BOOK REVIEW

The Road to Collaborative Governance in China. By **Yijia Jing**, Ed., **Palgrave Macmillan**, New York, 2015. 241 pp. Hardcover USD 100.00; E-book: USD 79.99. ISBN 978-1–137–52519–2.

As collaborative governance becomes an imperative issue, there is an urgent need to acknowledge empirical evidence around the world. This practical book, entitled 'The Road to Collaborative Governance in China', introduces the emerging concept of collaboration and network. It includes nine case studies to help assess different types of collaboration and operation within complex networks in contemporary China. On the basis of these cases, the authors attempt to explain the transformation of political institutions and evolution that have affected the networked environment and collaborative patterns.

In Part I, Chapters 1 and 2 discuss social service policies and collaborative relationships from community collaboration. In Chapter 1, the author mentions that the social policy for elderly care perceives informal exchange and resource sharing as a distinct type of collaborative network tie, providing readers clear visualizations of performance. However, current empirical studies have demonstrated the common collaborative perspective around the world. Is this specifically because the Chinese government releases power to polycentric governance and decentralization? Or is this an analytic result of more oligopolistic or duopolistic patterns not found in other countries (p.39)? The connection among service networks, accountability management, legitimacy, and commitment does not clearly explain the transformative procedures. In Chapter 2, the local community becomes strengthened and wields the power to balance the monopolistic condition for collaboration. The analysis of multiple actors' collaboration provides a significant experience in the cross-boundary system. In particular, Chinese communities form stronger cohesion and informal interactive ties in contrast to their Western counterparts. The only issue lacking is that the results show few descriptive or quantitative statistics to prove the outcome of inter-organizational collaboration.

In Part II, this book illustrates more current concerns and more extensive events applied to global policies (Chapters 3–7). Cases of climate protection, grassland governance, and disaster management describe how the Chinese central government reforms institutions influenced by media, socioeconomic status, and international cooperation factories through cross-sectoral perspectives and role structures. All these cases utilize archival data to induce transformative factors and attempt to depict the Chinese political environment. But the picture could be more holistic if these studies showed more evidence, such as interviewing a higher level of public administrator supporting the arguments of collaborative efficiency to reflect the real world in China. Schlæger (Chapter 5) briefly introduces the four cases of E-policy to take on cultural evolution. The point argued is that Chinese governments have gradually released the right to different types of outsourcing, public–private partnerships (PPPs), and resource sharing to alter the hierarchical structures. As we know, Chinese governments still exert power in policy-making and implementation process, even adopting the market approaches for collaboration so far (p.139). The author could explain more about interactions among these actors to corroborate the exacerbation of risk conflict in terms of diverse actors' collaboration (p.138).

Based on the previous perspective, the author might illustrate why the projects drove the conflict during the collaborative process, indicating who the central and broker actors are to dominate the network and transit information to vertical and horizontal levels. On the other hand, in Chapter 6, collaborative disaster management discloses the importance of trust, information sharing, and accountability. This study affirms the results of three stages and highlights the key factors influencing the effectiveness for disaster reduction, response, and recovery. However, the authors do not specifically explain the criteria to define the influential fact. Because only nine actors were involved in the interviews, this study seems to lack local nonprofit organizations (NPOs) and organization voices, usually playing important roles between formal and informal cooperation networks. The immense pressure on governments from NPOs and community groups requires more transparency, accountability, trust, and reliability, all of which can be achieved through collaborative networks. Another case of highway construction (Chapter 7) employs PPPs to figure out two mechanisms, suggesting that the Chinese public policies are on the way to breaking the monopoly and developing a more market-access approach (p.180). In spite of constructing a clear framework of collaborative conflict, the authors might describe the correlation between PPPs and network. 'PPPs' indicate the concept of a dyadic relationship within a network (Singh and Prakash, 2010), but 'network' addresses the innovative process and sustainability of the relationship (Mandell and Keast, 2007).

In Part III, Chapters 8 and 9 focus on the intergovernmental collaboration and interpersonal networks that break the stereotype of Chinese autocratic government. Based on the experiences of local and regional multiple jurisdictions, the collaborative transformations are achieved through vertical to horizontal networks. This change is on the basis of breaking geography. This study tells us a great story of inter-provincial collaboration through two-mode network visualizations. However, the author does

not explain how to observe the broken geographic boundaries and unlimited cooperation based upon the huge resource and administrative differences.

In Chapter 9, this study uses a survey to explore the intention and recognition of MPA students. It is an innovative way to categorize three collaborative patterns that can provide a preliminary understanding of what the public officials think about collaboration and their preferences in cooperating with each other. Nonetheless, underneath the Chinese traditional workplace culture, is the survey accurate in portraying public officials' opinions without hierarchical bias?

To sum up, the empirical evidence provides us with an insightful perspective that differs from our understanding of China's autocratic government. When considering improving collaborative effectiveness, the most important aspect is fostering accountability, transparency, trust, and legitimacy. The authors do offer us great case studies, but these examples lack description of the collaborative obstacles and solutions while confronting the conflict. Additionally, some cases raise a little evidence to show the process of collaborative relationships changing from vertical to horizontal or formal to informal collaborative transformation through diverse networks. Furthermore, this book could be more complete and precise in embracing different public issues, such as educational or labor rights, and providing exact comparisons and statistics to indicate how Chinese governments deregulate power to private sectors and NPOs to enhance interactions.

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