Research on Practice Subjects Construction of Public Cultural Service in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area[*]

WANG Wei

Shenzhen Polytechnic, Shenzhen, China

The construction of the public culture in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area requires the establishment of effective mechanism on multiple practice subjects. Policy networks theory, with its characteristics of governance attribute, multiple subjects coordination and optimization efficiency, provides a beneficial analytical framework for the construction of multiple practice subjects in the public culture area. This paper analyzes the application of the policy networks in the development of the public culture.

Keywords: public culture, the Greater Bay Area, policy networks

Introduction

Public cultural service is the public service carried out by the government in the cultural field, and it is an important indicator to measure the level of economic and social development of a country. With the all-round transformation of Chinese society in industrial production, lifestyle and social concepts, public cultural services have gradually changed from the "top-down" ruling and bureaucratic government management to a new governance model combining "bottom-up" and "top-down". The construction of public cultural service system is an important part of the construction of socialist culture with Chinese characteristics. And the construction of the interaction mechanism of multiple practical subjects is the main goal of the construction of public cultural service system, which is also an important path to realize the "good governance" of public cultural service. *The plan of the 14th Five-Year Plan for the Construction of the Public Cultural Service System* requires that "the supply of public cultural services is more diversified. The supply mechanism for public cultural services led by the government and with the extensive participation of social forces is more mature, the cultural creation from the ordinary people is more active, and the public cultural service system combined with the government, the market and society is more suitable for the future development."

Since the reform and opening up, Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao have long had close exchanges and cooperative relations. In particular, in the past two decades, under the guidance of *the Outline of the Reform and Development Plan for the Pearl River Delta Region* (2008) and *the Framework Agreement on Deepening*

Cooperation between Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao and Promoting the Greater Bay Area (2017), the three regions have gradually formed a regional community of shared future featuring complementarity, mutual benefit and mutual promotion. Since the CPC Central Committee and the State Council issued *the Outline of the Development Plan for the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area* in 2019, the cooperation between the mainland, Hong Kong and Macao has been further deepened. This *Outline of the Plan* is clearly stated that the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area should "build a dynamic and internationally competitive Bay area and a world-class urban agglomeration". *The Outline of the Plan* provides a comprehensive layout, positioning and planning for the social, economic, cultural and educational areas of the Greater Bay Area. Among them, public culture, as an important part of the social and cultural system, plays a key role in the enhancement of cultural soft power, the improvement of social civilization degree and the shaping of the humanistic spirit of the Bay Area. Public cultural development is not only an essential part of the cultural governance of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, and also a fulcrum for the high-quality development of the Greater Bay Area. It is a major component to develop socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era and provide strong positive energy for the prosperity of the Party and the country.

Cultural diversity is a prominent feature of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area urban agglomeration and a major challenge for the construction of public culture in the Greater Bay Area. Due to historical and social reasons, the cultures of different regions of the Greater Bay Area are diversified. Lingnan culture, Hakka culture, Western culture, Hong Kong and Macao culture, and overseas Chinese culture are intertwined. Mixed with Chinese multi-ethnic culture and Western culture, Guangdong culture is no longer a single Lingnan culture. The culture of Hong Kong and Macao is not simply colonial culture. With a century-lasting communication, local culture and western culture have penetrated together and "successfully created a branch system of Chinese culture" (Li, 2003, p. 136) in Hong Kong and Macao. With the development of globalization, "human culture can be rapidly spread and integrated around the world through politics, trade, finance, technology and other activities" (Li, 2003, p. 137). During this process, the cooperation and interaction between cities with different cultural backgrounds will inevitably bring cultural conflicts and collisions due to the cultural differences. However, the goal to develop the Greater Bay Area is to further strengthen the construction of a community of shared future between Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao and build a world-class city cluster. As an important part of public governance in the Greater Bay Area, the construction of public culture in this area needs coordinated development. Therefore, it is urgent to study whether the cities in the Greater Bay Area can carry out effective cooperation in a multicultural environment and realize cross-regional coordinated development on the basis of cultural integration.

Cultural exchange and cooperation between cities is a common form of the regional cultural coordinated development. The realization of cultural integration is based on the in-depth and frequent exchanges and cooperation. The mutual integration of different cultures, in turn, helps different cities to build a common cultural value consciousness, increase the public cultural identity, and realize a new pattern of public cultural governance in urban agglomeration. Because of the "one country, two systems" political system in the Greater Bay Area, Hong Kong and Macao have their own public culture operation mechanism, which differs from Guangdong Province. In addition, the broad coverage of public culture makes the participants diversified. Under the background that co-construction, sharing and co-governance have become the basic discourse of the construction

of the Greater Bay Area, it is necessary for the multiple practical subjects to cooperate with each others and solidify the partnership relationship. And with the development of public administration politicized, the construction of the public culture in the Greater Bay Area can be realized through the public policy, which regulates the formation, implementation and adjustment of the public organizations. Therefore, this paper intends to explore the coordinated development of public cultural construction from the perspective of interaction mechanism between practical subjects. Policy networks theory provides a useful analytical framework for this study.

Policy Networks and the Public Culture in the Greater Bay Area

Policy networks, a new model and a new way of public governance, originated in the 1990s. Policy networks, as a theory, constructs networks formed by the various formal and informal relationships between the interdependent actors to have influence on the policy-make progress (Li, 2013, p. 197). Policy networks researchers argue that policy networks is a specialized form of governance, with modern social function and social secondary system as the logical starting point (Kenis, 1991, pp. 25-28). Researches of this topic focus mainly on the policy field of organizational relations (Schneider, 1991, p. 87). The main contribution of this theory, as scholars pointed out, is that its relative effectiveness in the process of policy implementation can offset any efficiency loss in the process of policy formation (Kenis, 1991, p. 47).

In China, with the deepening of urbanization and marketization, public culture construction has developed into the process that government leads and multiple practical subjects participate to coordinate the expression of cultural needs, balance the supply of public cultural services, guarantee citizens' cultural rights, and realize cultural consciousness, cultural confidence and cultural development. It is difficult for the government, if continuing "top-down" unified management mode in the field of public culture, to effectively respond to the problems in the process of cultural policy formation, such as the imbalance between public cultural supply and demand, the low rate utilization of public cultural facilities, and public cultural project standardization construction and regional differences, etc.

Policy networks theory, with its characteristics of governance attribute, multiple subjects coordination and optimization efficiency, provides a beneficial analytical framework for the construction of multiple practice subjects in the public culture area. First of all, the policy networks theory, as a branch of governance theory, builds networks among public policy actors to correct and improve the old governance model of "center-edge" and "strong government-weak society". This network framework meets the logical requirements for the public culture construction consisted with multiple practice subjects and with the aim to jointly promote the development. Secondly, the main value of policy networks theory lies in the interpretation power when facing the complex reality and the foresight of solving practical problems. At present, the construction of public culture in the Greater Bay Area involves many subjects and complex problems with the multi-dimensional interaction and collision coexisting in the policy process. With the situation of complex and changeable environments at home and abroad, the public culture construction in the Greater Bay Area needs to fully consider the unbalanced development between different areas, the lack of systematization and coordination between cultural management departments and the integration of culture, economy and technology. It is not easy for local governments to automatically coordinate the development of public culture. Policy networks theory can provide new ideas and

solutions for the construction of public culture in the construction period of the Greater Bay Area from the perspective of the coordinated development of multiple practice subjects. Finally, it is the relative effectiveness of policy networks theory in the policy implementation process that makes it suitable for the construction of public culture system in the Greater Bay Area. On the one hand, multiple practice subjects can express and interact in this network and therefore to optimize and democratize the policy-make process. On the other hand, multiple subjects can improve the participation level, deepen the cognition and understanding of government cultural policy, thus forming a benign interactive cycle. It reflects the consideration of improving the construction level via policy by applying policy networks theory in the public culture filed in the Greater Bay Area. Also, the application of policy networks theory matches the trend to improve public administration with policies, and can integrate the public culture construction with the participation of multiple practice subjects. Therefore, all these efforts can promote the public culture development in the Greater Bay Area with a high level.

According to Marsh and Rhodes in the book *Policy Networks in British Government*, policy networks includes five different types of networks, which are policy community, intergovernmental networks, professional networks, producer networks and issue networks (Marsh & Rhodes, 1992, p. 14). Each type of networks actually consists of different practice subjects and makes efforts. With the relatively highly-developed market economy and the continuous diversification of social life in Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao, the public cultural construction in each region has a basic policy networks framework. In the new era of building a world-class urban agglomeration in the Greater Bay Area, it will be better for the Greater Bay Area to further improve the components of the policy networks, operate the policy networks framework at a higher level, fully promote the interactive effectiveness of diversified participants of public culture services, and finally make the public culture service system more powerful and efficient.

Policy community in the field of public culture in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area refers to the national cultural policy formulated by the central government and its functional departments, that is, the overall goals, basic principles and development ideas of national public cultural development. From the perspective of policy formulation and release institutions, the policy community relies on the departments at the highest administrative level; from the perspective of the importance of the policy itself, the policy community refers to meta-policy and is the most authoritative system. Policy community needs local governments to implement and feedback relevant policies, and local governments need policy guidance and resource supported by the central government. With the comprehensively deepening the reform in the field of public culture, the reasonable division of the powers and expenditure responsibilities of the central and local governments is an important starting point and focus to optimize the relationship between the policy community and the inter-governmental networks in the field of public culture.

The professional networks in the field of public culture is composed of cultural industry practitioners, experts, scholars, and research institutions. With a relatively prominent professionalism and independence, this networks plays an important role in the policy-make process of the public culture field. They are called "think tanks"independent of but serving the government. With its rich experience, professional knowledge and in-depth research in the field of public culture, it can directly influence the decision-making, provide professional consultation and foresee the future development direction in the identification of public cultural issues and policy implementation.

The intergovernmental networks consists of local governments and their cultural departments. In the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, the intergovernmental networks consisted with eleven cities is the middle layer of the policy networks in the field of public culture. They take in charge of the transformation of central meta-policies into local implementation. The responsibilities taken by the intergovernmental networks can separate into two parts. One is to implement the meta-policies formulated by the policy community and give feed back to the central government. The other is to guide the issue networks and producer networks (will be explained in the following text), as well as to maintain close contact with and seek professional assistance and consultation for the professional networks. In the new period of the public culture construction of the Greater Bay Area, the intergovernmental networks is very critical, playing a role in connecting the preceding and the future. The intergovernmental networks horizontally needs to strengthen communication, carry out exchanges and cooperation, promote cultural integration, improve the endogenous self-organization capacity of all cities in the Greater Bay Area, and thus ensure the stability and durability of intergovernmental interaction. In addition, in the vertical level, the intergovernmental networks needs to fully encourage the enthusiasm of various groups to participate in public cultural construction or activities, constantly innovate the modes of public culture construction, and promote the modernization process of public culture governance system.

The producer networks in the field of public culture is composed of cultural organizations, cultural enterprises, cultural resource holders, and cultural practitioners. This networks maintains a weak relationship and its structure is relatively loose.The main function of the producer networks is to provide cultural products and services to meet the public's demand for public culture. Due to inner value attribute and ideological attributes of the cultural industry and public cultural services, the producer networks not only produce cultural products and services under the guidance of the policy community and the intergovernmental networks, but also generate cultural symbols, construct cultural image, create cultural value and lead the civilized fashion through the discourse construction and value integration. On the one hand, the producer networks is supervised and guided by the intergovernmental networks, and makes appeals and feedback to the intergovernmental networks; on the other hand, as a group directly facing the public demands, the producer networks maintains communication and coordination with the public, and sometimes seeks assistance and guidance from the professional networks. With the aim to develop a cultural bay, the producer networks has the responsibility to supply qualified cultural products and services. Therefore, it is quite essential to both increase the quantity and improve the quality of the producer networks, which plays a key role in the public cultural progress.

The issue networks is one kind of form composed of the public and various medias. The issue networks is at the periphery of the policy networks system, with a wide range of participants, a loose structure and a low degree of organizational integration. Generally, it expresses its demands and affects the process of public policy through public opinion. The formation of the issue network is closely related to the development of media tools and the extent to which the public can reach the media. Whether the issue networks can have an impact on other networks within the framework of the public culture policy networks depends on the openness and acceptance of the policy community, the intergovernmental networks to citizens, and the degree of its own development. The issue networks is regulated, guided and influenced by policy community and intergovernmental networks, maintains coordination and communication with producer networks, and receives professional assistance from professional networks. Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao, especially Hong Kong and Macao, have relatively complete issue

networks. If they can further strengthen guidance and effectively integrate into the issue networks construction of the Greater Bay Area, it will surely create a good atmosphere conducive to the coordinated development of public culture in the Greater Bay Area.

Conclusion

To sum up, the policy community, intergovernmental networks, professional networks, producer networks and issue networks of the policy networks theory not only cover the diversified practice subjects of public cultural services in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, but also clarify the responsibilities and influence of each subject. The construction of public culture in the Greater Bay Area needs the coordinated development of multiple practice subjects, and more importantly, it requires the establishment of an effective mechanism. The inner mechanism of the policy networks in the field of public culture will make more progress if the head of the Greater Bay Area realize balanced resource allocation between various networks. All the practice subjects should cultivate and strengthen the participation, improve the mutual dependence, trust and continuous interaction, and optimize the consultative democracy and cultural choice and use of policy tools. It will improve a lot if the Greater Bay Area creates effective coordinated development of social conditions to make the policy networks well operate.

References

Kenis, P., & Schnerider, V. (1991). Policy networks and policy analysis. *Policy networks: Empirical evidence and theoretical considerations*. Frankfurt a.M.: Campus Verlag.

Schneider, V., & Werle, R. (1991). Policy networks in the German telecommunications domain. In B. Marin, & R. Mayntz (Eds.), *Policy networks: Empirical evidence and theoretical considerations*. Frankfurt a.M.: Campus Verlag.

Marsh, D., & Rhodes, R. A. W. (1992). *Policy networks in British Government*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

李燕. (2003). *港澳与珠三角文化透析*. 北京: 中央编译出版社.

李玫. (2013). *西方政策网络理论研究*. 北京: 人民出版社.