

Deliberative Democracy and the Effectiveness of Community Youth-Care Policy Implementation: A Case Study of Community G in City J, Gansu Province, China

Pei Li

School of Management, Northwest Normal University, Lanzhou, China

Email: 960154587@qq.com

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Abstract

Against the backdrop of China's shift of governance priorities toward the grassroots and the practice of whole-process people's democracy, deliberative democracy has become an important pathway for enhancing the effectiveness of community-level policy implementation. Taking Community G in City J, Gansu Province, as a single case and focusing on its signature program "Red-Collar e-Home: Silver-Age Companionship for Growth", this study examines how deliberative democracy empowers the implementation of community youth-care policies. The findings show that Community G has built a multi-actor collaborative structure under Party-building leadership, precisely identified and matched needs by leveraging the "Five Elders", and standardized consultative procedures through innovations such as the "menu-ordering service" and the "three-color alert" mechanism, markedly improving the precision, coverage, and satisfaction of policy implementation. These outcomes embody an inner logic of actor coordination, value precision, organizational innovation, and emotional sustenance. The practice nevertheless faces dilemmas of limited broad participation, administrative dependence, and difficulties in quantifying effectiveness. The paper accordingly proposes optimization paths in four respects: Party-building leadership, participation mechanisms, digital empowerment, and evaluation systems, offering theoretical and practical reference for comparable communities.

Keywords

Deliberative Democracy, Policy Implementation Effectiveness, Youth Care, Community Governance

1. Statement of the Problem

1.1. Research Background

Deliberative democracy, an important development in late-twentieth-century Western political theory, holds that legitimate decision-making must originate from consensus reached by free and equal citizens through public deliberation, emphasizing rational discussion, reciprocity, and orientation toward the public interest rather than simple voting and interest aggregation [1]. Its philosophical foundation can be traced back to Habermas's theory of communicative action [2]. Chinese scholarship on deliberative democracy with Chinese characteristics has developed along four strands: (1) historical and cultural genealogy, which traces its ideals to traditions such as "the world belonging to all" and "harmony in diversity", as well as to the CPC's "united front" and "mass line" methods [3]; (2) institutional and procedural construction, which examines the CPPCC as a specialized consultative body and the design of grassroots deliberative procedures to ensure substantive rather than formalistic deliberation [4]-[7]; (3) governance effectiveness, which analyzes how deliberative democracy resolves social conflicts, facilitates policy implementation, and builds community governance communities in pursuit of "good governance" [8] [9]; and (4) technology empowerment, which explores how digital platforms expand participation and improve transparency while attending to challenges such as the digital divide.

In China, deliberative democracy has become an important component of socialist democratic politics and a key form of whole-process people's democracy, with successive CPC National Congress reports providing its political legitimacy and strategic direction. The report to the 18th Congress (2012) first incorporated deliberative democracy into the Party's national agenda, calling for its "broad, multilevel, and institutionalized development". The report to the 19th Congress (2017) defined it as "a unique form and distinctive strength of China's socialist democracy" and specified seven consultative channels covering all levels of state governance. The report to the 20th Congress (2022) further situated it within whole-process people's democracy, emphasizing institutionalization, standardization, and proceduralization. Research on how deliberative democracy affects policy implementation in contemporary China must therefore be positioned within this framework and closely integrated with grassroots practice. Grounded in the case of Community G in City J, this study investigates how deliberative democracy converts institutional strengths into governance effectiveness in the field of youth care. Methodologically, the study adopts a single-case design, drawing on the authors' field investigation, the community's internal working documents and statistical records (principally for 2022 - 2023), as well as publicly available policy texts and prior scholarship. For this study, policy implementation effectiveness is defined as the degree to which youth-care policies accurately respond to differentiated adolescent needs, achieve equitable service access, gain stakeholder recognition, reduce administrative operation costs, and avoid idle public resources. Five measurable dimensions are operationalized as follows (see **Table 1**).

Table 1. Implementation effectiveness operational indicators.

Dimension	Formal Definition	Measurement Source & Calculation Rule
Precision of implementation	Matching degree between supplied services and actual youth individualized demands	Menu-ordering demand response completion rate = $\frac{\text{Number of fully resolved personalized needs}}{\text{Total collected valid needs}} \times 100\%$
Service coverage	Proportion of eligible adolescents receiving regular youth-care interventions	Youth participation coverage = $\frac{\text{Number of adolescents joining community programs}}{\text{Total registered community minors}} \times 100\%$
Stakeholder satisfaction	Subjective evaluation of youth, parents and Five Elders toward service quality	Post-activity anonymous questionnaire 5-point Likert scale; composite satisfaction rate = Share of respondents scoring ≥ 4 points
Execution efficiency	Average resource input required to complete one deliberation-supported service project	Average project cycle reduction rate: Compare average completion days of pre-deliberation top-down services vs post-deliberation menu-based services
Resource waste	Proportion of allocated public resources left unused or mismatched to target groups	Idle resource proportion = $\frac{\text{Value of unused human/material resources}}{\text{Total input resources per year}} \times 100\%$

Source: Compiled by the author.

1.2. The Practical Problem

1.2.1. Implementation Dilemmas of Youth-Care Policies

Young people's growth involves diverse and individualized needs, and the traditional top-down implementation model exhibits objective difficulties; yet existing research has paid insufficient attention to how deliberative democracy can improve the implementation effectiveness of youth-care services, which combine a public character with strong demands for precision. Drawing on policy documents, official reports, and prior studies, six categories of implementation dilemmas can be identified.

First, policy instruments are structurally imbalanced: some policies are vaguely worded and lack detailed operating rules, resources, and assessment standards, generating "tensions" and "policy blockages" between formulation and enforcement [10]. Second, fiscal and human resources are insufficient: professional capacity is weak and coverage is low—for example, the "Tree-Hole Pocket" mental-health project in Bishan District, Chongqing, receives large volumes of student

letters weekly but has only three full-time staff, making effective follow-up of complex cases difficult [11]. Third, supply and demand are mismatched: idle resources coexist with scarcity, as illustrated by the low attendance (about 65 percent) in Hong Kong's Student Health Service Scheme, while monolithic service models—such as purely restrictive “teen modes” on online platforms—fail to meet diverse needs [12]. Fourth, cross-departmental coordination is weak: youth-care work involves numerous departments whose actions are poorly coordinated and mostly fall to schools, while information silos impede referral, follow-up, and closed-loop case management [13]. Fifth, implementation deviates toward formalism: even well-designed policies weaken at the “last mile”, with some projects remaining at the level of formalistic activities and failing to address young people's real needs [14]. Sixth, evaluation and supervision mechanisms are absent: most projects lack scientific effectiveness indicators and tracking systems, leaving the outcomes of interventions unmeasured and the care chain incomplete. **Table 2** summarizes this typology.

Table 2. Typology of implementation dilemmas of youth-care policies.

Dilemma Category	Specific Manifestations
Defects in policy design	Imbalanced instruments; vague content; lack of operability
Constraints of resources and capacity	Insufficient funding; shortage of professionals; supply-demand mismatch
Difficulties in cross-departmental coordination	Fragmented functions; uncoordinated action; information silos
Implementation deviation and formalism	Implementation reduced to formalities; neglect of real needs
Absence of evaluation and supervision	Lack of effectiveness evaluation; underdeveloped tracking; weak accountability

Source: Compiled by the author.

These dilemmas arise from complex interactions across policy design, resource allocation, interdepartmental coordination, implementation, and supervision-evaluation. Reducing “policy blockages” requires improving the completeness and operability of policy content, enhancing implementers' capacity, correcting the target group's cognitive deviations, and optimizing the policy environment—tasks for which deliberative democracy offers a promising institutional instrument.

1.2.2. The Typicality and Representativeness of Community G

Community G is located at the seat of the City J CPC Committee and municipal government, covering 1.22 square kilometers with 22 residential compounds, 4,197 households, and 10,591 residents. Its demographic structure is marked by a pronounced “one old, one young” profile—11 percent elderly and 10 percent

children and adolescents—providing a natural basis for elder-youth interaction. Using the “Red-Collar e-Home: Silver-Age Companionship for Growth” brand as its vehicle, the community has built a youth-service model featuring deep participation of the “Five Elders” (veteran cadres, soldiers, experts, teachers, and role models) under Party-building leadership, with notable results. The community embodies the orientation of “Party-building leadership, pluralistic co-governance, and precise services” that characterizes contemporary Chinese community governance: its Party committee coordinates a structure of “branch linkage, Five Elders’ engagement, and social collaboration”; fifty-six “Five Elders” members (85 percent Party members) have been recruited into a “Silver-Age Lecturing Team”; a “three-color alert” care mechanism and programs such as public-welfare classrooms and intangible cultural heritage workshops deliver precise services; resources of schools, hospitals, enterprises, and social organizations are integrated; and the “Red-Collar e-Home” smart platform supports digitally empowered governance. Its experience is thus typical and representative, offering a reference for comparable communities—though as a reference in working ideas and methods rather than a replicable template, since every community must adapt to its own resource endowments, demographic structure, and salient problems.

1.3. Research Methodology: Field Investigation and Data Validation

1.3.1. Fieldwork Schedule

Author conducted continuous field investigation in Community G from March 2023 to January 2024, covering pre-investigation, formal semi-structured interviews, participatory observation, and secondary document sorting. Supplementary follow-up visits were carried out in April 2025 to update 2024 service operation data and verify long-term intervention outcomes.

Purposive stratified sampling was adopted, with four participant groups (total $N = 76$): Community governance staff (12): Party secretary, deputy secretary, CCNG full-time staff, grid workers; selected based on their overall coordination of youth care programs. Five Elders backbone members (24): recruited from the Silver-Age Lecturing Team, including retired cadres, teachers, veterans; prioritized those with paired youth assistance experience over 1 year. Youth & family representatives (32): 17 adolescents under red alert, 7 tracked yellow-risk teenagers, 8 general student parents; stratified by family type (single-parent, low-income, dual-worker migrant families). External collaborative stakeholders (8): enterprise CCNG managers, primary school counselors, civil affairs street officers; selected for cross-department coordination interviews.

1.3.2. Interview & Observation Arrangement

Semi-structured interviews: 76 one-on-one interviews (30 - 60 minutes each), recorded with informed consent; interview themes covered demand identification, deliberation procedure, resource matching, service dilemmas. Participa-

tory observation: 28 on-site observations of offline deliberation meetings, 4:30 classroom, intangible cultural heritage workshops, intergenerational storytelling events; the author participated as a volunteer observer without intervening routine work. Supplementary focus groups: 2 special consultation group meetings with Five Elders and parent representatives to cross-check inconsistent interview statements.

Three-layer verification was applied to internal working documents (2022 - 2023 archives): Cross-validation: Match statistical records (service hours, participant counts, alert case logs) with interview narratives from staff and Five Elders; Source tracing: Original paper archives (meeting minutes, demand collection forms, resource cooperation agreements) were checked against digital platform back-end data of Red-Collar e-Home; Triangulation: Discrepant data points were resolved via follow-up telephone visits with community administrators to revise and standardize statistical entries before analysis.

2. The Practice of Deliberative Democracy Empowering Youth-Care Policy Implementation in Community G

2.1. Party-Building Leadership: Constructing a Structure of Deliberative Co-Governance

Centered on the work of caring for the next generation, Community G has constructed a deliberative co-governance structure in which the community Party committee serves as the core, the Committee for the Care of the Next Generation (CCNG) functions as the executive hub, the “Five Elders” constitute the backbone, and multiple actors participate jointly [15] [16]. Organizationally, the CCNG is directed by the Party committee secretary, with the deputy Party secretary and “Five Elders” backbone members as deputy directors, and four functional groups—ideological education, conflict mediation, cultural inheritance, and care and assistance—enable professionalized responses to youth needs, embodying the principle of “Party building driving CCNG building”. Mechanistically, the community has formed a working mechanism of “Party-committee leadership, branch responsibility for designated areas, Five Elders taking the lead, and pluralistic co-governance”, which integrates governance resources inside and outside the administrative system. In terms of platforms, the offline “Five Elders Workstation” and the “Red-Collar e-Home: Reading for the Future” space co-built with an enterprise CCNG, together with online venues such as the “Silver-Age Livestreaming Room”, provide multidimensional channels for deliberative participation. A typical case illustrates this structure’s efficacy: upon discovering through door-to-door surveys that a child with cleft lip and palate could not afford timely surgery, the Party committee secretary coordinated with the district health commission and civil affairs bureau to secure a free surgical quota under existing policy—demonstrating the Party organization’s pivotal role as a resource linker and conflict coordinator.

2.2. Pluralistic Participation: Precisely Matching Needs with Supply

Community G has formed a service-supply model of precise “needs-resources” matching. Its needs-identification system, built on the “Five Elders Lighthouse” project and the “1234 Seedling-Cultivation” mechanism, has realized the transition from “the government deciding the menu” to “residents placing orders” through the “menu-ordering service” model. On this basis, a “three-color alert” care mechanism implements dynamic risk grading and precise intervention: red pairing (one-to-one assistance between “Five Elders” members and seventeen children from single-parent families and other priority groups), yellow tracking (monthly psychological counseling for seven children in difficulty), and blue emergency response (immediate relief for twenty-three households with special difficulties). Resource integration proceeds along two coordinated paths. Endogenously, the political prestige, social capital, and professional expertise of the “Five Elders” are activated: veteran Party member Zhao Jinhu, for example, not only helped the child with cleft lip and palate secure medical resources but also re-shaped the child’s growth environment through long-term paired assistance. Exogenously, a community-enterprise linkage established the Xinhua Reading enterprise CCNG and created the “Red-Collar e-Home: Reading for the Future” space, effectively resolving after-school care difficulties for children of workers in new forms of employment. Spatially, the community has transformed dispersed venues—the Party-masses service center, the New Era Civilization Practice Station, and the Youth Home—into a functionally composite “full-chain service space”, embedding the “4:30 Classroom,” an intangible cultural heritage workshop, and parent-child reading programs to achieve economies of scale and scope in service supply.

2.3. Procedural Standardization: Enhancing the Efficacy of Deliberative Decision-Making

Although it has not explicitly adopted a standardized procedure such as the “six-step method”, Community G’s practice embodies the closed-loop logic of deliberative democracy through an effective set of implicit operational norms: needs are surveyed through visits, online solicitation, and grid-worker feedback (217 valid needs identified in 2023, 68 percent concerning youth services); agendas are formulated through CCNG screening and special investigations; multi-party deliberation proceeds through quarterly joint conferences and twelve special consultative meetings annually, producing solutions such as the “one policy for each person” assistance plan for children in difficulty; a mechanism matching “resource lists” with “needs lists” matched fifty-three projects and linked social resources worth approximately RMB 150,000 in 2023; and outcome feedback is secured through a points-based incentive system (1,200 service hours redeemed in 2023) and satisfaction evaluations (92 percent satisfaction). **Table 3** summarizes the complete deliberative decision-making process and corresponding 2023 output indicators.

Table 3. The deliberative decision-making process and its outcomes in community G.

Process Stage	Main Measures	Participating Actors	Outcomes in 2023
Needs surveying	Visits + online solicitation + grid feedback	Five Elders/social workers/residents	217 needs collected
Agenda formulation	Screening and evaluation + special investigation	CCNG/experts	89 priority items identified
Organizing deliberation	Joint conferences + special consultative meetings	Multi-party representatives	12 consultative meetings held
Resource matching	Matching of resource and needs lists	Community/enterprises/social organizations	53 projects matched
Implementation feedback	Points system + satisfaction evaluation	Residents/third-party organizations	92% satisfaction

Source: Compiled by the author.

The community has also innovated pluralistic deliberative forms adapted to different groups: online-offline integration (twelve sessions of “cloud-based Party lectures” attracting 3,500 person-times of views, plus “walking ideological-political classes” visiting revolutionary memorial halls and the satellite launch center); intergenerational deliberation (eight sessions of “Listening to Grandpa Tell Stories of the Past”, pairing thirty-two “Five Elders” members with 105 young people); a “four seasons” themed-activity matrix (with annual youth participation exceeding 1,200 person-times); and scenario-embedded deliberation (the children’s library serving simultaneously as couriers’ rest station, grandparents’ reading-guidance venue, and students’ homework space, with annual service volume exceeding 1,920 person-times). These standardized procedures have yielded substantive effectiveness: the “menu-ordering service” has responded to eighty-nine individualized needs with 100 percent satisfaction; the “three-color alert” mechanism has intervened in seventeen high-risk cases, managed thirty-eight transferred yellow-flag cases, and provided blue emergency relief twenty-three times; and twenty-eight special activities in 2023 covered more than 1,230 person-times of young people, up 35 percent over 2022. Theoretically, the case corroborates deliberative democratic theory in three respects: substantive participation, transparent operation, and continuous feedback achieve the unity of procedural and substantive justice; pluralistic forms lower participation thresholds and give voice to the young and the old, embodying inclusive governance; and the problem- and result-oriented use of deliberation confirms that governance effectiveness is positively correlated with decision-making quality.

2.4. Cultural Immersion: Cultivating Value Identification with Deliberation

Successful deliberative governance requires not only institutional design and resource integration but also cultural foundation and emotional bonds. Through its “Soul-Forging Project”, Community G integrates core socialist values into the en-

tire deliberative process: twelve “Red Storytelling Meetings” by veteran soldiers and Party members attracted 860 person-times of youth participation and generated 217 learning reflections; “lecture + discussion” sessions on the guiding principles of the 20th CPC National Congress produced twenty-six pieces of advice, five of which were adopted; and practical posts such as “community junior managers” and “junior grid workers” enable value internalization through experience. Emotional bonds are cultivated through an institutionalized pairing network of fifty-six “Five Elders” members with 105 young people, which carried out eighty-nine activities and resolved 127 practical difficulties in 2023; emotionalized platforms such as “Listening to Grandpa Tell Stories of the Past” let deliberation proceed amid emotional resonance; and two-way empowerment—including “digital back-feeding”, in which young people teach elders to use smartphones for online deliberation—fosters mutual learning across generations. Cultural inheritance provides further vehicles: an “Intangible Cultural Heritage Innovation Workshop” combines crafts training with deliberation on innovative transmission; solar-term occasions host events such as the “dumpling banquet cum community council”; and folk activities are paired with governance initiatives such as the “community safety talk for all”, which gathered fifty-six resident suggestions. Theoretically, the case demonstrates the mutual construction of cultural governance and deliberative democracy: culture supplies the symbolic resources and frames of meaning that serve as the medium of deliberation; intergenerational emotional bonds reduce deliberation costs and build trust, and the value consensus formed through sustained immersion provides the prerequisite for rational deliberation, confirming that a community of values underpins a community of governance.

3. Practical Dilemmas: Reflections on Community G

Despite its achievements, the practice of Community G faces four deep-seated dilemmas that illuminate the universal tensions of grassroots deliberative democracy in China.

First, there is a tension between elite dominance and broad participation. The “Five Elders”, relying on their political capital and prestige, participated in 89 percent of deliberative activities in 2023, and their adopted suggestions accounted for 76 percent of the total. This improves efficiency but limits inclusion: attendance by young and middle-aged parents has remained below 15 percent and is mostly passive (72 percent of surveyed parents reported not knowing how to participate or doubting their opinions would matter); young people appear mainly as “objects to be served” rather than participants; and the structure reinforces a Matthew effect in which active groups’ influence expands while ordinary residents’ expressive space shrinks—departing from the deliberative ideal of equal participation.

Second, administrative dominance paradoxically constrains autonomy. More than 80 percent of governance resources must be obtained or coordinated through the Party committee system, reinforcing all parties’ dependence on the administrative hierarchy; enterprise CCNGs and social organizations have adapted to “the

Party committee taking the lead”, weakening their capacity for autonomous deliberation; community workers and residents have grown accustomed to “waiting for instructions”, compressing grassroots innovation; and responsibilities that should be shared remain concentrated in the Party committee. The core question is how to realize pluralistic co-governance and grassroots autonomy while upholding the Party’s leadership.

Third, informal deliberation is insufficiently balanced by institutionalization. Successful cases depend heavily on the prestige of key individuals such as Zhao Jinhu; emotion-based mechanisms such as elder-youth pairing lack stable institutional guarantees should key figures depart; and the community lacks explicit procedural norms, so that agenda initiation, participant selection, and decision formation remain arbitrary. The transition from “personalized” to “institutionalized” deliberation is thus key to sustainability [17].

Fourth, precise services are not matched by effectiveness evaluation. Existing evaluations focus on process indicators (numbers of activities and participants) rather than outcome indicators (capability improvement, problem-resolution rates); data generated by the “three-color alert” mechanism are under-analyzed, particularly regarding long-term effects; and feedback channels are weak, so that some deliberative outcomes remain mere formalities. This reflects a broader governance problem of emphasizing innovation over evaluation and input over output, making a scientific effectiveness-evaluation system an urgent task for grassroots governance modernization.

4. The Inner Logic of Empowerment: Refinements from the Practice of Community G

The practice of Community G exhibits a fourfold inner logic through which deliberative democracy empowers policy implementation; these logics interweave and mutually reinforce one another.

First, the actor logic: a governance network of pluralistic coordination and complementary roles. The community Party committee acts not only as the political core but also as a “resource coordinator” and a “platform builder”. The fifty-six “Five Elders” members constitute the backbone, simultaneously serving as needs discoverers (collecting 217 items of needs information annually), service providers (participating in eighty-nine projects), emotional bonders (forming 105 assistance pairings), and cultural transmitters (organizing forty-two cultural activities)—a demonstration of “active aging” in grassroots governance. Enterprise CCGs and social organizations supplement administrative resources, providing resources worth approximately RMB 350,000 and serving 860 person-times of young people in 2023, while families and young people participate as “needs expressers” and “service beneficiaries” through mechanisms such as the menu-ordering service. **Table 4** systematically sorts out role positioning, core functions and 2023 practical outcomes of all multi-stakeholder governance actors.

Table 4. Role positioning and functional performance of pluralistic actors in community G.

Actor Type	Role Positioning	Main Functions	Outcomes in 2023
Party organization	Leadership core	Overall coordination; resource integration	27 matters coordinated and resolved
“Five Elders” group	Backbone force	Service provision; emotional bonding	Participation in 89 service projects
Enterprises/social organizations	Resource supplement	Professional services; specialized supply	Resources worth RMB 350,000 provided
Families/young people	Participating actors	Needs expression; outcome feedback	217 needs raised

Source: Compiled by the author.

Second, the value logic: service supply oriented toward precise response and effectiveness. Taking the actual needs of young people’s healthy growth as its fundamental orientation, the community conducts precise identification and classified services for its 1,056 young people through the three-color alert mechanism (seventeen under red-level attention, seven under yellow-level tracking, and twenty-three under blue-level assistance). Effectiveness gains appear in three dimensions: precision (a 92 percent needs-satisfaction rate under the menu-ordering model, thirty-five percentage points above the traditional model), coverage (rising from 65 percent in 2022 to 85 percent in 2023), and satisfaction (above 90 percent for three consecutive years); the eighty-nine deliberation-determined projects of 2023 saw average execution efficiency rise by 40 percent and resource waste fall by 28 percent. This logic fuses the efficiency orientation of New Public Management with the responsiveness orientation of the New Public Service.

Third, the organizational logic: the dual drive of Party-building leadership and mechanism innovation. The “Party building driving CCNG building” model provides organizational guarantees through organizational embeddedness (the Party secretary serving concurrently as CCNG director), resource integration (coordinating resources worth RMB 850,000 annually), and political guidance. Innovative working mechanisms—the “1234 Seedling-Cultivation” mechanism, the three-color alert, the menu-ordering service, and the Youth-Silver Relay—are institutionalized, refined, and standardized; within this framework, deliberation serves as the source of mechanism innovation, generating twelve new mechanisms in 2023, eight of which achieved significant results and were institutionalized. This logic embodies the organic combination of top-level design and grassroots innovation.

Fourth, the emotional logic: deep support from trust-building and sustained motivation. The selfless care of the “Five Elders” and intergenerational emotional bonds significantly reduce deliberation costs—the survey shows that deliberation with an emotional foundation succeeds 42 percent more often and yields 35 percent better implementation effects. Trust built through long-term service constitutes the psychological foundation for deliberation and implementation, with res-

idents' trust in the community reaching 88 percent in 2023, up twelve percentage points over 2022; and the deliberative process itself produces emotional capital that sustains subsequent implementation. This corroborates the core proposition of emotional governance theory: in the Chinese cultural context, emotion-based governance grounded in human feeling and face is often more effective than purely institutional governance.

Taken together, the four logics answer, respectively, the questions of “who acts” (the actor logic), “why act” (the value logic), “how to act” (the organizational logic), and “how to sustain action” (the emotional logic), jointly constituting the complete logical chain through which deliberative democracy empowers policy implementation—a finding that enriches deliberative democratic theory and offers a new perspective for understanding Chinese grassroots governance.

5. Paths for Enhancing Implementation Effectiveness

Building on the experience and dilemmas of Community G, optimization paths are proposed along four dimensions.

First, deepen Party-building leadership and expand collaborative space. The community Party committee should establish a quarterly joint conference system that brings homeowners' committees, property management companies, institutions within the jurisdiction, and social organizations into joint discussion of major youth-service matters, supported by formal implementation measures for resource integration and sharing. A “two-way entry and cross-appointment” mechanism should link the CCNG with homeowners' committees and property companies, while “micro-deliberation” groups composed of grid workers, building leaders, parents, and “Five Elders” representatives should be established at the grid and building levels to collect micro-needs and resolve micro-problems, shifting the focus of deliberation further downward.

Second, optimize participation mechanisms and stimulate endogenous momentum. Drawing on the “six-step working method” (agenda solicitation, agenda review, pre-meeting investigation, deliberative discussion, outcome implementation, and supervision-feedback), community deliberative rules of procedure should be formulated, with routine online-and-offline agenda solicitation. Participation should be broadened through a “Youth Deliberation Corner”, a “Parents' Advisory Group”, and a youth volunteer pool, and incentives should combine points-based rewards with spiritual recognition, a “Community Governance Contribution Award”, and a volunteer-service “time bank”.

Third, strengthen digital empowerment and build smart deliberation. Existing platforms should be upgraded into an integrated “Smart Care-for-the-Next-Generation” mini-program combining needs solicitation, agenda publication, online deliberation, service reservation, and outcome feedback, with an age-friendly interface that lowers the digital threshold. A community youth database should integrate education, civil affairs, and health data under privacy protection, with big-data analysis informing agenda-setting, while AI-assisted functions—intelligent

agenda matching, process recording, and outcome generation—raise efficiency; norms of online conduct must meanwhile guard against the digital divide and online violence.

Fourth, improve the evaluation system and safeguard implementation effectiveness. A dual supervision mechanism should combine internal oversight (by the Party committee and residents' representatives) with external third-party evaluation. Drawing on the balanced scorecard, an indicator system should cover four dimensions—service coverage, problem-resolution rate, improvement in young people's capabilities, and satisfaction of all parties—with differentiated evaluation cycles (quarterly, semiannual, and annual). Evaluation results should be linked to resource allocation, cadre assessment, and policy adjustment, and published regularly to accept residents' supervision, forming a virtuous cycle of "evaluation-feedback-improvement".

These proposals enrich the theoretical connotation of deliberative democracy by integrating digital technology and scientific evaluation, innovate the institutionalized realization of Party-building leadership, and help fill the methodological gap in grassroots governance effectiveness evaluation.

6. Conclusion

Based on the case of Community G in City J, Gansu Province, this study has examined how deliberative democracy empowers the implementation effectiveness of community youth-care policies. Through pluralistic coordination under Party-building leadership, the integration of "Five Elders" resources, procedural standardization, and cultural immersion, the community has significantly enhanced the precision, responsiveness, and satisfaction of policy implementation, verifying the practical value of deliberative democracy in grassroots governance. The study distills a fourfold empowerment mechanism of "actors-values-organization-emotion", revealing how deliberative democracy enhances implementation effectiveness through pluralistic coordination, precise response, mechanism innovation, and emotional bonds. At the same time, the case reflects tensions between elite dominance and broad participation, administrative dominance and autonomy, informal deliberation and institutionalization, and precise services and effectiveness evaluation. The proposed paths—deepening Party-building leadership, optimizing participation mechanisms, strengthening digital empowerment, and improving evaluation systems—provide actionable references for similar communities and for the deeper integration of consultative democracy into grassroots governance.

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Declaration of AI Usage

During the preparation of this manuscript, AI-assisted tools were used for the following purposes: (1) English language polishing and grammar checking; (2) translation support between Chinese and English; and (3) preliminary literature organization, screening, and reference formatting assistance. These tools were not used for research conception, study design, data collection, statistical analysis, interpretation of results, or the generation of substantive academic arguments and conclusions. All intellectual contributions, academic judgments, final decisions on literature inclusion, and the substantive content of this paper are entirely the author's own. The author takes full responsibility for the accuracy and integrity of the work.

Conflicts of Interest

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

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