service party members from the past “passive participation” to “active participation”.

### **2.1.2. Overview of Social Work Intervention in Community Governance**

In 2019, J Community introduced social work agencies in 2019, focusing on the areas of people’s livelihood security and community construction, and carried out projects such as Party organizations serving the masses, social assistance, caring for minors protection, community governance, and cultivation and incubation of community social organizations. J community in 2023 social workers carried out for the elderly, the disabled, minors, low families and other special difficult groups social work support services more than 10, by providing its livelihood development, family visits, psychological counseling, humanistic care, ability promotion services, effectively improve the difficult groups of social participation consciousness and self-development ability. Visited 30 households, carried out 25 individual case services and 35 community activities, serving more than 2,000 people, connecting 5 community units and 150 volunteers.

## **2.2. Achievements and Deficiencies of the Current Situation of Community Governance**

### **2.2.1. J Effectiveness and Innovation of Community Governance**

J community uses the unified urban management and smart city operation center of its own city to divide the city management into different grid districts according to the standards, thus creating a “micro-grid real grid” governance work conducive to local community governance. Different from the traditional community grid member system, the “micro grid” of J community makes the work scope of each staff member smaller and the work is more specific. This way of community governance takes the primary principle of building the party fortress. J community has achieved full coverage of grass-roots Party organizations and work in the “micro grid”, effectively strengthening the overall leadership of the Party. In view of the low participation of residents, J community builds a network mechanism of multi-party cooperation to exchange information with the participants, so as to improve the work and service ability of the organization.

### **2.2.2. J Community Governance Deficiencies**

Through research and interview data analysis, J community governance has several deficiencies in the following aspects. First, the branch construction needs to

be standardized, and the party member integral responsibility system needs to be improved. The enthusiasm of some party members to participate in the activities is not high, and did not actively drive the community residents to participate in the community governance. Second, the content of social work participation in community governance is less, and the recognition of social workers is relatively low. When social work participates, its service tends to be formalized, and its professional performance has not been effectively played. Third, the community residents' awareness of independent participation and their sense of identity to the community need to be improved. After the introduction of social work organizations, J community has carried out more activities and the number of residents participating in the activities, but all of them are driven by the community, and the autonomy of residents still needs to be strengthened. Fourth, the community resources are single, the grass-roots workers work intensity. The community governance work of J community introduced few other social forces, and the resource adsorption capacity was weak, which led to the mismatch of power and responsibility of the community, and there was not enough energy and resources to develop.

### **3. Feasibility Analysis of Community Governance under the Guidance of Social Work Participation in Party Building**

#### **3.1. High Similarity of Social Work and Party Building Work Concerns**

As the link between the state and the community autonomy, the grass-roots Party organizations not only provide the channels and space for the state power to intervene in the community governance, but also are the key actors to promote the community autonomy (Zhang, 2019). All the work of the Party is based on the people, and every work is effectively improving the people's living standards and meeting people's expectations for a high quality of living standards. The social work major adheres to the working concept of "people-oriented". Whether it is concept innovation or practical application, it is striving for the people to have better material conditions and meet higher spiritual needs. The focus and foothold of party building work and social work have a high similarity, which provides a good background condition for social work to get involved in the community governance under the guidance of party building, and is also a necessary condition for the integrated development of the two.

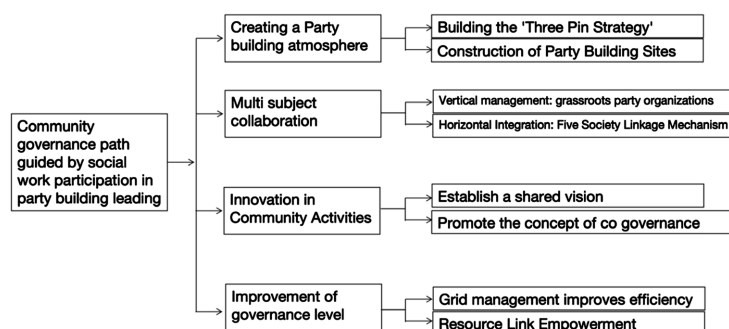
#### **3.2. High Complementarity of Social Work and Party Building Work**

Although the two have a high similarity, there are differences when it comes to specific analysis and specific application. Party building work is more from the macro level to improve people's livelihood and protect the people's rights. For example, formulate corresponding management mechanisms to coordinate the community and pay attention to the overall governance module of the community.

On the other hand, social work pays more attention to the effectiveness of residents from the micro level, from the perspective of individuals or a certain group of residents, takes measures according to local conditions, and takes more consideration into account the unique needs of residents. In the interview with social workers in J community, I learned that compared with the grassroots Party organizations, the social trade union pays more attention to a certain family, establishes corresponding family files, and connects relevant resources for them, so as to serve the people smaller, more detailed and more specific. In addition, social workers will experience the rationality and feasibility of the current social policies in the long-term observation and practice of the community, and will use a professional role to conduct policy advocacy, constantly improve the policies implemented in the community, and form a virtuous cycle mechanism. The “large-scale consideration” of grassroots Party organizations complements the “fine service” of social work, which will further enhance the work efficiency of community governance and improve the current situation of community operation.

#### 4. On the Exploration of Community Governance Path under the Guidance of Social Work Participation in Party Building

The path of community governance under the guidance of social work participation in party building can be approached from the following four aspects, as shown in **Figure 1**.



**Figure 1.** Community governance path under the guidance of social work participation in Party building.

##### 4.1. “Three Pin Strategy” to Create an Atmosphere for Party Building

We will always adhere to political leadership and comprehensively govern the Party with strict discipline. Community party organizations rely on the leadership of the neighborhood committee and the policy support of the government to form political rights and coordinate various community organizations and social work. In order to improve the ability of community governance, we must first continue to deepen the political construction, strengthen the guidance of the party building, put the political construction in the first place, and strengthen the leadership of

the community Party organization. We must continue to put the people first, and make community work in the new era more detailed, closer and more solid, from “opening up the last meter” to “doing the last meter well”. Local community grassroots Party organizations can grasp the “three Pin strategy”, improve the construction of various mechanisms, and create a new brand of the community with high quality and high standard party building with the characteristics of the community. The three Pin are: “quality”, the community grassroots party building governance should control the project quality with high standards; “variety”, the community grassroots Party organizations take the lead to integrate all forces, promote multiple integration, and increase the project types of community activities and services; “brand”, integrate local characteristics with the overall direction of community governance, and create a “new brand” of community Party organizations to participate in grassroots governance.

Build the party building position, implement the organizational responsibility. Communities should strictly implement the Partys political life system, carry out activities such as publicizing the Partys theoretical knowledge, themed Party lessons, and organizing daily meetings, and strengthen the publicity and promotion of core socialist values. Do a good job of ideological publicity, stimulate the enthusiasm of the party members and cadres in the community, with the party members to drive the community residents to actively participate in the community activities and work. We will do a good job in the mechanism of “community whistling and party members reporting”, establish and improve the management system for community party members, promote the management of the points system for party members, standardize the democratic evaluation of party members, and strengthen the supervision and management of party branches. With party building as the core, we will build a good position for community party members, rely on the basic functions of the street Party working committee and community Party organizations, establish the street working committee and community Party committee, implement the part-time member system of the big working committee and community Party committee, and strive to build a full-coverage and regional party building community with the street and community Party organizations as the core (Liu, 2022).

#### **4.2. Social Work Participation and Coordination of Multiple Subjects**

Multi-dimensional participation in social work, strengthen the community professional strength. Social work has a professional theoretical and practical system, and the three major methods of case work, group work and community work can all play an effective role when intervening in community governance. Community activities can not only enable residents to better integrate into the community, but also help them to empower themselves, improve their ability, cultivate the awareness of independent participation, and change “community blood transfusion for residents” into “residents make blood for the community”. In addition to the

introduction of social work organizations in J community, the community can also directly recruit professional social workers to work in the community. This method can help the social workers to better integrate into the community environment and establish a deeper emotional connection with the residents.

Diversified subject coordination, improve the community management mechanism and the party building and co-construction mechanism. Adhere to the concept of regional party building community, learn from the “linkage of the five societies” mode, that is, the main body of community governance is “community, social workers, community Party branch, community volunteers, community residents”. In the interview with the staff of the unit in J community, I learned that the city of J community carried out the party building project between the unit and the community, and jointly participated in the community governance activities. This activity will help to strengthen the overall strength of the community, further strengthen the ability to serve the residents, further deepen the construction of spiritual civilization, and further strengthen the socialist core values. Community Party organizations should actively play the role of leaders, actively introduce social forces, give full play to the role of social organizations, provide better human and material resources for community governance, improve the guarantee of community elements, and create conditions for community development. Consolidate the vertical organization and management under the existing mode, and at the same time, we should actively strengthen the horizontal integration between grass-roots community Party organizations and other social subjects, lead and guide relevant units and enterprises to enter and build together, and constantly improve the new organization network of grass-roots community party building.

### **4.3. Innovating Community Activities to Promote Residents Autonomy**

Create community characteristic activities to achieve new breakthroughs in community governance. In order to improve the participation of community residents, the community can also make efforts in the form of activities, the content involved, and the location of the event. All community grassroots organizations should work with social workers to dig into the special needs of local communities and residents, and be demand-oriented, so as to better meet the needs of residents for a better life. Social workers can use professional group work methods, help the community to build a variety of interest group, create a good community atmosphere, the key is the community to find activity positioning, build their own characteristics, and to focus on activity feasibility, continuity, replication, pay attention to activity effectiveness and community branding.

Emphasize independent participation to enhance residents' sense of gain. Establish the consciousness of “ownership” of the community masses, respect the principal position of the community masses, and further promote the practice of democratic election under the leadership of the Party organization. With the help of the concept of “regional development model” in community work, it emphasizes



the participation, cooperation and autonomy of community residents, enhances the community cohesion and sense of belonging, promotes the effective stimulation of the autonomy of community residents, and ensures the sustainable development of community activities. Social workers and community party organizations to take various ways to encourage residents to participate in community governance, community governance mode from “top to bottom” single direction to promote innovation for “I put forward, I participate in, I promote, I share” total governance, improve residents independent participation consciousness and ability, improve residents to the sense of belonging and identity of the community, community residents in give full play to the individual role at the same time, also can enjoy the benefits of community development. The point redemption system adopted by many communities can greatly motivate community residents to participate in community autonomy. For example, the point redemption system adopted by many communities now can greatly motivate community residents to participate in community autonomy. By accumulating points for residents’ participation in activities, volunteer services, environmental protection, and other behaviors within the community, residents can redeem corresponding rewards or services based on the accumulated points.

#### **4.4. Expanding Governance Thinking and Integrate Overall Resources**

Make good use of the grid management system to improve the efficiency of community governance. Community grid management system is an important means to follow the mass line in the new era, carry out mass work well, and improve the ability of urban management and grassroots governance. Each community governance work team should attach great importance to the team construction of grid members, highlight the joint construction and sharing to mobilize the masses to participate in community governance, which can not only reduce the burden of grass-roots staff, but also further improve the effectiveness of grass-roots work. From the volunteers of social public welfare organizations, enthusiasm to the masses, owners, property practitioners and other groups, so as to contribute to community governance under the coordination of social workers. Of course, the system is not only excellent but also excellent. Each community should optimize the grid setting according to local conditions and clarify the responsibilities of grid members. The “micro grid” system adopted by J community should make the work allocation of community governance solid and detailed, and effectively improve the awareness rate and satisfaction of community residents on the grid community governance work.

Social workers play a coordinating role in linking and integrating all resources. To build the “1 + 1 + N” operation mode of social work Party building leading grassroots governance, namely “one center, one social worker, multi-party coordination”. Social workers have professional background support and can use various skills such as conflict resolution, counseling, and organizational management



to assist in community governance. Social workers who receive professional training are more likely to establish professional social support networks, promote cooperation with other organizations and resources to support community initiatives, and are better at advocating for community interests and empowering residents to participate in governance processes, thereby promoting more inclusive and effective governance models. Social workers should give full play to the role of resource linkers, connect community party organizations, resident units, social organizations and other resources, and highlight the function of the convenience and benefit of the people of grass-roots communities. Strive to break through the information circulation barriers of the community governance platform, realize the efficient integration and mutual sharing of multi-party data, improve the accuracy of the community governance data, provide effective resources, and realize the “five-minute service circle” for residents. To form a new situation in which the government takes the lead, social workers complete resource integration and promote residents’ participation, from passive correction to active discovery and service provision, and effectively meet the peoples yearning for a better life.

## 5. Conclusion

The participation of social work in community governance can not only effectively consolidate the leadership of the Party, but also effectively improve the efficiency of community governance, improve the autonomy of community residents, and enhance the sense of belonging of the community. However, in the process of participating in community governance, there are also problems such as limited forms of activities, difficulties in community intervention, and relying on government force publicity. In recent years, Wuhan and other places have accumulated experience in urban community governance with “party building guidance” as the core. Through the party building work system and open consultation and participation governance platform, social forces have been absorbed to extensively participate in urban community governance (Wang & Chen, 2022). Communities should further strengthen the construction of social work, pay attention to the construction of social work talents, improve the service ability of social workers, and increase the popularity of social work. Social workers can participate in community governance from the micro, medium and macro levels, enrich the types of community activities, promote the improvement of social policies, and improve the ability of community autonomy. In addition, social workers can provide decision support to policy makers by studying and evaluating the effectiveness of community governance, thereby better serving the overall situation of community governance.

Social work participation in community governance not only tests and improves the professional theory of social work in practice, but also promotes the localization, specialization, and refinement of the social work profession. This kind of participation helps to form community governance theories and practical models that are adapted to China’s unique social structure and cultural background.

Social work is not only about “helping others to help themselves”, but also about making the service object “self-help others”. This concept is also applicable to the community. Social work intervention in the community can not only improve the efficiency of community governance, but also activate the independent participation mechanism of the community, so as to further enhance the level of community autonomy. Each community should strengthen the leadership of community party organizations, take the party building as the starting point, introduce professional social work forces, and at the same time build a multi-subject construction mechanism of social work, promote the resource integration of community party organizations, and help the brand building of community party organizations. In the future, we should further explore and improve the model and mechanism of community governance under the guidance of social work participation in party building, innovate the social work service model, develop more service projects that meet the characteristics of the community and the needs of residents, and make greater contributions to the construction of a harmonious society and the modernization of national governance.

### Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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