

Grassroots Grid Governance Difficulties and Solutions Based on Beimen Community Yibin City

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Abstract: With the rapid advancement of urbanization, community governance innovation has become a key link in promoting the modernization of national governance. Taking Beimen Community in Yibin City as an example, this paper comprehensively uses questionnaire surveys and interview methods to analyze the prominent problems in its grid-based governance, including unbalanced resident participation, fragmented coordination among multiple actors, role dilemmas of grid workers, superficial application of information technology, and mismatched supply of public services. Finally, targeted countermeasures are proposed, namely reconstructing a "one core, multiple actors" co-governance pattern, promoting the empowerment and transformation of grid workers, advancing deep integration of smart governance, improving resident participation incentive and feedback mechanisms, and facilitating the devolution of resources, in order to provide reference for improving the governance capacity of Beimen Community and similar communities.

Keywords: grid; grid-based governance; community governance

1. Introduction

1.1 Research Background

At the current stage, Chinese society is undergoing a profound transformation. Rapid urbanization and the increasing complexity of social structures have led to diversified demands for public interests, posing brand-new challenges to traditional, administratively driven grassroots management. During his inspection in Tangshan, General Secretary Xi Jinping pointed out that communities serve as the "last mile" for the Party and the government to connect with and serve the residents. Therefore, it is essential to improve the management system and integrate public resources to enhance service capacity, ensuring that the public's sense of gain, happiness, and security is effectively realized ^[1].

As a central city in the southern Sichuan region, Yibin City has conducted many active explorations in promoting the modernization of urban grassroots governance in recent years, and Beimen Community stands out as a typical case ^[2]. Currently, although grid-based governance in Beimen Community has achieved certain results in maintaining order and guaranteeing basic services, it has also exposed deep-seated problems such as insufficient resident participation, poor inter-departmental coordination, and excessive workloads for grid workers. Based on this, this paper focuses on the grid-based governance practices of Beimen Community, dissecting existing problems and optimization paths to contribute to the modernization of grassroots governance.

1.2 Literature Review

1.2.1 International Research Status

1.2.1.1 Research on Issues Related to Community Governance

Existing problem-oriented research mainly focuses on various practical challenges, participation barriers, and the complexity of micro-level operational mechanisms in community governance. Mkhari A P (2025) argues that weak infrastructure combined with insufficient digital literacy can hinder the actual implementation of e-participation, suggesting that grid-based governance must

prioritize overcoming the digital divide to achieve effective online–offline integration^[3]. Shimpou N (2024) suggests that community gardens can enhance urban resilience, providing empirical support for incorporating community gardening into green space planning to resist social crises^[4]. Richard S et al. (2023) propose that the core drivers of resident participation in community development include a shared sense of responsibility and expectations of good governance, with significant motivational differences between urban and rural areas^[5].

1.2.1.2 Research on Countermeasures Related to Community Governance

Relevant research analyzes multiple dimensions, including stimulating community endogenous motivation, innovating democratic participation mechanisms, introducing external forces for empowerment, and improving local rule design. Guerra V et al. (2025) confirm that community newspapers in slum areas simultaneously served the functions of precise information dissemination and social solidarity maintenance during the pandemic, providing a basis for marginalized communities to enhance their resilience through self-organization^[6]. Smaniotto Costa C et al. (2023), through theoretical integration and case-based validation, point out that the decentralization of budgeting power can enhance residents' perception of governance effectiveness, thus offering a practical path for optimizing participation incentives in grid-based governance^[7]. Giovanni Agostinis et al. (2020) propose that introducing external forces such as regional development banks to construct an indirect governance mechanism can both compensate for local capacity shortcomings and resolve internal power conflicts^[8].

1.2.2 Domestic Research Status

1.2.2.1 Research on Issues Related to Community Grid-Based Governance

Domestic research focuses on core contradictions and challenges, including the squeezing of autonomous space by administrative tendencies, resource fragmentation caused by insufficient multi-actor coordination, and the digital divide accompanying technological empowerment. Gao Yawen (2016) affirms the positive role of grid-based governance in improving social stability and institutional operational efficiency, while objectively pointing out its limitations such as insufficient resource integration and inadequate collaboration among actors^[9]. Min Xueqin (2015) reveals the practical problems faced by community consultation, including legitimacy assurance, balancing fairness and efficiency, and the design of participation platforms^[10].

1.2.2.2 Research on Countermeasures Related to Community Grid-Based Governance

Relevant research proposes a series of systematic and practical solutions and optimization paths from multiple dimensions, including multi-actor collaboration, resource integration, institutional innovation, and technological empowerment. Wang Caizhang (2025), through a case study, reveals the unique role and value of social organizations in compensating for insufficient government services and improving overall governance effectiveness^[11]. Zhang Ni (2022) proposes a systematic optimization scheme covering "resource integration, multi-actor collaboration, and technological empowerment"^[12]. Zhou Yayue and Wu Lingfang (2019) reveal the real logic and driving mechanisms behind resident participation in community governance^[13].

1.2.3 Research Summary

The previous research has laid the foundation for this study in theory and practice, but it has also left some problems to be solved. Because the countries and circumstances are different, the results of foreign studies should not be applied blindly. Research at home is relatively advanced, but it has not been deeply studied what the operating mechanism and actual problems of certain communities are. Beimen Community in Yibin City will be the subject of this study, and through collection of primary data by means of questionnaires and interviews, relevant countermeasures in line with the actual situation of Beimen Community will be put forward to address the deficiencies of previous research.

1.3 Aim of the Study

This paper will study the actual problems of grid-based governance in Beimen Community, explore the operating logic and reasons for governance issues from all sides, find optimisation paths suitable for old communities based on related theories, address the governance pain points accurately, and enhance the effectiveness of community governance and the sense of gain for residents.

1.4 Significance of the Research

1.4.1 Theoretical Significance

It can show us how grid-based governance works in practice and what kinds of conflicts and problems occur in this specific area; it provides some actual cases for the theory of community governance beyond theoretical discussions and into daily life. It also promotes the integration of various disciplines, does not restrict itself to one discipline, conducts interdisciplinary research, and provides strong theoretical support for the exploration of community governance in all aspects and at a deeper level.

1.4.2 Practical Significance

It can directly improve the governance level of Beimen Community itself. The proposed countermeasures are based on the actual situation of the community to address the specific problems and major difficulties it faces in the process of grid-based governance, optimise the governance process, enhance service efficiency, better meet the demands of residents, and ultimately improve the overall quality of life in the community.

1.5 Research Content

The introduction of this paper outlines the research background, literature review, research purpose and value, content framework, research methods, and defines the two main concepts of community governance and grid-based governance. It will learn about the relevant policies in Yibin City and the development of grid-based governance in Beimen Community, analyze the current governance situation based on survey data, find all the problems that exist, and put forward specific optimisation countermeasures in line with relevant theories.

1.6 Research Methods

Some studies have used many different ways. Use the method of literature research to collect related literature and policies from databases to construct a theoretical system. To obtain data on the governance situation in the community, a questionnaire was distributed and collected from the residents; 217 valid questionnaires were obtained for quantitative analysis. Semi-structured interviews are also carried out to learn about the actual situation of all sides in more depth and add to the questionnaire data.

2 Definition of Core Concepts

2.1 Community Governance

Community governance goes to the grassroots level of urban areas, the Party organisation in the community is at the top, the residents' committee of the community takes charge of coordination, and various actors work together. It is a continuous process of joint operation, provision and improvement of public affairs and public services such as community public security, environmental sanitation, elderly care services, dispute mediation, cultural and recreational activities, etc.

2.2 Grid-Based Governance

Grid-based governance is to divide the community into a few responsibility grids and have full-time grid workers. With the help of information technology platforms, grid workers will be responsible for gathering information, carrying out hazard inspections, resolving disputes, disseminating policies, providing services, etc., to build a normal governance and service system with clear rights and responsibilities, information sharing and a closed-loop coordination.

3. Policies Related to Community Grid-Based Governance in Yibin City and Analysis of Current Situation

3.1 Review of Policies Related to Community Grid-Based Governance in Yibin City

Provincial-level policies have established the fundamental guidelines for grid-based governance throughout Yibin City. Sichuan Province began exploring grid-based governance relatively early and has gradually built a relatively complete policy system. In 2021, a document jointly issued by the Sichuan Provincial Department of Civil Affairs, the Provincial Party Committee Organization Department, and the Provincial Party Committee Political and Legal Affairs Commission pioneered the 16-character community governance framework of "Party building leadership + comprehensive services + comprehensive security guarantees + technological empowerment," clearly proposing the establishment of a working mechanism of "grid discovery, community call, graded response, and coordinated disposal," as well as a "full-chain" dispute resolution system. These measures signify that grid-based governance has risen from a management tool to a core mechanism in the development and governance of urban and rural communities across the province.

Under the provincial framework, the Yibin Municipal Party Committee and Municipal Government have issued a series of supporting policies tailored to local conditions. Their core direction is to promote the downward shift of governance focus and the devolution of service resources, while exploring a locally distinctive "micro-grid, real-grid" governance model. The 2023 Yibin Municipal Government Work Report formally proposed and explained the "micro-grid, real-grid" governance model, marking the entry of Yibin's grid-based governance into a new stage centered on "refinement." In September of the same year, Yibin City held a symposium on grid-based service management, committing to thorough efforts in refined grid management and precision services.

As the central urban district of Yibin City, Cuiping District has the most representative practice of "micro-grid, real-grid." In 2023, the Cuiping District Government Office officially issued the "Implementation Plan for the Transformation and Upgrading of 'Micro-Grid, Real-Grid' in Cuiping District, Yibin City." This plan set a specific goal of building 175 "virtual residential areas" and 781 "micro-grids, real-grids" into new benchmarks for governance within approximately two years.

3.2 Overview of Beimen Community and Implementation Background of Grid-Based Governance

3.2.1 Basic Community Situation

Beimen Community, Cuiping District, Yibin City, Sichuan Province, is a typical community located in the northern part of Yibin's old urban area, covering an area of about 1.5 square kilometers. The community's population structure shows obvious aging and close-knit social characteristics. According to survey data, residents over 46 years old account for more than half (56.22%), of which those aged 61 and above make up 23.04%. Meanwhile, 61.29% of residents have lived there for more than five years, forming a relatively stable residential group and a strong sense of community identity. In terms of economic and social patterns, individual business owners and freelancers are relatively concentrated, accounting for 27.65%. Coupled with a considerable number of old residential compounds, the community faces pressure from public service demands

such as elderly care and medical services, while also shouldering the important tasks of renovating old residential areas and improving the living environment.

3.2.2 Establishment of the Grid-Based Governance System

Beimen Community's grid system mainly includes several core parts: organizational structure, operational mechanism, technology platform, and related support measures. The specific construction is as follows.

First, the organizational structure follows the principles of proximity adaptation and full coverage, dividing the community into 5 primary grids, 25 secondary grids, and 3 exclusive grids. It establishes a Party building system of "Community Party Committee – Grid Party Branch – Party Member Center Household in Building" and an administrative system of "Residents' Committee – Grid Leader – Full-time Grid Worker," while absorbing part-time forces such as property management, resident representatives, and volunteers to create a professional and volunteer integrated governance team.

Second, operational process. It defines seven responsibilities for grid workers, including information collection, dispute mediation, and convenience services, and establishes a closed loop of "discovery – reporting – disposal – feedback." Grid workers use the "Zhixiang Cuiping" app to report requests in real time. Minor issues are handled on-site; matters within the community's scope are graded and assigned; cross-departmental problems are resolved within a time limit through the mechanism of "street whistle-blowing, departmental response," with results fed back to residents.

Third, digital platform management. Beimen Community relies on Yibin City's unified smart community platform to preliminarily establish a community basic information database. Based on geographic information system (GIS) technology, this platform uses tag-based management for elements such as population (especially special groups like the elderly and disabled), housing, key locations, public facilities, and resident units within the jurisdiction on an electronic map.

Fourth, supporting measures. The community has improved long-term systems: regular training on business, legal knowledge, and communication skills; monthly assessment plus annual evaluation, linking disposal efficiency and resident satisfaction to salary determination and awards; and regular multi-party joint meetings to collaboratively address key and difficult governance issues.

4. Analysis of the Current Situation of Grid-Based Governance in Beimen Community, Yibin City

This study conducted a special survey on grid-based governance in Beimen Community, Yibin City, in January 2026. Combining quantitative questionnaire survey research with qualitative semi-structured interview methods, and supported by 217 valid resident questionnaires and 10 interview samples covering community managers, grid workers, and various residents, it analyzes the operational effectiveness and underlying problems of grid-based governance in this community from multiple dimensions. The results are as follows.

Overall, Beimen Community has a solid foundation for grid-based governance, which is recognized by most residents. Survey data show that overall resident satisfaction with governance reaches 88.5%, 94.0% of residents affirm its positive role in improving their sense of well-being in the community, 88.94% have basic awareness of the grid-based governance system, and an initial integrated online-offline information dissemination model has taken shape. Among all aspects, the renovation of old residential areas and support for special groups have been most effective, significantly optimizing the community's living environment and improving the quality of life for key populations. However, the overall level of refinement, normalization, and long-term effectiveness of governance is insufficient, and multiple structural shortcomings urgently need improvement.

First, surface-level governance awareness and inadequate adaptability of information dissemination. While overall resident awareness is relatively high, deep understanding is lacking: more than 20% of residents do not know the specific services provided by grid workers. Meanwhile, the fragmentation of information dissemination channels is prominent. Young tenants rely on informal channels for information, resulting in fragmented and outdated content. Elderly residents, limited by digital literacy, can only rely on traditional offline notices. This channel adaptation imbalance leads to a mismatch between governance supply and demand: 41.0% of residents report that community public services do not match their needs, creating a governance dilemma of "high awareness, low understanding, weak adaptation."

Second, poor coordination among multiple actors and obstacles in governance processes. The community's closed loop of "discovery – reporting – disposal – feedback" has not been effectively implemented, and the "street whistle-blowing, departmental response" coordination mechanism does not function smoothly. Opaque resident feedback information and imperfect participation mechanisms are major problems. Interviews confirm significant cross-departmental coordination shortcomings: slow responses from higher-level departments, incomplete problem resolution, and grid workers often receiving no feedback after reporting complex issues. Moreover, grid workers lack enforcement authority and can only coordinate and report, failing to resolve complex problems on the ground, leading to a performance dilemma, problem accumulation, prolonged governance cycles, and diminished resident trust in governance.

Third, low quality of resident participation, forming a vicious cycle of governance. Although residents' overall governance awareness is relatively good, their actual willingness to participate is weak. Only 27.2% of residents frequently participate in community governance, while more than 30% rarely or never engage in public affairs. Time conflicts and lack of incentive mechanisms are the main constraints. Participation is clearly stratified: young and middle-aged workers and individual business owners have very low participation rates. At the same time, the community's participation mechanisms lack long-term sustainability. Residents mostly participate passively and temporarily, with limited channels, weak voice, and a low sense of participatory efficacy, making it difficult to form an active and sustained co-governance atmosphere, and the grassroots mass base for governance is weak.

Fourth, insufficient effectiveness of digital empowerment and poor adaptability of smart governance. The community has popularized information-based governance platforms, with 68.2% of residents recognizing their governance value, but 21.2% feel that the platforms contain too much information and have limited practicality. Existing platforms only have basic functions for information recording and problem reporting, lacking core intelligent functions such as early warning, precise matching, and coordinated disposal. Moreover, the platforms have not been optimized for aging and simplicity despite the community's characteristics of an aging population and a high proportion of residents with low education levels. Elderly residents face significant digital access barriers, and younger residents also find the platform functions rudimentary, so the empowering effect of digital governance has not been effectively realized.

Fifth, imbalance between grid workers' rights and responsibilities, and insufficient precision in public service delivery. Grid workers bear heavy and complex grassroots tasks including fire safety, civil affairs, social security, and dispute mediation, but lack corresponding management and enforcement authority as well as professional resources, leaving them passively constrained. In terms of service delivery, there is a problem of "emphasizing hardware, neglecting software." While achievements in hardware construction such as community renovation are outstanding, services such as elderly care, convenience services, and personalized livelihood services are single in type and have large gaps. Traditional universal services struggle to match residents' diverse and differentiated needs, making precision upgrading of public services difficult.

In summary, although Beimen Community's grid-based governance has established a complete

operational framework and achieved interim results, there are prominent shortcomings in key areas such as information dissemination, multi-actor coordination, resident participation, digital empowerment, service delivery, and the balance of rights and responsibilities. These are the core directions for subsequent optimization of the grid-based governance system and improvement of grassroots governance effectiveness.

5. Countermeasures and Suggestions for Grid-Based Governance Problems in Beimen Community, Yibin City

5.1 Improve Incentive Mechanisms and Stimulate Endogenous Motivation

To address problems such as fragmented participation time and insufficient motivation among residents in community governance, innovate participation models by promoting online channels such as "cloud discussion halls" and "micro-proposals" to facilitate residents' use of fragmented time to engage in community affairs. Form volunteer and interest groups based on residents' expertise, implement a community planner system, and involve professional residents in projects such as community space renovation and micro-regeneration to enhance residents' sense of gain from governance. Build a full closed-loop working chain of demand collection, consultation, decision-making, implementation, feedback, and evaluation to ensure that resident demands are implemented. Establish a community governance points incentive system, incorporating participation behaviors such as volunteer service and offering suggestions into points management. Points can be exchanged for goods and services and also serve as an important basis for merit evaluation, thereby constructing a virtuous cycle of long-term resident participation.

5.2 Build a "One Core, Multiple Actors" Collaborative Governance Pattern

Strengthen the core leading role of the community Party organisation, change the governance mode of taking charge of all matters, build a Party organisation system at the grassroots level via grid Party branches and functional Party groups, and use the leading role of Party members. Establish various parties' consultation platforms and use carriers such as grid council meetings and building leader meetings to include residents in community governance and supervise the use of funds and public services, implement participatory budgeting models, etc. Introduce professional social organisations such as social work, legal services and elderly care through the government's purchase of services to fill the service gap. In coordination with the Community Grand Party Committee and the Party Building Joint Meeting, organise the construction of joint resources, shared responsibilities and cooperative co-governance for enterprises and institutions in the area.

5.3 Enhance the Professionalism of Grid Workers and Link Rights with Responsibilities

Refine the list of rights and responsibilities for grid workers and the access list for community affairs, clarify the duties of grid workers, community staff and functional departments, eliminate redundant responsibilities and excessive accountability. Build a linkage mechanism of "grid worker whistleblowing and departmental response", give grid workers the power to initiate matters and assess the effectiveness of their handling, focus on solving problems at the grassroots level, and reduce the pressure on the grassroots. Establish an all-round training system and conduct special training in several areas, such as conflict resolution, emergency response, information-based office work, etc., to cultivate generalist social workers. Improve the assessment system, give more weight to the main indicators of residents' satisfaction and problem-solving ability, link the assessment results to salary and promotion, expand the path for career development, and increase the sense of professional identity for grid workers.

5.4 Construct an "Online + Offline" Inclusive Service Platform.

Gather all the scattered online resources to build an integrated smart governance platform that can open up the whole data closed-loop of services, connect with data from many departments, share information and coordinate business, analyse residents' demands and predict governance risks

based on big data, and achieve precision governance. To promote the development of the digital economy, preserve and optimise old services for offline service windows and bulletin boards, add self-service terminals, and provide proxy and door-to-door services for special groups, such as the elderly and people with disabilities. Regularly organise public digital skills training courses to help older people overcome the digital divide and enjoy all kinds of public services fairly.

5.5 Strengthen Resource Devolution and Optimise Demand Matching

Accurately identify the service demands of the main groups through grid visits, online collection, questionnaires, etc., and find problems in public services. Based on the actual demands of the people, decentralise the allocation of government service resources and have the market and social forces provide personalized and diverse services. Set up a "grid resource package" system to distribute funds and power based on different needs at various locations of the power grid and address small-scale issues near the people efficiently. Revitalise the idle community space to inject social capital, improve livelihood services for the elderly and children, public culture, mental health, etc., thereby boosting the quality of life of residents through good governance.

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