

Research on the Construction Logic of Community Governance Collectives under the “Structure-Action” Framework—A Practical Exploration Based on YC District, SX City

Bin Qiu, Ke Cheng

School of Marxism, Shaoxing University, Shaoxing 312000, Zhejiang, China

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Abstract: The construction of a community governance collective is an important practical pathway for advancing the modernization of grassroots governance and governance capabilities. However, existing research often analyzes this from the single dimension of either structure or action. While this has enriched our understanding of the pathways for constructing community governance collectives, it still lacks a systematic explanation of how structure and action complement each other in specific governance contexts. Based on this, this paper introduces Giddens’s theory of structuration and, using the “contract-based” co-construction practice in YC District, SX City, Zhejiang Province, as a case study, constructs a “structure-action” analytical framework to explore the internal logic of the formation of community governance collectives. The study finds that the construction of the community governance collectives in YC District is not the result of a single structural element or mere actor action, but rather the product of the coupled interaction between structure and action. Structural elements provide institutional boundaries, value orientations, and practical conditions for governance actions, while actors adapt and reshape existing structures in response to real-world governance issues. This process propels community governance relationships from interest-based connections toward emotional identification, achieving a transition from decentralized governance to collective-based governance. The relatively mature “contract-based” co-construction practice path thus formed provides valuable practical experience for effective grassroots community governance during the 15th Five-Year Plan period.

Keywords: Community governance collectives; “Contract-based” co-construction; Structure; Action; Generative logic

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1. Literature review and problem statement

Advancing the modernization of the national governance system and governance capacity through the construction of a social governance community is a crucial theoretical proposition and practical direction for grassroots governance in the new era. As a historical category, the “social governance collective” has

been continuously refined and enriched in the course of China's social governance practices. The President of the CPC first proposed the concept of the "social governance collective" at the 2019 Central Conference on Political and Legal Affairs; the Fourth Plenary Session of the 19th CPC Central Committee called for "improving the social governance system characterized by Party leadership, government responsibility, democratic consultation, social coordination, public participation, legal safeguards, and technological support, and building a social governance community where everyone shares responsibility, fulfills their duties, and benefits from the outcomes" ^[1]; The 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China and the Third Plenary Session of the 20th Central Committee continued to emphasize the need to improve and refine the social governance system based on joint construction, co-governance, and shared benefits; the Fourth Plenary Session of the 20th Central Committee carried forward the previous overall deployment on social governance, clearly stating that during the 15th Five-Year Plan period, we must "follow the path of social governance with Chinese characteristics to ensure that society is both vibrant and orderly", and proposed the major task of "improving the social governance system" ^[2]. Within this macro-governance framework, communities serve as the basic units of social governance; their governance effectiveness directly impacts the accessibility, sustainability, and systematic nature of social governance, making them a crucial arena where the concept of the social governance collective transitions from institutional design to practical implementation.

The construction of the community governance collective relies not only on top-level design at the national level but also on the synergistic advancement of theoretical support and practical pathways. In recent years, with the advancement of the modernization of social governance, the community governance collective has gradually become a hot topic of academic interest. First, the understanding of the community governance collective has undergone a transformation from the traditional community to a community in the context of modern society. Liu Shan argues that, in the traditional sense, local communities primarily rely on geographical ties and familiar relationships for their maintenance, with members exhibiting strong emotional bonds and homogeneity ^[3]. However, with the acceleration of industrialization and the increase in the number of commercial housing communities, communities have gradually transformed from "living communities" into social spaces primarily focused on residential functions. The original relational bonds have continuously weakened, and interactions and identification among community members have become increasingly loose. Liu Yaqiu points out that the current concept of community collectives refers more to residents' sense of belonging to the community, including neighborly mutual aid and resident participation in community affairs ^[4]. Therefore, Jin Qiao proposes that the community governance collective is a governance system within urban and rural communities that, in accordance with existing institutional requirements and based on shared interests and a consensus of values among all residents, is formed by various entities serving residents around public affairs to achieve collaborative governance and participatory co-construction ^[5]. Second, existing research has explored the construction of community governance collectives from various perspectives, which can be summarized into two main aspects: macro-level state leadership and micro-level subject action. At the level of macro state leadership, Zhang Min, starting from institutional provision and structural construction, argues that structural restructuring under the leadership of the Party is the political guarantee for building social governance collectives, and that political authority and resource integration capabilities are the fundamental conditions for building community governance collectives ^[6]. Building on this, scholars such as Ma Wenwu and Li Zhiming further point out that, unlike Western countries which

use institutional design to treat capital as the underlying logic of social governance, the model of good governance in China's social governance in the new era is to uphold the Party's comprehensive leadership embedded within the "state-society" dual structure, advocating for a balanced and coordinated "strong state–strong society" relationship framework^[7–8]. At the micro-level of actor behavior, the analytical focus shifts to the interactions among diverse actors within communities. Among them, Zhang Zhen and Zhong Chaoping point out that young people, leveraging their strong organizational and resource integration capabilities, can drive the reconnection of previously dispersed governance actors through a progressive logic of "structural optimization—action integration—emotional bonding"^[9]; Bao Guoxian and Liu Ying, on the other hand, argue that social workers can promote the establishment of interactive networks, the infusion of professional expertise, the achievement of collective action, and the optimization and reshaping of community governance structures through a layered embedding approach of "relationship-structure-action"^[10]. Overall, these studies have enriched and developed our understanding of the pathways for constructing community governance collectives from various perspectives. However, it should be noted that existing research still faces a certain tension between macro-level structural analysis and micro-level actor behavior: macro-level research, starting from institutional provision and overarching frameworks, offers general concepts and pathways for building community governance collectives. However, its focus often remains on static descriptions at the structural level, lacking in-depth examination of specific governance contexts and struggling to address the complex and ever-changing realities of community governance practices. In contrast, micro-level analysis is grounded in specific settings and practical processes, striving to reveal how diverse actors achieve cooperation and drive the formation of collectives through interaction. Although such analyses emphasize the action process itself, they pay insufficient attention to the underlying institutional rules and resource conditions, making it difficult to grasp the structural foundations for the construction of community governance collectives as a whole.

Consequently, it is necessary to introduce a "structure-action" analytical framework. By combining this framework with a case study from YC District in SX City, Zhejiang Province, the study aims to conduct an in-depth analysis and attempt to construct a replicable and scalable model of community governance collectives, with the hope of providing valuable insights for the modernization of social governance during the 15th Five-Year Plan period.

2. "Structure-action": An analytical framework for the construction logic of community collectives

As an analytical tool, the "structure-action" framework is highly suitable for explaining the construction logic of community collectives: institutional rules and resource distribution constitute a relatively stable "structure", while the negotiation and cooperation among diverse actors regarding public affairs manifest as concrete "actions." Therefore, introducing the "structure-action" analytical framework helps to grasp the intrinsic construction logic of community governance collectives holistically, revealing how communities transition from loose connections to orderly coordination under the conditions of multi-stakeholder actions and established rules and resources.

2.1. Theoretical explanation of the "structure-action" analytical framework

The "structure-action" analytical framework adopted in this paper primarily draws from Giddens' theory of structuration. Unlike Durkheim and others, who viewed "structure" as a fixed "external entity", Giddens

argues that structure is essentially an institutional arrangement composed of “rules” and “resources”, resulting from repeated application and continuous reproduction in social practice^[11]. In other words, “structure” is not an abstract “superstructure”, but rather a “generative medium” activated and imbued with meaning by people through their actual actions. Among these, resources are distinguished into “authoritative resources” and “allocative resources”; the former primarily manifests as the capacity to organize and control actors, while the latter manifests as the capacity to control material conditions and social elements. At the same time, rules can be divided into “normative rules”, which regulate rights and obligations, and “interpretive rules”, which provide meaning and justification for action^[12]. Building on this, Giddens further conceives of “action” as a “stream of action” unfolded by the agent in specific contexts based on agency, the core of which consists of “the processes of reflexive monitoring, rationalization, and motivation of action”.^[11] The key to structuration theory lies in revealing the “structural duality” between “structure” and “action”, namely, that structure is both the medium through which action unfolds and the result of the action process^[11]. On the one hand, interactions among actors depend on established rules and resources, with structure providing the basic conditions of possibility for action; on the other hand, in the process of utilizing structure, actors continuously reproduce and even reshape it. This logic of “use as reproduction” makes structure and action two interdependent dimensions of the same social process.

2.2. The positive interaction between “structure” and “action” in the construction of community governance collectives

Based on the above analysis of Giddens’ structural theory model, this paper attempts to explore the operational logic of the “structure–action” dialectical relationship in the process of constructing community governance collectives. In this process, structural “rules” and “resources” and the agency of actors are not two independent, predetermined sets of phenomena—nor do they constitute a form of “dualism”—but rather embody a “duality.” On the one hand, the structural system constituted by “rules” and “resources” provides the fundamental institutional foundation and operational conditions for the formation of the collectives. First, the “rule” structure formed by governance institutions, by clarifying the boundaries of authority and responsibility as well as operational procedures, provides institutionalized channels for actors in the community to participate in public affairs and, to a certain extent, constrains opportunistic behavior; Second, from the perspective of the “resource” structure, the “allocative resources”—that is, the various material and informational elements available for allocation—upon which community governance relies provide actors with the necessary practical conditions, while “authoritative resources” provide the legitimacy required for the various actions within the community. On the other hand, since actors possess a certain level of knowledge regarding their own actions—and the structure has no independent existence apart from this knowledge—the formation of community governance collectives also depends on the behavior of community actors in specific contexts. Different actors (such as grassroots governments, community organizations, social organizations, and volunteers) select appropriate action strategies and participate in the community governance process based on their own interests and value perceptions. When existing structures fail to meet their operational needs, they drive the readjustment of “rules” and “resources” through reflective judgment, thereby continuously forming new structural arrangements within the community governance collectives.

3. “Structure-action” in the community governance collectives: A practical analysis of YC District, SX City

3.1. Case description

Located in the core area of SX City, YC District has seen a continuous rise in its level of economic and social development in recent years. This has led to an intertwining of contradictions—including increased population density, complex community composition, diverse interests and needs, and a multi-stakeholder management landscape—making it difficult for the traditional problem-solving mechanisms, which primarily relied on administrative leadership and single-channel coordination by community cadres, to effectively address the increasingly complex demands of grassroots governance. In response, YC District has consistently adopted a problem-oriented approach, continuously addressing the practical challenges of grassroots community governance. It has gradually developed a “contract-based” co-construction mechanism centered on Party-building leadership. By integrating dispersed resources and mobilizing diverse stakeholders, this mechanism harnesses collective wisdom and effort to resolve a range of “key minor issues”—the urgent, difficult, and pressing concerns affecting residents’ daily lives — thereby establishing a new model of community governance with significant exemplary value.

3.1.1. Standardizing procedures and clarifying co-construction rules

In the implementation process, YC District has established a clear operational workflow for “contract-based” collaborative initiatives. First, the collaborating parties (such as community Party organizations, local institutions, and social organizations) engage in “contract negotiation” through visits and surveys to understand the actual needs and available resources of each party. Based on this, they jointly agree on a “menu” of collaborative content and service projects, forming a preliminary intent; subsequently, the process moves to the “signing” stage, where written agreements are signed on the basis of equality and voluntary participation to clarify the goals of the collaboration, division of tasks, and timelines; simultaneously, the terms of the agreements are “publicized” through channels such as bulletin boards and online platforms to inform community residents of the collaborative initiatives; during the implementation phase, all participating entities advance “contract fulfillment” in accordance with the agreed terms and maintain regular communication to promptly resolve practical issues; finally, upon completion of the agreement, the “contract evaluation” is conducted to assess the outcomes of the collaboration, summarize lessons learned, and propose areas for improvement.

3.1.2. Resource integration to build a collaborative framework

In advancing the collaborative initiative, YC District emphasizes the coordinated integration of dispersed resources. First, using Party organizations as a link, the district focuses on the principle of “establishing Party branches in residential communities” as the primary approach. This drives government agencies, enterprises, public institutions, and social organizations within the jurisdiction to establish stable collaborative relationships, breaking down sectoral and administrative barriers to form regional Party-building alliances or collaborative communities, thereby achieving organizational coordination and resource sharing; Second, specific projects are designed to address practical issues in community governance, embedding resources into the project implementation process to concentrate efforts on resolving real-world matters such as environmental improvement and community services; Third, the “Community Partner” mechanism is innovated, using “universal resident contracts” to link diverse entities such as social organizations,

enterprises, and professional institutions. This encourages Party members, residents, and volunteers to actively participate in co-construction by taking on service roles and engaging in public welfare activities, thereby transforming dispersed human resources into a vital force for building community governance collectives.

3.1.3. Platform support to enhance collaborative efficiency

In its practice of contract-based co-construction, YC District has kept pace with trends in digital technology by establishing an information management platform to achieve “online + offline” operations for co-construction efforts. Regarding grassroots governance applications, the original “Yuecheng Youyue” WeChat mini-program was iteratively upgraded based on operational needs to create the “Zheli Co-construction” app. The platform’s functional scope was expanded by introducing application scenarios such as “Contract for All”, “Partnered Co-construction”, “Livelihood Market”, “Light Up Wishes”, and “Party-Mass Map.” In terms of operational mechanisms, a business processing workflow—“residents place orders, communities issue orders, Party members accept orders, orders can be claimed at any time, progress is tracked in real time, and services are evaluated”—enables collaborative tasks to be generated, circulated, and feedback provided online, thereby reducing information fragmentation and communication barriers. At the same time, leveraging the “Matrix-style Smart Governance” system, the platform aggregates and shares data resources across multiple departments, enhancing the coordination and transparency of community affairs handling. This, in turn, improves the convenience of resident participation and expands the coverage of the development of community governance collectives.

As YC District’s “contract-based” collaborative governance practices continue to deepen, its governance trajectory has evolved from standardizing processes through resource integration to mechanism upgrades enabled by digital technology, gradually charting a path from “matters” to “governance” and from “systems” to “intelligence.” In this process, various governance elements are optimally allocated and coordinated under the support of institutional frameworks and digital platforms, ultimately forming community governance collectives characterized by “resource sharing and collaborative deliberation.”

3.2. “Structure-action” analysis of “contract-based” co-construction in YC District

The operational process of YC District’s “contract-based” co-construction mechanism reveals the interactive dynamics between “structure” and “action”: Under structural arrangements such as the “contract” institutional system, project-based operational mechanisms, and digital platform support, actors including government agencies, social organizations, Party members, and residents implement specific action strategies—such as project adoption, deliberation and consultation, and service provision—around co-construction initiatives. Subsequently, existing “rules” and “resources” are further optimized and refined, ultimately forming a new structural configuration: community governance collectives bound by “contracts.”

3.2.1. The operational manifestation of structural conditions

From the perspective of the operational manifestation of structural conditions, the “contract-based” co-construction practices in YC District are grounded in institutional rules, supported by community culture, and linked by resource integration. Through the synergistic interaction of these structural elements, the modes of action of diverse actors are shaped.

First, the regulatory role of organizational systems in guiding actor behavior. The community governance collective is a composite entity established by relying on clear organizational systems to provide channels for diverse actors to exert their influence and rules for participation, thereby consolidating social trust through a sound regulatory framework and stimulating and accumulating residents' conscious sense of agency ^[13]. In the "contract-based" co-construction practices of YC District, organizational systems constitute the fundamental framework for the participation of diverse actors in community governance. Centered on Party-building leadership and relying on a "contractual" rule system—which includes the signing of co-construction agreements, the clarification of task lists, the detailed division of responsibilities, and the establishment of consultation procedures—this framework integrates government agencies, social organizations, Party members, and individual residents into a unified operational order. It enables various actors to collaborate within clear boundaries of rights and responsibilities and under defined behavioral expectations, striving to create a "single core with multiple participants" model. Normative provisions clearly define the rights and obligations of participating entities in cooperative initiatives, reducing the risks of ambiguous responsibilities and disorderly actions; procedural regulations establish a relatively complete operational workflow around stages such as issue publication, project adoption, process supervision, and outcome feedback, embedding the actions of entities within institutional frameworks. At the same time, a tiered organizational structure strengthens the guidance and constraints on stakeholder behavior: Community Party organizations in YC District leverage the organizational framework of "village/community Party organizations—grid (residential area) Party branches—micro-grid (stairwell) Party groups" to integrate local units and social forces into the co-construction network, thereby institutionally consolidating what previously dispersed governance efforts were. Under this structural framework, stable behavioral patterns have emerged within the regulatory framework—such as Party members taking the lead in undertaking projects, co-construction units fulfilling their responsibilities as agreed, and residents participating in consultation and providing feedback—transforming actor participation from sporadic and spontaneous to standardized and collaborative.

Second, the supportive role of community culture in actors' behaviors. Since different social forms give rise to different cultures that perform corresponding governance functions, the construction of a community governance collective requires not only institutional structures but also the full utilization of culture's vital supportive role ^[14]. In advancing the co-construction process, YC District has focused on revitalizing local cultural resources and strived to formulate community covenants that residents "all recognize, can understand, and are able to practice", thereby guiding and shaping the actions of community members at the level of cultural value structures. For example, drawing on the enduring "Tai Men culture", the community has explored the establishment of a "Tai Men Party School" tailored to local conditions, organized the "Conversations on Our Home: Tai Men Gathering" activities, and created the "Tai Men Hui" governance brand. These practices are all grounded in familiar social relationships, guiding residents to view community affairs as shared responsibilities and making it easier for community members to adopt a cooperative and mutually supportive approach when facing public issues. At the same time, local lifestyle cultures, represented by "yellow wine culture", also play a significant role in community public activities. YC District organizes festivals, cultural exhibitions, and community interactions centered on "yellow wine culture", providing an important contextual space for residents to participate in community life. Within these interactive settings, connections among residents are continuously strengthened, and their sense of belonging

and identification with the community is correspondingly enhanced. It is evident that, through the sustained activation of local cultural resources, resident participation in community affairs is no longer merely a response to institutional requirements but has evolved into a proactive orientation driven by cultural values and emotional identification. Ultimately, local cultural resources—this “golden key”—subtly unlock the operational space for diverse stakeholders to participate in community governance.

Third, the role of governance resources in safeguarding stakeholder action. In YC District, various governance resources have broken down “resource silos” under the framework of “a single contract”, integrating them into the community co-construction system. Among these, as the birthplace of “contract-based” co-construction, Yuedu Community has fully leveraged its resource advantages. Centering on community governance needs, it has designed four major categories of “service menus”—including education and training, learning and exchange, mass organizations, and comprehensive services—covering over 40 service items such as greening and beautification, joint public security patrols, and sports and fitness. These span multiple sectors, including finance, electricity, and fire safety, creating practical conditions for diverse stakeholders to participate in community governance. In addition, as YC District’s “contract-based” collaborative development continues to expand, various governance resources are constantly converging in each community, forming a support system composed of facility resources, human resources, and material resources. Regarding facility resources, several well-equipped Party-Mass Service Centers in YC District have added public spaces such as “Neighborhood Harmony Stations”, Shulan Reading Rooms, and Senior Citizens’ Universities, providing stable venues for residents to participate in community affairs; In terms of human resources, the “Contract for All” mechanism has been leveraged to engage a diverse range of stakeholders—including working Party members, professionals from partner organizations, and retired officials—in community governance, offering services such as education and training, medical consultations, and legal aid; regarding material resources, partner organizations have contributed funds and donated various supplies—including books, fitness equipment, and office machinery—providing crucial support for community infrastructure development and the implementation of livelihood projects.

3.2.2. Structured outcomes of the action process

From the perspective of action-driven structural reshaping, during the contractual partnership process in YC District, diverse stakeholders supported and motivated one another, engaging in consultation and collaborative governance regarding community affairs. These action strategies crystallized into new institutional arrangements and governance mechanisms, further driving the optimization and refinement of the community governance collectives’ structure.

First, the innovation and optimization of conflict resolution mechanisms. In grassroots community governance, the diverse range of entities involved in community affairs often leads to varied interests and demands, which can trigger numerous conflicts. In the past, conflicts between different community stakeholders were typically resolved through ad hoc coordination by community staff, lacking a systematic mediation mechanism. When disputes became complex, relying solely on individual staff members to mediate often failed to resolve the underlying issues. To address this situation, YC District decided to establish a more standardized one-stop conflict resolution mechanism, focusing on creating a “One Town, One Model” full-chain dispute resolution model. In practice, each community has established dedicated mediation studios, recruiting community legal professionals and residents with high credibility to form a

team of mediators. They also conduct timely follow-ups on mediation outcomes, thereby forming a conflict resolution mechanism that integrates dispute acceptance, professional mediation, and follow-up visits. At the same time, distinctive mediation platforms are being developed to meet the governance needs of different areas. For example, Yuedu Community has established the “Baziqiao Workstation” as a grassroots dispute mediation hub; Didang Sub-district has set up the “Commercial Harmony Station” at Shimao Plaza to resolve consumer disputes; and Dongpu Sub-district has established the “Wine Workshop Dispute Resolution Hall” at the Huangjiu Town Police Station to handle complaints. Through this series of institutional arrangements, conflicts and disputes can be addressed at the grassroots level and resolved before they escalate. The “time-honored brand” of grassroots governance in YC District not only allows the “Fengqiao Experience” of the new era to shine with renewed brilliance but also significantly empowers the establishment of community interest collectives.

Second, the development and refinement of the community management team. Against the backdrop of “fragmented” community distribution and “atomized” resident behavior, the “lone-wolf” approach of a small number of community workers can no longer meet actual governance needs. Therefore, the growth of the community management team can be understood as the result of collective action—involving participation and cooperation in community public affairs—based on shared interests^[15]. Based on this understanding, YC District has adhered to Party-building as the guiding principle. In accordance with the principles of “territoriality, comprehensiveness, appropriateness, and complementarity”, the district has ensured the “five essentials”—grid configuration, staffing, responsibility implementation, compensation guarantees, and operational effectiveness—across all 639 community grids. This has comprehensively strengthened the “battle fortresses.” Based on the scale and composition of each grid, the district has systematically organized and advanced Party organization coverage, essentially achieving the integration of grid-level Party organizations with residential community Party organizations. At the same time, using grid-based Party building as a lever, the district has explored the establishment of a “13610” work system, continuously updating governance grids, extending the reach of grid Party organizations, and steadily expanding the grid worker team, thereby better embedding grassroots Party organizations into the community governance structure. Currently, the district has deployed over 700 full-time grid workers, with more than 10,000 Party members, cadres, and volunteers joining the grid service teams. We have formed diverse volunteer groups such as “Flood Prevention Task Forces”, “Silver-Haired Green Protection Teams”, and “Senior Mediation Teams”, providing stable human resources support for community governance. With the establishment of a grid-based Party building management system with local characteristics, previously dispersed governance forces have been integrated into an organized governance structure. Community management is increasingly moving beyond the “go-it-alone” model, completing the transition from a “work unit collective” to an “organizational collective” centered on Party organizations, thereby forming an “organizational collective” for community governance.

Third, the cultivation and consolidation of a sense of collective. Fostering a sense of collective among modern citizens and reconstructing a beautiful spiritual home for residents has not only become a heartfelt call and pursuit but also an important hallmark of building a harmonious socialist society^[16]. Therefore, building upon the “collective of interests” and the “organizational collective”, it is also necessary to stimulate residents’ intrinsic motivation to participate in public affairs through consciousness-building, to break down the barriers of the “society of strangers” through emotional identification, and to promote the formation of

an “emotional collective” in community governance. To this end, YC District has, on the one hand, explored the establishment of an “Urban Mobile Observer” mechanism to guide residents and the newly employed in participating in community governance affairs. This enables them to promptly report community safety hazards, environmental issues, and potential conflicts during their daily lives and work, allowing them to assume the vital role of information gatherers and advocates for public sentiment within the city’s dynamic spaces. On the other hand, retired Party members and veteran officials have taken the lead in activating residents’ self-governance capabilities, transforming them from “bystanders” to “participants” in community governance and enhancing internal participation within the community. Self-governance groups have been established in communities across the YC District. Leveraging their familiarity with the people, the area, and local conditions, these groups assist in governance tasks such as conflict mediation and environmental remediation. As every resident becomes the community’s “eyes” and “ears”, interactions among residents increase, and trust within the community deepens. Consequently, community members’ sense of belonging to and responsibility for their shared living space has been further strengthened. Community governance has evolved into public action grounded in emotional bonds, thereby consolidating the “emotional collectives” of community governance.

3.2.3. The “structure-action” interaction: The internal logic of the formation of community governance collectives

An analysis of the “contract-based” co-construction practices in YC District reveals that the formation of community governance collectives cannot be achieved by a single structural element or the actions of a single actor alone but rather is the result of the mutual embedding and continuous interaction between “structure” and “action.” In this context, organizational institutions, community culture, and governance resources collectively constitute the basic structural framework of community governance: organizational institutions regulate actor behavior and the order of participation; community culture reinforces value formation and emotional bonds; and governance resources provide the practical conditions and implementation foundation for actor actions. Under this structural arrangement, diverse actors are incorporated into the community governance arena and carry out governance practices within the norms of existing institutional rules and resource allocation. However, as governance practices unfold, new conflicts and governance needs begin to emerge. Faced with these practical issues, diverse actors exercise their agency and initiate a series of practical actions in community public affairs, thereby generating a new governance structure. First, through the establishment of a one-stop conflict resolution mechanism, previously dispersed conflicts of interest are incorporated into an institutionalized mediation system, promoting the formation of a “collective of shared interests” in community governance. Second, supported by the grid-based Party building system and service networks, dispersed governance forces within the community were integrated into a unified organizational framework. Community governance shifted from “single-line management” to “collective wisdom and effort”, further evolving into an “organizational community” centered on the Party organization. Third, the establishment of “Urban Mobile Observers”, resident self-governance groups, and various public activity platforms continuously strengthened emotional bonds among community members, forming an “emotional collective” grounded in trust and mutual recognition.

Overall, the internal logic behind the formation of the community governance collectives in YC District lies in the structural arrangement of “institutions—culture—resources” as its foundation, driven by action

strategies such as conflict resolution, grid-based governance, and consciousness-building. Through their mutual integration, these elements give rise to a new structure—progressing from a “collective of interests” to an “organizational collective” and finally to an “emotional collective”. It is precisely through this cyclical interaction of “structure–action–restructuring” that the levels of normalization, standardization, and refinement in community governance have significantly improved, forming a new paradigm of community governance collectives characterized by joint construction, co-governance, and shared benefits (**Figure 1**).

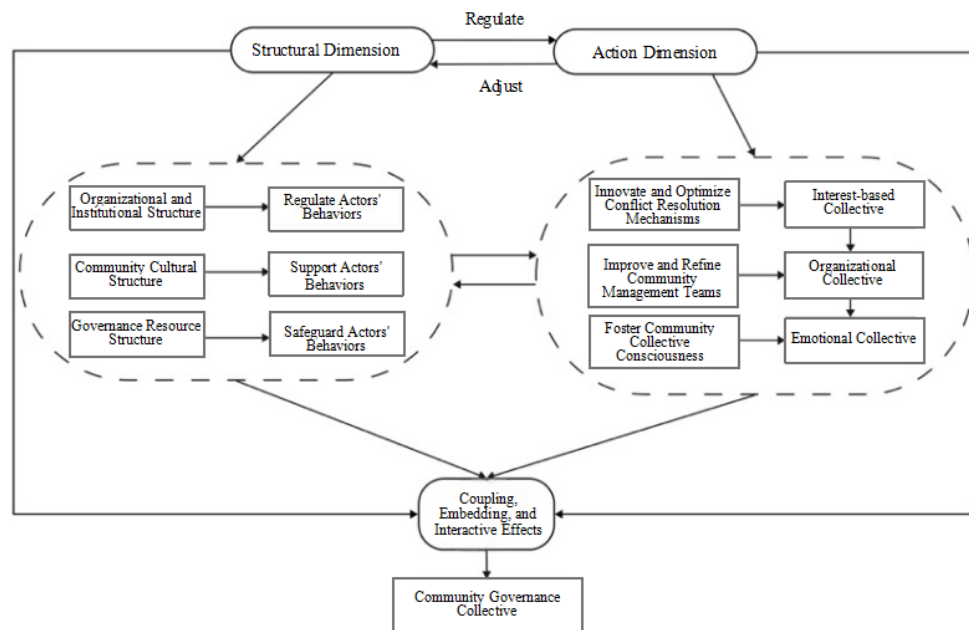


Figure 1. The generative logic of community governance collectives’ construction under the “structure – action” framework

4. Conclusion and implication

Based on the case study of YC District in SX City, several patterns can be identified regarding the generative logic of the community governance collectives under the “structure-action” framework: First, a stable structure provides fundamental support for the formation of the community governance collectives. Community governance does not unfold in a vacuum but is gradually advanced through structural conditions such as institutional rules, cultural atmosphere, and governance resources. Reasonable institutional arrangements provide normative channels for stakeholder participation; cultural identity helps strengthen value-based connections among members; and effective resource allocation can help resolve the “unable to handle” dilemma created by the decentralization of governance. These structurally interlinked elements lay the fundamental groundwork for the formation of community governance collectives. Second, individuals are not “passive actors” constrained by structures; through their actions, they utilize and reshape structures, thereby revitalizing what were once “dormant” structures. Within existing structures, community governance actors enter the governance arena based on a comprehensive assessment of both public and private interests and adjust their relational structures through interaction and cooperation. As practice deepens, the convergence of interests among actors intensifies, the organizational relationships of

collaborative governance gradually clarify, and the sense of identity and trust among community members accumulates accordingly. In response to these demands for action, the community governance structure is constantly reconfigured, shifting toward a more collaborative form of collective. Third, structure is not an objective entity independent of actors, but rather an institutional arrangement composed of rules and resources that is continuously reproduced through social practice. Structural elements such as organizational institutions, community culture, and governance resources provide institutional rules, value orientations, and resource conditions for actors' actions, while also constituting the basic context in which such actions unfold. However, structure does not automatically transform into a governance collective; rather, it requires active actors to put it into practice and utilize it. In the process of handling community public affairs and addressing governance issues, diverse actors continuously adjust their interactive relationships and provide feedback on existing institutional arrangements and organizational relationships. In this practical model, community governance structures serve both as the conditions for action and as the outcomes of actor agency. Consequently, community governance relationships are repeatedly restructured and adjusted through the interplay of structural constraints and agency, and the pattern of a community governance collective characterized by "co-construction, co-governance, and shared benefits" is realized in this process.

Taking the "contract-based" co-construction in YC District as a case study, this paper analyzes the generative logic of the community governance collectives. It offers the following insights for advancing the construction of grassroots social governance collectives during the 15th Five-Year Plan period:

1. Shape structural elements that support the collaborative participation of diverse actors in community governance. The formation of a community governance collective cannot be separated from a stable structure. During the 15th Five-Year Plan period, efforts should be grounded in the realities of grassroots governance to improve the organizational system and institutional arrangements under the leadership of the Party. By optimizing resource allocation and building governance platforms, diverse governance actors can become interdependent within an institutionalized framework and effectively fulfill their functions. At the same time, we must strive to expand venues for consultation and deliberation, enrich platforms for community public activities, and strengthen the guidance of community cultural values. This will ensure that the structural "overarching framework" of the community governance collectives extends "vertically to the grassroots" and "horizontally to all corners", providing the necessary conditions for diverse actors to engage in collaborative governance.

2. Fully stimulate the active engagement of diverse actors in collaborative community governance. When outcomes align with expected views or values, actors continue to follow existing behavioral patterns or modes of interaction; when they do not, actors adjust their own behavior or drive structural changes in the social space ^[17]. Grassroots community governance also exhibits this logic of action: when the initial governance structure conflicts with individual or community interests, various governance actors often intervene in the community governance process by participating in conflict mediation and negotiation, optimizing governance teams, and fostering a sense of the collective. Based on this, during the 15th Five-Year Plan period, efforts should focus on enhancing the action expectations of diverse actors in community affairs governance, with the ultimate goal of improving the governance structure. This will stimulate their dynamism and drive the evolution of community governance structures toward a more rational and orderly direction.

3. Promote the coupled interaction between community governance structural elements and actor

actions. In the community governance arena, the community governance collective serves both as a platform integrating structural elements such as organizational systems, governance rules, and resource allocation and as a vital space for collaborative governance by diverse actors. This inherently necessitates a coupled interaction between governance structures and actor actions. Among these, structural elements such as organizational systems, governance rules, and resource allocation define the boundaries of actor behavior, while action elements—including conflict resolution, grid-based governance, and the cultivation of a public spirit—infuse community governance with cohesion. Therefore, prioritizing the effective integration of governance structures and governance actions—ensuring that structural elements respond to the practical needs of actors while using governance actions to refine governance structures—is the top priority for grassroots community governance during the 15th Five-Year Plan period.

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