

In the context of purchasing public services Discussion on the Cooperation Relationship between Chinese Government and Helping Disabled Organizations

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ABSTRACT. *With the increasing demand for diversified public services for the disabled, the government provides services for special groups by purchasing public services. This article mainly analyzes the key crux in the operation of government purchase of public services for the disabled, and then discusses the cooperative relationship between government purchase of public services for the disabled and organizations for the disabled.*

KEYWORDS: *public service, cooperation relationship, government ,disability organizations*

1. Background and questions raised

Since the 1970s, administrative reforms that started in developed countries such as Europe and the United States have set off a global wave of reforms. The crisis of welfare state has become increasingly prominent in western countries, resulting in new public management, new public service theory and governance theory. The government in the public service system should not undertake the specific production and provision of public goods and services indefinitely, but should play the role of fund provider and supervisor. The specific services are provided by third-party organizations, especially non-profit departments. For example, Osborne and Gueble put forward the concept of “entrepreneurial government” and believed that the government's function was to “steer” rather than “paddle” [1];The Denhardt couple believed that the government should “serve” rather than “steer” and should involve citizens in the government's supply of public services [2], etc. These theories all believe that the traditional “rational bureaucracy” should be reformed to realize a comprehensive and all-round system design-a new public service system based on the effective linkage of the three mechanisms of government mechanism, market mechanism and social mechanism. Taking efficiency as the fundamental objective and reducing administrative costs to resolve financial crisis and debt crisis as the direct objective.

Driven by the value of “improving efficiency and reducing expenditure”, governments of various countries have begun to explore concrete ways to achieve the reform goals. One of the greatest achievements of decades of exploration is “the government purchases public services from social organizations” (POSC). However, the measure of “government purchasing public services from social organizations” has become a national system arrangement because it meets the needs of our government to change its functions and meet the increasing diversified demands. With the transformation of the system and the transformation of the main contradictions, the increasing need for a better life for the disabled makes the public services for the disabled increasingly refined. And “because the public goods provided by the government have general properties, they cannot cover these extremely special groups” [3]. In recent years, some special social organizations have been serving such vulnerable groups relying on their own professional advantages, so the government procurement of public services provided by them arises at the historic moment. In 2013, the State Council issued “Guidelines on Government Purchasing Services from Social Forces”; In 2014, the Ministry of Finance, the China Disabled Persons' Federation and other six departments jointly issued the “Opinions on Doing a Good Job in the Pilot Work of Government Purchase of Services for Persons with Disabilities”, which stipulated the purchase subject, the undertaking subject, the purchase content, the performance management and the safeguard measures, etc., and “there are laws to follow” for people's livelihood departments to purchase public services from social organizations. The purpose of this article is to analyze the blocking nodes and key sticking points in the operation of government purchase of public services for the disabled, and then to explore the cooperative relationship between government purchase of public services for the disabled and organizations assisting the disabled.

2. Discussion on Cooperation Relationship from the Perspective of Resource Dependence

2.1 Resource Dependence: A Theoretical Perspective of Cooperation

The theory of resource dependence, which began in the 1940s, is a major innovation and breakthrough in the theory of inter-organizational relations. The birth of the theory of resource dependence means that the research on the relationship between organizations has shifted from static analysis of the internal operation of organizations to the interaction between organizations and their surroundings. In 1949, Selznick's classic study of Tennessee Valley Authority [4] was the origin of the resource dependence theory. The concept of “common choice” means that the research of organizational relations has already begun to set foot in the field of inter-organizational power relations. In 1958, Thompson and McEwen established three types of cooperative relations between organizations, namely, alliance (including alliances such as joint ventures), negotiation (including contract negotiation) and common choice (following Selznick, defined as absorbing potential interfering factors into an organization's decision-making body). In other words, the power-

dependence model is proposed.

Most of the subsequent studies followed the analysis path proposed by Selznick and Thompson, and enriched them on the basis of criticism or support. Although these studies broke through the shackles of the static closed system model, they have not yet formed a systematic and comprehensive theoretical design and have not materialized the research object into a medium-sized organizational level. Until the 1970s, in their book *External Control of Organizations: A Perspective of Resource Dependence*[5], Fever and Sarancico systematically discussed the resource dependency theory with the medium-level organization as the main research object. Four important assumptions: (1) the most important thing for an organization is survival;(2) No organization can be completely self-sufficient, and organizations need to obtain resources in the environment to survive;(3) the organization must interact with the elements in the environment on which it depends;(4) The survival of an organization is based on its ability to control relations with other organizations.(3) the availability of alternative resources. The theory of resource dependence illustrates that the difference in the degree of organizations' dependence on resources leads to the inequality of power relations among organizations. Its external manifestation is that organizations with weak resource dependence will control organizations with strong resource dependence. The existence of such external control will eventually affect the autonomy of organizations with strong resource dependence.

2.2 North Paradox: Duality of Buying Handicapped Services

Some scholars believe that if we don't make strict requirements, we don't have to use the concept according to the established meaning given by the concept initiator, but we should analyze it in a similar meaning and apply it to new analysis objects, which may extend the analysis chain of the concept and make the concept have a broader meaning[6]. As an important category of institutional economics, "North Paradox" originated from the analysis of the relationship between the state and economic development, clearly pointing out the duality of state power intervention in the economy: "The existence of the state is the key to economic growth, but the state is also the root of man-made economic recession" [7]. At present, some scholars have expanded the analytical framework of "North Paradox" and extended it to the discussion of various social problems and phenomena. For example, Ding Huang and others applied the concept of "North Paradox" to the explanation of the utility of multi-subject participation in the field of maritime rescue [8].

Huang Xiaojun and others introduced the concept of "North Paradox" into the analysis of the impact of government intervention in the field of competitive sports professionalism[9]. Wang Sheng also introduced the "North Paradox" into the relevant research on government purchase of services and the development of social organizations[10]. From a macro perspective, he put forward the view that the government purchases services as an important driving force for the development of social organizations and will also have a negative impact on their development.Starting from the microscopic process of government purchasing

assistive services, this paper analyzes how the mechanism of North Paradox caused by the differences in resource endowment structure works through interviews.

Through research, it is found that disability organizations are often very small in size at the beginning of their establishment, and problems such as capital, venues and equipment are the bottlenecks of their development, which often present a pattern of congenital deficiency in resource endowment. Until the government issued a series of policies to purchase disabled services from social organizations, the stable cooperative relationship with the government has injected impetus to the development of the organization, but the heavy reliance on government resources has also made the development of disabled organizations difficult. In addition, although the government has provided funds for the purchase of service projects, the vast majority of the funds are limited income and are only used to implement projects or activities designated by the government, and cannot be used for the organization's own development. The financial difficulties make it difficult for the organization to provide competitive salaries so as to retain talents. The double dilemma of capital and talents is only the appearance of contradictions faced by the organization in the process of development. The essence is the fragmentation of the independence of social service organizations. Social service organizations should exist as subjects independent of the government and the market, but in reality, their development is highly dependent on the government's funding and support, and their responsible persons are also closely related to the government. However, trying to get rid of the dependence on the government through commercial channels will lead to a high dependence on the market and investors, and will lead to the doubt of the society on the non-profit of the organization. How to achieve a balance between the government and the market and to seek the independent development of the organization has become an urgent problem for social service organizations to solve during the transformation.

2.3 Strategic Behavior: From Lobbying the Government to Giving Equal Attention to Righteousness and Benefit

In summary, the organization has multiple dependencies on the government. Specifically, it refers to capital, organizational system, official media, registration, permission for activities, resources of government leaders, opportunities and rights for organizational decision-making, etc. However, the most important aspect, or the one that can achieve certain results through certain strategic actions, is capital. Therefore, the first strategic action taken by such organizations is to lobby the government to obtain corresponding financial support. In essence, the most important thing is actually the system and regulations, but the dual management system is the premise for local governments at the grass-roots level to implement policies, and the grass-roots government can do nothing about it. The most widely contacted organizations of this kind are grass-roots governments. In a word, under special institutional environment, such organizations often rely more on finance than on political legitimacy. However, it was later discovered that the government's purchase of public services also brought many other problems, so it changed its

strategy.

According to the theory of resource dependence, in order to avoid dependence on resources of other organizations in the environment, organizations have two ways to choose from: one is to maximize the dependence of other organizations on themselves; the other is to minimize the dependence on resources of other organizations. The second is the adjustment of the organization's dependence on resources. Specifically, it is to explore business cooperation models. The commercial behavior of social organizations can enhance the ability to obtain funds, improve independence, enhance the ability to participate in competition and resist risks. It does not exclude cooperation with enterprises. While using enterprise resources, it analyzes and learns the public interest motivation and behavior strategies of enterprises, and pays more attention to introducing commercial thinking into the management and operation of social organizations, such as the introduction of business concepts such as result orientation, emphasis on efficient operation, emphasis on employee training, emphasis on innovation, etc., which greatly improves the response speed and accuracy of the organization to public interest markets and service demands. However, it is still under exploration and has not yet formed a mature approach.

2.4 Risk: Lack of System and Mission Drift

The relevant management system is still a dual management system. Although it is somewhat relaxed, the nurturing system has not yet been established. Moreover, the existing legal norms have not been strictly demonstrated, the contents are vague, and the clauses are contradictory, which makes private non-enterprise units obtain the status of civil subject, but their legal nature is still trapped in the “corporate legal person” and it is difficult to obtain the legal person status suitable for their organizational attributes. The “social service organizations” mentioned in the Charity Law correspond to private non-enterprise units. When the purpose, business scope and non-profit of the organization meet the relevant provisions of the Charity Law, they can all apply for change to “Charity Organization”. The Regulation on the Registration and Administration of Social Service Organizations formally solicits opinions from all walks of life. The transformation from “private non-enterprise units” to “social service organizations” is bound to increase the difficulty in terms of connotation and extension of the concept of name, management mechanism, sources of funds and profit distribution.

Secondly, the risk of mission drift still exists. In the process of cooperation with commercial organizations, it is inevitable to learn their business models. Commercial behavior makes private non-enterprise units face the risk of losing or even being replaced their public welfare goals. Although some supporters believe that the commercial operation of private non-enterprise units can improve the organization's ability to obtain funds and independence, and promote the improvement of organizational efficiency[11], there are still scholars who are cautious about commercial behavior. This is because the pursuit of market-oriented operation and commercial ability by private non-enterprise units is likely to lead to

the fundamental contradiction of profit distribution, and the emergence of problems such as false accounts and false expenses, provision of salary and treatment obviously exceeding the market price, and transfer of amount to stakeholders make the public co/tenuously question its non-profit nature [12].

3. Conclusion

Finally, it should be pointed out that this paper applies the theory of resource dependence to the analysis of the transformation and development of private non-enterprise units, focusing on the strategic choices made based on the adjustment of resource dependence, and paying insufficient attention to the changes in governance structure, operation mode, management mechanism, etc. The above are also aspects that need to be improved in future research. This paper aims to offer some valuable suggestions for further research and suggestions.

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