

Research on the “Tiao-Kuai” Relation in China's Public Crisis Management System

-- Based on the Framework of IAD

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Abstract

The “Tiao-Kuai” relation is an inherent feature of our administrative system, and although it ensures the operation of top-down hierarchy in China, it tends to lead to some drawbacks such as Tiao/Kuai division and Tiao/Kuai contradiction, administrative fragmentation, and double leadership. With the occurrence of this epidemic, China's emergency management has revealed many problems, and one of them is that it is subject to “Tiao-Kuai” relation,, which leads to administrative inefficiency, such as poor communication of information, untimely decision-making, and mutual shirking of responsibilities. According to the development in emergency management of our country, the work of various departments of our government is not well executed and the contradiction between sections is inevitable. In China's public crisis governance, one of the ways to modernize the system is to realize the coordination of “Tiao-Kuai” and break the rule of division between the vertical hierarchy and horizontal departments. In this way, we can make our crisis management system more perfect. This paper will draw on the framework of Institutional Analysis and Development (IAD) proposed by Eleanor Ostrom to analyze the “Tiao-Kuai” relation in China's public crisis governance, using the COVID-19 as a case study, from which the current conflicts between Tiao and Kuai can be identified and what are the coordination paths in future public crisis governance, thus promoting the effective development of holistic governance.

Keywords

Crisis Management; Tiao-Kuai Coordination; Holistic Governance.

1. Introduction

The "Tiao-Kuai relation" is a structural feature in the construction of grassroots organizations in China, and is an important phenomenon in the political field of contemporary China. The hierarchy of China's government is divided into five levels of government, and the “Tiao-Kuai” relation is the most complex and contradictory among all the unitary countries in the world. In such a large bureaucratic system, government governance is particularly important. From the perspective of national governance, whether the state and local governments are centralized or decentralized determines the management of public affairs, and a little mismanagement can lead to disruptions in the implementation process and administrative inefficiencies. Public affairs are complicated, and there is a conflict between public affairs and national governance, but it is urgent to solve the problem of national governance efficiency, so it is important to define the relation between "central authority" and "local power". Xueguang Zhou once proposed a profound contradiction between "authoritative institutions and effective governance": the degree of centralization of authoritative institutions and the power of local governance are inversely proportional, and if one side is strong, the other side must be weak

[1]. Conversely, if the power of local governance is high, it will be considered as "fragmented". In the face of this contradiction, Chinese politics also has corresponding mechanisms to resolve it, such as the ritualization of political indoctrination and the movement-based governance mechanism [1]. Li'an Zhou explored the administrative contracting system through the theory of "political tournament", and studied the governmental governance system from both horizontal and vertical latitudes [2]. Although he analyzed the incentive of officials and government governance, it can be seen that it is a disguised exploration of the effectiveness of government governance in a deeper level. The relation between top-down governmental functionaries and horizontal local government system inherently exists in our governmental system, and there are contradictions between the two, which can only integrate the contradictions in coordination. Improper handling of the Tiao-Kuai relation can easily lead to fragmentation, "Tiao-Kuai" contradiction, and administrative fragmentation and other problems. For the professional research in various fields nowadays, we cannot avoid the contradiction between the two. According to the research of Chinese scholars, the essence of "Tiao-Kuai" relation is the division of power from top to bottom.

China is a country prone to emergencies, from the Zhouqu mudslide, Wenchuan earthquake, to the occurrence of atypical pneumonia, new coronavirus pneumonia and other such events, China has learned a lesson and the management system for emergencies has been improved day by day. From the past history, there are many kinds of crisis events in China, with a wide area and high frequency. In modern society, research on crisis systematic management should be on the agenda to achieve a comprehensive and coordinated development of public crisis management. Now that we are in the era of big data, it is even more necessary to modernize the public crisis governance, and the modernization of the public crisis governance system is actually manifested in the modernization of its organizational system [3]. The effectiveness of crisis governance relies on the coordination of "Tiao-Kuai" relations. First of all, each stage of the crisis requires the coordination and close cooperation of various departments, and asymmetric information can cause lagging or even failure in decision-making, and poor policy implementation can lead to wasteful decisions.

In the case of the COVID-19, the top-down prevention and control of the epidemic required the joint collaboration of government departments and provincial governments, and these relations are what we call the "Tiao-Kuai" relations. China's emergency management is a late start, and it is also a key part of the effectiveness of government governance. From the perspective of both, China's crisis management system is limited by the "Tiao-Kuai" fragmentation of the government, and the administrative fragmentation, disconnected management, and low efficiency of the government caused by the conflict between the government and the "Tiao/Kuai" have led to the imperfection of the public crisis management system. By analyzing the existing literature and drawing on the Institutional Analysis and Development (IAD) framework to review the current state of public crisis governance and the "Tiao-Kuai" relation, this paper explores the process of shifting the "Tiao-Kuai" conflict to coordinated governance, attempts to explore the path of integration between the two, and looks at how holistic governance is possible.

2. Literature Review and Analysis Framework

2.1. Synergy and Contradiction of "Tiao" and "Kuai"

The expressions of "Tiao" and "Kuai" first came from Zedong Mao. According to Mao, the term "Tiao" refers to central ministries and commissions, and "Kuai" refers to local governments [4]. Later, after scholars added to the term, scholar Hong Malik gave a more refined concept. The term "Tiao" refers to the functional departments with the same nature of business content from the central to local levels of government; "Kuai" refers to the various levels of government

formed by the combination of different functional departments [5]. The definition of "Kuai relation" is very different, and one argument is that "Kuai relation" refers to the interaction between different government organizations based on the Kuai structure [5], which is also cited in some articles [6], and some other scholars believe that "Kuai relation" refers to "Tiao" and "Kuai" "There is both identity and cooperation as well as contradiction and conflict between them [7]. In the daily interaction between "Tiao" and "Kuai", there are inevitably some collisions and frictions, so "Tiao contradiction" refers to "Tiao". The "Tiao-Kuai" relation is both antagonistic, mutually exclusive, and interdependent [7].

The bureaucratic system allows our government to operate from top to bottom, but it also brings about the contradiction between the "Tiao" and "Kuai". Shangli Lin summarized the "Tiao-Kuai" contradictions as the contradiction between centralization and decentralization, between policies and between decentralization and money sharing [11]. The division of these three contradictions well explains the aspects of the contradiction between Tiao and Kuai, which in general is still the relation between centralization and decentralization. Some scholars believe that it is the over-centralization of power in the Tiaos, the fragmentation of power in the Kuai, and the ineffective macro-control of the central government that cause the "Tiao-Kuai" contradiction [5]; others feel that the factors influencing the "Tiao-Kuai" contradiction are the over-centralization of power in the Tiaos without sufficient management authority, "local incompetence" and "local omnipotence" coexist [7]; the third view is that the relation between vertical management departments and local governments is essentially a problem of division of power between the central and local levels [12]. A synthesis of the above views shows that the root of the contradiction is still the lack of clarity in the division of powers and responsibilities between the Tiao and the Kuai; the central government wants to decentralize, but some matters still have to be coordinated by the central government; local governments have expanded their powers, but they are constrained by the jurisdiction of their superiors and dare not let go of the power.

There are many reasons for the contradiction between the two sectors. At the earliest, Chinese scholar Junrui Qian believes that the relation between the Tiao and Kuai is the relation between centralization and decentralization, that is, the division of power will to a certain extent cause the contradiction between the Tiao and the Kuai. Later on, some scholars also think that the relation between Tiao and Kuai is manifested as the Tiao of administration and the Tiao of economic management, which is the difference of the division field. Later, scholars have systematically studied the causes of the Tiao-Kuai contradiction, and there are mainly the following views. One of the views is that the original compartmentalized local government management system was felt to be established in response to the needs of a planned economy [8]. The dual subordination system [5] is considered to be another reason, i.e., the functional departments of local governments at all levels are vertically under the command of higher functional departments to ensure the unity of action of the "Tiao"; horizontally, they are under the command of the local government, which in turn ensures that the "Kuai" in the region The "Kuai" can form a whole [9]. Although it ensures the normal operation of the Kuai structure, on the other hand, it leads to the occurrence of Kuai conflicts. The third viewpoint is that responsibility isomorphism is the problem. The so-called "responsibility homogeneity" refers to the high degree of unity and consistency of functions, responsibilities and institutional settings among different levels of government in China [10]. Other scholars also have different views on the reasons for this, including irregular party-government relations, historical empiricism, and the influence of the Soviet model.

2.2. The Development of Public Crisis Governance in China

Public crisis governance is a key part of modernized national governance. Since the occurrence of atypical pneumonia in 2003, the Chinese government began to focus on the construction of

crisis management, and the academia also began to research on crisis management. The government promulgated the Regulations on Emergency Response to Public Health Emergencies, which marked that the door to the legalization of public crisis management in China has been slowly opened.

Regarding the concept of public crisis management, scholars in China have their own views, and the general direction is divided into two main views. One is that crisis management is the management of emergencies, such as Jun Tang and Jianing Wei, etc. This view focuses on some measures to be taken for individuals and organizations after a crisis occurs to reduce the losses afterwards. The second is that public crisis management is the management of the whole process of emergencies, such as Chengfu Zhang, Yayue Zhou, Weibin Gong and Duoyong Sun. This paper adopts Professor Chengfu Zhang's definition and considers public crisis management as a dynamic process. The government adopts a series of control activities for potential or emerged crises in response to different stages of crisis development in order to effectively prevent, handle, and eliminate crises [13].

Regarding the subjects of public crisis management, there are three views: the first is that the government is the dominant one; the second is that the government gives the main body and multiple subjects participate together; the third is that multiple subjects can participate collaboratively, and this view is that the government and other subjects do not have primary and secondary importance and have equal status. Scholar Hongwei Wang believes that in the pluralistic co-governance network, the government, enterprises, NGOs, volunteers, and citizens are the same stakeholders of crisis management, and it is a public crisis response model characterized by coordination, centered on the network, and participated by multiple subjects [14].

Regarding the model of public crisis management, scholars in China have three views. They have been discussed mainly from three perspectives: the e-government perspective, the knowledge management perspective, and the collaborative governance perspective. These three perspectives have explored relevant cases from the practical level of crisis management and also provided research references for the study of crisis management in China.

2.3. IAD Analysis Framework

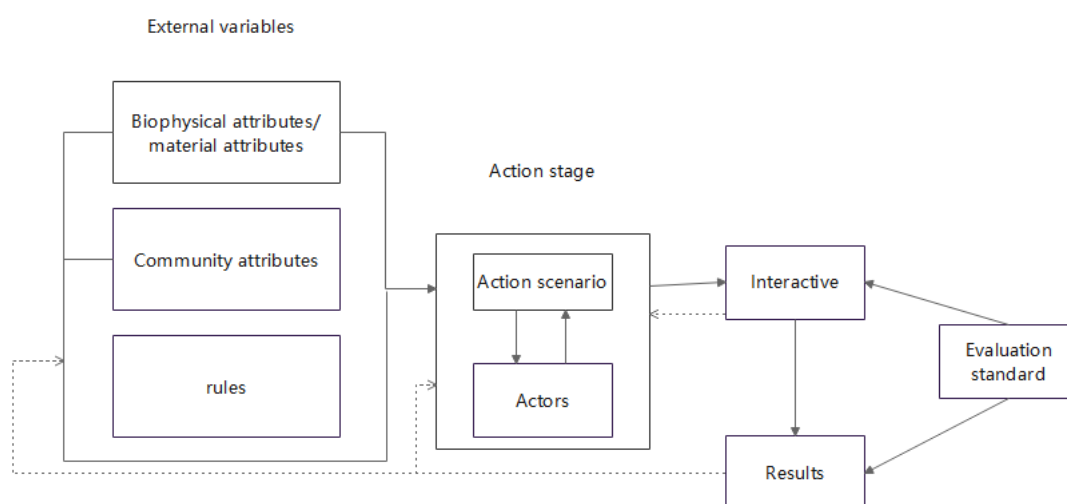


Figure 1. Framework of Institutional Analysis and Development [16]

Source: Ostrom, 2005b:15.

The institutional analysis and development framework (IAD framework) was proposed by Eleanor Ostrom to provide a set of general language to discuss the impact of rules, object attributes, and community attributes on the structure of the action arena, individuals facing

incentives and outcomes from an institutional perspective [15]. The analytical focus of the IAD framework is the action arena, which consists of two main factors: action scenarios and actors [15], and the content of this framework is shown in Figure 1 [16]. Based on the external influence variables in the IAD framework proposed by Eleanor, this paper will focus on analyzing one of them, the institutional factor. Because institutions are one of the important variables that influence the action arena, based on this, Eleanor proposes to draw on the "goal" (AIM) element of institutional syntax. Institutions are the support for actors' activities in the action arena, they are intangible and invisible, so a framework needs to be developed to analyze them.

3. Tiao-Kuai Relation in China's Public Crisis Governance System: The New Crown Epidemic as an Example

3.1. Action Arena: Contradictions under Structural Constraints

The IAD framework has been used to analyze the public crisis management system in China. In this analysis of public crisis governance in China, actors and scenarios can interact in the arena of action, producing results that are consistent or inconsistent with the expectations of the actors, who then evaluate the resulting results according to their own criteria. As we can see from Figure 1, the action arena consists of two parts: the action scenario and the actor.

3.1.1. Action Scenario: The Scenario Where the Contradiction between the Tiao and the Kuai Arises

From a game theory perspective, Eleanor extends the traditional game theory triad of actors, strategies, and payoffs by summarizing the action scenario into seven constituent elements that correspond to the field of public crisis governance, namely: number of actors, positions, permissible actions, potential outcomes (what will be affected), control over choices (whether actors can act alone or need to follow the direction of others), accessible information, and the number of actors. rewards (costs and benefits) assigned for actions and outcomes [13]. Several of these will be analyzed below.

(1) Number of actors: Institutionally, the development of emergency management in China has gone through four stages and formed "one case and three systems", i.e., plan building, institution building, mechanism building, and legal system building. The more perfect the system is, the more comfortable our country will be in the process of actual response.

(2) Positions: What kind of positions exist? The main deliberative bodies of the Ministry of Emergency Management are the National Flood and Drought Control General Command, the Earthquake Relief Command of the State Council, the Safety Production Committee of the State Council, the National Forest and Grassland Fire Prevention Command, and the National Disaster Reduction Committee, with posts set up for the director, ministers and other members. The government stipulates that the National Health and Wellness Commission consists of a total of 23 organs, including the General Office, the Department of Personnel, the Bureau of Disease Prevention and Control, the Department of Primary Health and Wellness, and the Health Emergency Response Office. During the occurrence of New Crown Pneumonia, these departments were coordinated and worked together each responsible for their own post responsibilities.

(3) Permissible actions: During the epidemic, the National Health and Wellness Commission managed all the news regarding the epidemic from the initial virus verification, to some guidance by Xiaowei Ma in Wuhan later, and all the news regarding the epidemic during the epidemic. Moreover, the National Health and Wellness Commission has also set up a leading group to deal with the epidemic. National-level CCTV media or provincial health and health

committees are required to release information related to the epidemic under the guidance of the National Health and Health Commission.

(4) Potential outcome: During the epidemic, the whole country is influenced by the information released by the National Health and Wellness Commission, and the information they release determines people's daily actions. Second, the provincial health committees are in turn subject to the dual leadership of the National Health Council and the provincial governments.

(5) Control over choices: The accesser of resources, i.e., the National Health and Wellness Commission, is subject to the command of his superior, the central government, and the provincial health and wellness committees are subject to the dual leadership and discretion of the National Health and Wellness Commission and the provincial governments when making decisions or releasing information.

(6) Accessible information: Provincial health and health committees and people's governments at all levels collect data in their respective jurisdictions and report them to the National Health and Health Commission, and the state then aggregates the data from each province for release, so they have a collaborative relation with each other, although there is a subordinate relation.

(7) Remuneration assigned for actions and results: During this epidemic, our public health supplies were consumed tremendously, economic growth was slow or even declining, every health care worker such as specialists, doctors and nurses were risking their lives to save patients, and the government implemented comprehensive treatment for patients infected with the New Coronavirus. We cherish people's lives and have their trust, and people's peace and happiness are our heart's desire.

3.1.2. The Contradiction of Each Actor: The Choice of Self-interest

Actors are another element of the action arena. Eleanor uses rational choice as a basis to reflect on the theoretical assumptions of human behavior [15]. In the era of big data, we advocate the construction of smart countries and smart cities. Rationality is the basis for people not to panic and treat things calmly, and it is a prerequisite for people to make better decisions; rationality is not only good for physical and mental health, but also for work and life. Mental models affect personal cognition, and personal cognition will determine all aspects of a person's life. Peter St. Gee proposed the characteristics of a learning organization to improve the mental model. The development of education in China is getting better and better, college students and graduate students are expanding, higher quality education is coming into thousands of homes, and local provinces and cities are promoting the construction of local urban libraries. We all stayed at home during the epidemic, not only because we obeyed the government's orders, but also because the wonderful society built by the government gave us a place of trust, we had a good mind, and we had a rich and colorful life even if we lived at home at a snail's pace. Nowadays, we have a rich inner life and a good psychological foundation, and we are in a position to be at home. People can live a better quality of life and live more comfortably when their quality of life has improved.

According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, physiological and security needs are the lowest level of people's needs. In terms of individuals, we can divide individuals into ordinary individuals and government officials based on their positions. As an ordinary individual has no public responsibilities, the first thing he needs to consider is his own safety, and the safety of his life is the first consideration. He can choose not to go to the high-risk areas, and after going to the high-risk areas, he also needs to think about what kind of harm will be brought to himself and others. Zhengzhou's "Guo" time is all over the internet. He had an appointment with a friend to go to Italy to watch a soccer match before the Spring Festival, but he ran into the new crown epidemic. At the beginning of March when the epidemic was basically stabilized, for the consideration of visa expiration, he and his friend went to several cities in Italy, and at this time, the epidemic in Italy has been quite dangerous, and after learning such situation, Guo returned

to Zhengzhou without reporting to the relevant departments, and still took buses and subways to shuttle between the east and west of Zhengzhou to work. This is a sign of irresponsibility to the public.

Second is the individual as a public official. During the epidemic, the state removed many directors of municipal health committees because they were corpses and did not seek their jobs in their positions. They were in personal private security considerations and had self-interest tendencies, such as reducing visits to the places where the epidemic occurred or to major hospitals, but as members of the state civil service, they have public responsibilities in their bodies and should take up their positions and consider the public, not in press conferences They should not ask questions.

3.2. Results

3.2.1. Predicted Results

Based on the analysis of the action scenarios and actors in the action arena, we can predict the results. During the epidemic, it can also be said that in the presence of major events, the contradiction Tiao/Kuai leads to obstructions to the resolution of big things in life, delays in time, and unresolved small things. At the beginning of the epidemic, people from all walks of life in our country were united in their conviction that we could win the epidemic prevention and control interdiction battle. This was due to our unitary system, where we, the people, were allowed to stay at home at the command of the state, although there were some "special people" among them; government leaders at all levels went to the front line to conduct relevant commands, although there were also some leaders who did not know anything about the epidemic; all health care workers held their positions, and there were There were also those who went to the front line to resolutely fight the epidemic and those who were at the back to protect the epidemic, but the selfishness of individuals could not affect the selflessness of the majority of people. We finally won the battle against the epidemic.

3.2.2. Evaluation of the Results

The results were generally good, but they also taught our emergency management system a deep lesson. There were also many small details that revealed flaws during the epidemic. As a personal example, my family is in Xinzheng, a small county under Zhengzhou, Henan Province. My brother is a senior in high school this year, and Henan Province issued an announcement that seniors officially returned to school on April 7. During the epidemic, they took online classes via nail and did their daily health punch cards on nail. The clocking did not end when school started and changed from once a day to twice a day. I didn't understand at the time why students had to punch in those fake temperature data on nail when they were already going to school and parents didn't even have access to them. I continuously called Xinzheng Education Bureau, Zhengzhou Education Bureau and Zhengzhou Epidemic Prevention Command, all of them shifted the responsibility to each other and said some crowning words, which probably meant that the school just started and some instruction revocation needed to be reported to the leaders to go through the procedure, which took some time and thanked me for the feedback. From this matter can be seen, mutual shifting of blame not only exists at the most grassroots level of government, in the case of upper and lower government orders do not work, they will only shirk responsibility. The purpose of territorial management is to give local governments autonomy, but in the event of an incident, it becomes an excuse for them to pass the buck to each other. The phenomenon of "twinning competition" [15] has emerged in China's grassroots governance, which helps Kuai departments to cooperate with each other and move toward collaborative governance under the situation of assessment or competition [17].

4. Conclusion and Discussion

Tiao-Kuai relation is the most basic structural relation, whether it is "Tiao-based" or "Kuai-based", the essence is the definition of the relation between the central government and the local government, and the division of power between them. From the "county system" in the era of Qin Shi Huang to the five levels of government we have today, the central government actually wants to give local governments enough power while maintaining a moderate degree of control over them. In the case of emergency response, there are multiple agencies and departments involved in the handling and response, and there is the disadvantage of "double leadership". Although scholars in China have proposed "campaign governance", "administrative contracting system" and "responsibility homogeneity" in an attempt to tap the vitality and flexibility of government work, the shortcomings of Tiao-Kuai cannot be eradicated. The Tiao-Kuai coordination of the government is a long way off and cannot be solved overnight. This paper briefly analyzes the Tiao-Kuai relation between the government and the state in crisis governance by using the institutional analysis and development framework proposed by Eleanor Ostrom, but the analysis is not deep enough and needs further improvement. Our scholars have already explained the Tiao-Kuai relation in depth, but the Tiao-Kuai relation exists in various fields, and there is still no relevant solution for the coordination between the Tiao and the Kuai specifically in the relevant research. Based on the above analysis, we should think about how to break the division between the upper and lower levels and how to realize the coordination of the people's government at all levels horizontally. At the same time, the resolution of the conflict between the Tiao and the Kuai is not just a matter of proposing a few countermeasures, but there are also various problems in the process of implementing countermeasures, and the results of implementing countermeasures vary, and the research on Tiao-Kuai in the field of crisis governance in China still needs to be discovered.

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