



# Investigation on the Implementation Status of the Power List System in Township Governments in China

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**Abstract.** The Power List System is government-led self-revolution of power within administrative agencies in China. Township governments are the last mile to implement the Power List System. This paper uses multi-stage stratified sampling and content analysis methods to investigate the implementation of the Power List System in 145 townships across the country. The results show that most of the townships in China have completed the sorting and publicity of powers. But there are still some problems in the implementation process such as imperfect implementation plan, low publicity rate, inconsistent powers and responsibility, incomplete content, inconsistent standards and imperfect supervision mechanism, etc. In order to further improve the implementation level of the Power List System in townships, the Governments should make a scientific and operable implementation plan, standardize the implementation process, perfect supervision and evaluation mechanisms.

**Keywords:** Power List System; Township Governments; Policy Implementation Status

## 1 Introduction

The Power Lists refer to a series of publicly available files that listed every power executed by the government departments including in its basis, execution flows, the materials needed, complaints call etc. <sup>[1]</sup> The Power List System refers to a series of supporting mechanisms in the whole process of making and running Power Lists including a series of work rules such as the formulation, publicity, adjustment, supervision etc. The implementation of the Power List System is a self-revolution dominated by the Chinese government within administrative agencies. <sup>[2]</sup> The Power List System started from the practice of mayor power disclosure in Handan City in 2005. In 2013, the Third Plenary Session of the 18th CPC Central Committee pointed out that Power List System is an important measure to accelerate the transformation of government functions, to build a law-based government and a service-oriented government, to realize the openness and transparency of government administrative powers. In March 2015, the General Office of the CPC Central Committee and The General Office of the State Council “Guidelines on Implementing the Power List System of Working Departments of Local

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Governments at All Levels”(referred to as “the Guidelines”)asked provincial governments to make Power Lists including in the various administrative powers and their basis, executive subject, operation processes, corresponding responsibilities, supervisory call etc, to open to the public, to accepted social supervision before the end of 2015. And city or county governments and public institutions that undertake administrative functions according to law basically complete the publication of Power Lists before the end of 2016. The implementation work of township governments shall be determined by the localities in the light of their actual conditions.

The Power List System has changed from the practice of local governments to the comprehensive promotion around the country through 17 years. So far, governments above the county level have basically completed the sorting out of administrative powers, making power lists, disclosure and dynamic adjustment. Some provinces and cities began to implement the Power List System in township governments.

Township governments are the "last mile" to implement the Power List System. On the one hand, the power and responsibility delegated by the county governments should be taken over by the townships. On the other hand, township governments also directly provide management and services to individual citizens and various market entities. In a sense, the implementation of the Power List System in townships will affect the people's sense of gain, which will finally affect the dynamic adjustment of the relationship among government, market and society. Therefore, it is necessary to investigate the implementation of the Power List System in townships.

However, most of the existing studies on the Power List System focus on governments above the county level. <sup>[3]-[4]</sup> There are also some researches on city streets<sup>[5]</sup> and village level. <sup>[6]</sup> In the existing research literature, there is little investigation on the implementation of the power list system in townships.

This paper attempts to investigate the basic situation on the implementation of the Power List System in townships, in order to provide references for further improving the Power List System and effectively promoting the implementation of the Power List System in grassroots governments.

## **2 Research methods and processes**

The Power List System is a basic system promoted by the Chinese government from top to bottom <sup>[7]</sup>. Governments at all levels should carry out their work in accordance with the basic requirements of “the Guidelines” from the General Office of the CPC Central Committee and The General Office of the State Council. “The Guidelines” mainly puts forward the following requirements:(1) Local governments at all levels should focus on the main links (such as the sorting out of administrative powers, reducing powers, controlling powers and opening powers) to formulate implementation plans in light of local conditions. (2)Sorting out and categorizing the administration powers of the governments according to laws. “The Guidelines” puts forward the reference opinions on the types of administrative powers of 9+X. They are, administrative permission, administrative punishment, administrative compulsion, administrative expo-

priation, administrative payment, administrative inspection, administrative confirmation, administrative rewards, administrative ruling and other categories. (3) The constituent elements of the Power Lists should include the name of the administrative powers, the code of powers, the types of powers, the basis of powers, executive body, the operation process, the corresponding responsibility, etc. (4) After sorting and categorizing the powers, it needs to be reviewed and confirmed in accordance with the laws, to make Public disclosure on the government website.

The main purpose of this paper is to investigate township governments how to implement the requirements of the "the Guidelines".

The multi-stage stratified sampling and content analysis methods are used to investigate the implementation of the Power List System in 145 townships.

Firstly, all the provinces in the country were listed one by one, and 15 provinces were randomly selected. We randomly selected 2-4 cities according to the number of cities under the jurisdiction of 15 provinces, 42 cities in total. Then 1-5 counties, according to the number of counties under the jurisdiction of each city, are randomly selected, 68 counties in total. At last, 145 township governments are randomly selected from 68 counties. The final samples include 57 townships in the eastern region, 40 townships in the central region and 48 townships in the western region.

Secondly, 138 policy documents and 195 copies of the Power Lists are collected from the official websites of the sample counties and townships from February to May 2021. After removing duplicate files, a total of 72 valid files and 135 copies of the Power Lists (Only 97 townships have published the power lists) were obtained.

Thirdly, the content analysis method is used to code the valid documents and statistical analysis in according to the basic requirements in "the Guidelines".

### **3 Data analysis results**

#### **3.1 Implementation plan of the Power List System in townships**

The Power List System in townships is carried out under the guidance of the county governments. The implementation plan of the different townships in the same county is almost the same. Seven of the 68 sample counties did not issue any documents on the implementation of the Powers List System in the townships. After analyzing 72 effective documents on the implementation of the Power List System in townships from 61 sample counties, we found that most county governments only forwarded the relevant notices and documents from provinces and cities. They did not formulate their own implementation plans according to the actual situation of the county.

There are three different paths to implement the Power List System in townships in these implementation plans.

(1) Three steps. The implementation process of the Power List System in townships mainly consists of three stages: sorting and classifying of the powers, reviewing and confirmation, disclosing, such as Longhua, Wuji, Qianxi, etc. These counties have put forward the three-core links in the implementation plan, but there are some differences in the specific requirements of each link.

(2) Four steps. Dynamic adjustment is added to the core steps. The implementation process consists of four stages: sorting and classifying of the powers, review and confirmation, disclosing, dynamic adjustment, such as Xiuwen, Zhengding, etc.

(3) Five steps. A preparatory phase including planing and training has been added to the process. The implementation process consists of Five stages: start-up and preparation, sorting and classifying of powers, review and confirmation of lists, disclosing of lists, dynamic adjustment of Power Lists, such as Pingding, Lingshan, etc.

### 3.2 The publicity of power lists and responsibility lists

The publicity of the Power Lists is an important link during implementation. “The Guidelines” required to publicize the Power Lists and the corresponding Responsibility Lists.

#### 3.2.1. Publicity of Power Lists.

Among the 145 sample townships, 97 townships publicized their Power Lists, accounting for 66.89%. All township samples in Jilin, Xinjiang and Xizang provinces (autonomous regions) have not publicized. (As shown in Table 1).

The Power Lists of most township governments can be found on the official websites of county governments. Some townships published them on the government affairs service network, such as townships in Zhejiang and Jiangxi provinces. Some townships publicized them on official website of county government and Local government agencies establishment website at the same time, such as townships in Hebei.

**Table 1.** The publicity of power lists

Area	Province	Sample	publicity	Publicity Platform
Eastern region 57 (44)	Fujian	16	16	Government affairs service website
	Zhejiang	9	8	Government affairs service website
	Liaoning	11	4	Official website of county government
	Hebei	13	8	Official website of county government, Local government agencies establishment website
	Jiangsu	8	8	Government affairs service website
	Jiangxi	13	13	Government affairs service website
Central region 39 (29)	Shanxi	11	9	Official website of county government、
	Jilin	8	0	
	Hubei	7	7	Government affairs service website
	Gansu	11	6	Official website of county government、
West region 48 (24)	Xizang	11	0	
	Ningxia	5	5	Official website of county government、
	Shanxi	11	7	Government affairs service website
	Guizhou	6	6	Government affairs service website
	Xinjiang	4	0	

Source: Collected from the Internet

### 3.2.2. Disclosure of the Responsibility Lists.

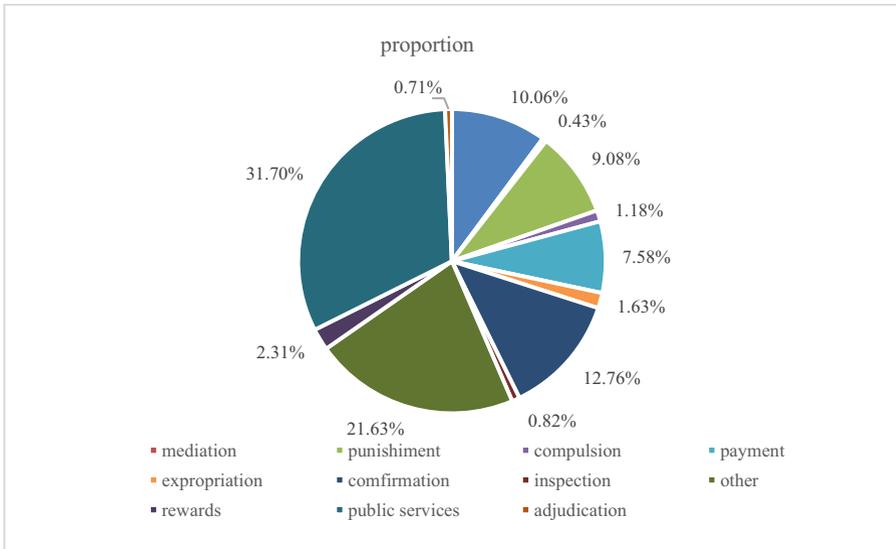
The publicity rate of the Responsibility Lists is lower than that of the Power Lists. 85 of 145 townships disclose their Responsibility Lists. The proportion is 58.6%. Among them, all samples from Fujian, Jiangxi, Hubei, Ningxia and Guizhou disclosed the Responsibility Lists.

There are two different ways of compiling the Responsibilities Lists. One is to separately compile Power Lists and Responsibility Lists, such as townships under the jurisdiction of Zhejiang and Hebei. All other townships adopted one table contains two lists. (power lists and responsibility lists).

### 3.3 Categorizing the powers

There are great differences in the power classification of 97 townships. Most townships have classified administrative powers according to "the Guidelines". Some townships have adjusted the "9+x" according to their actual situation. For example, the townships from Fujian, Hebei, Jiangsu have added public service matters into the Power Lists. These service matters occupy considerable proportion. Several townships from Shanxi have added administrative mediation. The townships in Liaoning only have administrative permission, administrative confirmation, administrative payment and other types. After adding up the administrative power of 97 township governments according to different types, public services accounted for 31.7%, followed by another categories accounting for 21.6%. (As shown in Figure 1).

The proportion of power types in different regions is different. Townships in the east and central regions have the largest share of public services. They're over 30%. The proportion of administrative permission and administrative ruling reached 53.3% in the western region. This difference reflects the differences in the governing concepts of township governments in different regions. The administrative power of township governments in the eastern and central regions is more manifested in the provision of public services. However, the township governments in the western region are more inclined to management or control.



**Fig. 1.** Categorizing of powers in the townships

### 3.4 Amount of administrative powers of township governments

There are also great differences in the quantity of administrative powers of townships in different regions. The amount of administrative powers of township governments in the central region is more, with an average of 138 items. The quantity of township governments in the eastern region is the minimum, with an average of 85 items. The quantity of administrative powers of township governments in the western region average 122 items.

There are also great differences in the amount of administrative powers of townships in different provinces in the same region. Among the five eastern provinces, Jiangsu has the most administrative powers, with an average of 93, of which 77 % belong to public service matters. The townships from Liaoning Province in the eastern region, the amount of administrative powers is the least , with an average of 24.8. In the central region, Shanxi has the most, with an average of 173 items, of which the most are other categories , accounting for 35.5%. In the central region, townships in Jiangxi have the least administrative powers, with an average of 71 items, of which the most are administrative affirmation, accounting for 35.5%. In the west region, townships in Ningxia have the most administrative powers, with an average of 134 items, of which the most are administrative penalties , accounting for 39%. This difference also reflects the different priorities of township governments in the different region.

### 3.5 The main content of the Power Lists

Among the 97 samples, the Power Lists from 48 sample townships contained all the requirements of “the Guidelines”. 36 townships lacked corresponding responsibilities

and accountability situations. And 13 towns lacked power operation processes. In addition to the requirements of “the Guidelines”, some townships have added the time limit, location, required materials and undertaking agencies of various powers. Some townships in Hubei also listed common questions and detailed answers in the process of power operation, as well as the public satisfaction evaluation. These fully reflect the transformation of township governments functions and concepts.

## 4 Conclusion and suggestion

### 4.1 Conclusion

Through the above investigation and analysis, we can draw the following conclusions.

(1) The Power List System, a self-revolution within administrative agencies, has been implemented in most townships (67%) in China. It has played an important role in transforming government functions, building a law-based government and a service-oriented government, and improving the service efficiency and service level of the government.

(2) “Power Lists” of township governments, essentially, are the lists of services. In fact, township government sectors in China are the institutions that serve the people. However, in the western region, the management affairs such as administrative adjudication, administrative punishment in some township governments are still in the dominant position. Township governments in western region need to change their ideas and strengthen the construction of service-oriented government.

(1) There are still some problems in the implementation process of the Power List System. For example, the implementation plan is not specific, the publicity rate of the Power Lists and Responsibility Lists is not high, powers and responsibilities are inconsistent, the contents of the lists are incomplete, the standard of power division and basis is not uniform, supervision and evaluation mechanisms are not sound.

### 4.2 Suggestion

In order to further improve the implementation level of the Power List System in townships, the governments need to do the following aspects of works.

(1) Make a scientific and operable implementation plan of the Power List System for township governments. First of all, the implementation plan should conform to the basic spirit of the Guidelines and be in line with the actual work of township governments in the region. Secondly, the implementation plan should focus on the important links of the implementation process and put forward specific requirements and guidance. Thirdly, in the implementation plan, the governments cannot ignore the preparatory work in the early stage, the dynamic adjustment and supervision in the later stage.

(2) Standardize the implementation process of the Power List System in townships. The standardization of the implementation of the Power List System will not only affect the authority of the system, but also affect the legitimacy of the system. Although the actual situation may be diversity in different townships, the basic functions of townships governments should not vary much. Therefore, the governments may formulate

relatively unified standards and processes for the sorting procedures, classification standards, power bases, list forms and content elements, and forms of publicity etc. At the same time, strengthen the training of township civil servants.

(3) Perfect supervision and evaluation mechanisms. The Power List System exposes government powers and responsibility to the sun, which can effectively solve the problem of dysfunctional operation of government power and lack of supervision. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen the whole process supervision of the implementation of the Power List System. On the one hand, county governments and people's congresses at the same level should attach importance to the supervision and inspection in the whole process of execution. On the other hand, it is also necessary to strengthen publicity, and extensively mobilize the public to actively participate in monitoring and evaluation. Generally, the goals of public policy are a collection of multiple values. It is difficult to evaluate intangible and untouchable values in objective indicators<sup>[8]</sup>. So, it is very necessary to understand the public perception of the policy implement<sup>[9]</sup>.

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