

“Foreign-bodily Measurement” : the Status Quo, Dilemma And Prospective of Government Performance Measurement of China

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Abstract

Although it has been prevailing across the whole nation, yet, in fact, China's Government Performance Measurement is still in its primitive stage, at which is immature and devoid of experience, more even in a dilemma where no more achievements can be made theoretically and practically. Based on the view that the fundamental reason why the dilemma can exist in China's Government Performance Measurement is that China's government takes charge of the entire process of performance measurement, namely, “ Domestic-body Measurement” . The thesis puts forward the theory of “Foreign-bodily Measurement” and points out “Foreign-bodily Measurement” is the internal demand and the inevitable direction of China's Government Performance Measurement, after the understanding and analyzing the nature that Government Performance Measurement is “governance measurement”.

Keywords: Government Performance Measurement, Dilemma, “Governance Measurement”, “Foreign-bodily Measurement”

1. Introduction

Since 2003, widespread attention has been paid to Government Performance Measurement so that an upsurge of research which influenced by New Public Management initiated by western countries and the result of raising the Scientific Outlook on Development by China's authorities. The important significance of Government Performance Measurement has been widely accepted [1,2]. But, China's Government Performance Measurement may

be not so satisfactory, when we make further investigation and contemplate the very hot evaluation campaign which is been made in China. China's Government Performance Measurement is still in its primitive stage, at which is immature and devoid of experience, more even in a dilemma where no more achievements can be made theoretically and practically, so that the voice against Government Performance Measurement occurred recently. To certain extent, this really reflects that the topic of Government Performance Measurement with character of adroitness and diversity carries some sort of formalism and superficiality, and confronts the difficulty of how to make further progress [3]. As a result, it is a great topic for us to figure out the radical reasons of why China's Government Performance Measurement is facing so difficult a question, and to reevaluate the implication, function and status of China's Government Performance Measurement from the perspective of basic theory problems and basic constraint elements, finally seeking to new breakthroughs in theory.

2. The Radical Reason of Measuring Dilemma Rests in “Who to Measure”

From the practices of China's Government Performance Measurement, we can draw a conclusion that almost all the practices are led by the internal parts of Chinese government. Obviously, it is a “closed measurement”, although there are many practices of Government Performance Measurement involving in public opinions and their designing, even “the Third-Party” and “Citizens Comment on Government”, yet, all this can be attributed to the formalism. We strongly believe that internal measuring

method of Government Performance Measurement mainly and radically caused the dilemma of measurement practices in China. The value of single measurement body of Government Performance Measurement has directly damaged the fairness, rationality and continuity of Government Performance Measurement. In order to thoroughly get rid of the dilemma of making no progress, the method of internal measurement first must be abandoned and goes for the method of external measurement as radical way.

As a matter of fact, “who to measure” is a fundamental point in the designing of Government Performance Measurement System. The reason why the same phenomena appeared in the practices of measurement is that we are largely unaware of that point. In this sense, the reasons why the dilemma could

appear in both China’s Government Performance Measurement practices and China’s theoretical study are the same thing. It is because of the wrong awareness in thought that led to the deviation in practices and dilemma in theory.

In terms of status quo of theory study in domestic scope, considering the description and analyzing the problems appeared in practices, Most scholars only stay at the superficials of the questions, ignoring the way of finding reasons from the existing theories, lack of introspecting and researching further to theory itself.

We will analyze the existing problems and main reasons in current China’s Government Performance Measurement through fig.1 as follows:

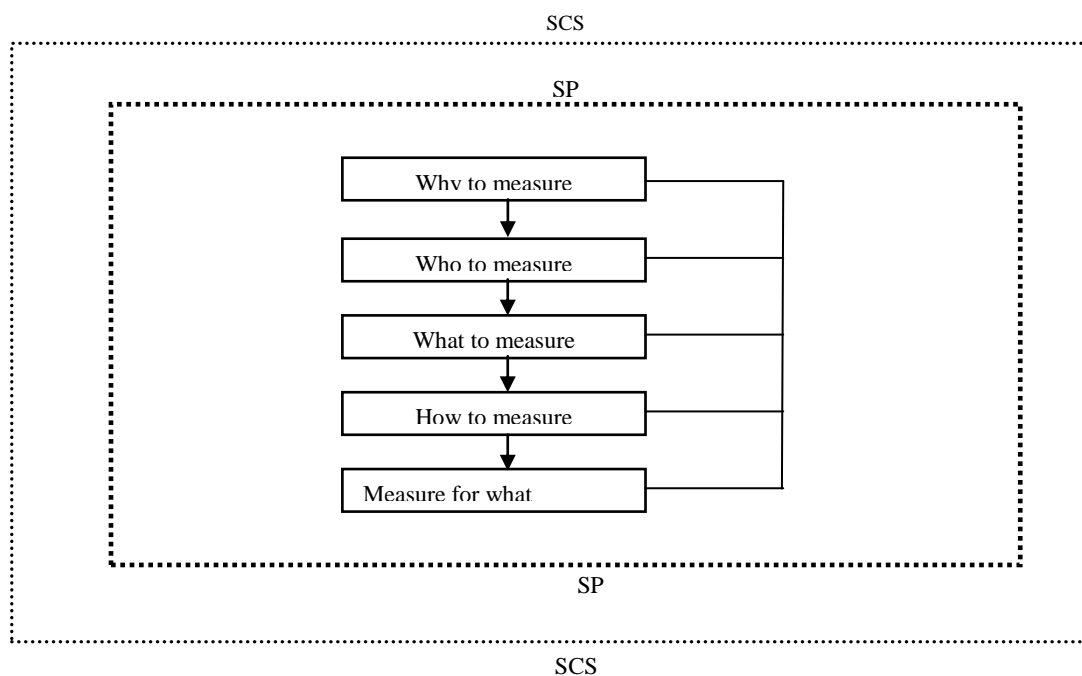


Fig.1: System of Country and Society

SCS: System of Country and Society

SP: System of Politics

-Represents the political climate of Government Performance Measurement
-▶Represents the system of country and society of Government Performance Measurement
- It not necessarily means the relationship of determination, but rather represents the major positive theoretical analysis of the logic
- Represents interaction but uncertain maybe vary based on the stages of performance measurement

According to the generally logical framework,” why to measure---who to measure---what to measure---how to measure---measure for what”, although we have to hold the view that these five links can not work without anyone one of them being

absent, the significance of each link to the measure system may vary at different stages of the development of Government Performance Measurement. From the perspective of status quo in practice of China’s Government Performance Measurement, systematic and

scientific Government Performance Measurement has not been into the stage of actual operation and running. And also, theoretically, there is not a systematic framework which has to be native and original. Consequently, a systematic theory framework has to be developed now, which is the most important thing in theory study. At this stage, the key and crucial thing currently is to make clear “who to measure”, which is the starting point of Government Performance Measurement. It is because the link of “who to measure” direct determines both the link of “how to measure” and the link of “measure for what”, and also indirect influences the link of “what to measure”. Just as what has been mentioned above, all the patterns of measurement which were led by Chinese Government are the main forms that exist in China and also the radical reason for the dilemma of practices. But there is question here: why all the patterns in China are led by government? This is really because, theoretically and practically, we lack the right comprehension of Government Performance Measurement and we haven’t deal well with the point of “who to measure”, which is not so easy to put it into the links of measurement.

On the basis of combination of further research and Literature, the reason for China’s incomplete awareness of “who to measure” can be attributed into two aspects: one is that ignore the environment of national politics when they study Government Performance Measurement. The other is that, to certain extent, the wrong awareness of the nature and implication in Government Performance Measurement. The first aspect can be thought as studying for studying on the condition of being out of the political system. Just as what we can seen from 1 all the former study have been constraint into the five links ignoring connecting the five links with political system and society, which forgot one key point: the original purposes of Government Performance Measurement are to improve and push the administrative system reform, even the political system reform. The theory that is deviating from the radical purposes can not meet the needs of practice, not to mention the direction to practices. And if we can attribute the first aspect to the research ideas, then the either aspect belongs to the nature of theory study which is deeper question. If we can not understand the nature and implication of

Government Performance Measurement better, we will not make further achievements in theory study. Although some scholars in China have realized the two reasons and their significance and fundamental status, even called on making some study, yet we have made very less discussion to the two questions and rarely saw some persuasive study results.

3. Putting forward “Foreign-bodily Measurement Idea”

3.1. Government Performance Measurement is “Governance Measurement” other than “Management Measurement”

“A powerful management tool (or technique)”is the common definition to the implication and nature of Government Performance Measurement in China’s Academia. This sort of definition is so popular that it almost covers all the references in China. So no wonder, when most scholars face the problems that occurred in practices of measurement, that we often find that many references gave the policies such as: “it is the leader that plays the first fiddle in it and become an interesting thing of ‘the project of playing the first fiddle’; The key is that the chief leaders care or not; It is the leader’s care that the Government Performance Measurement works or not; First, leaders highly emphasize it or not, especially the main leader’s ideas; Acquiring the top leader’s agreement and support is the crux of Government Performance Measurement’ success and so on”.

Generally, the common definition of management is a process that managers achieve the organizational purposes through the means of planning, organizing, directing, coordinating and controlling to coordinate the members in organization and allocating the resources related [4]. So we usually comply with the concept of management to understand the nature and implication of Government Performance Measurement” a powerful management tool”. The nature of management is the objective, inborn and natural request of coordinated labor. We usually comply with the mindset of management concept to understand the description of nature and implication to Government Performance Measurement “a powerful management tool”. Now that, as a

tool of management, Government Performance Measurement is the internal affairs of government since management with the nature of internal affairs. So, under the mindset, it appears that Government performance Measurement is the internal things of government.

But it is not the truth. The Government Performance Measurement we called is Government Organizational Performance Measurement, so that it is different from Civil Servant Performance Measurement. The Organizational Performance Measurement in modern sense derived from Enterprise Performance Evaluation. Enterprise Organizational Performance more refers to "Enterprise Business Performance" or "Enterprise Performance". According to the simple idea of behavioral logic "Motivation produces behavior". The measurement behaviors follow the measurement motivations so that the performance measurement has to figure it out that has the motivation of measurement, namely who is measurement body. After thumbing up the development history of enterprise, enterprise organizational performance measurement has its own particular process and context of development.

In the early classical enterprises of ownership and partnership, the distinguishing feature of enterprises, investors managing the enterprise consciously and hard, is the high degree unity of ownership and management. In 1840s, corporate enterprises began to appear, and the ownership and management began to separate, following in the wake of the classical enterprises started to shift to the modern business enterprise to gradually. Beginning of the 20th century, with the development of capital markets and the stock continues to improve and further separation of ownership and management, most investors were no longer directly involved in the production and business activities, entrusting the management rights to professional managers, thus arising the problems of information asymmetry and incentive incompatibility between the owners and managers. As the owner of client, stakeholder, sought to plan a kind of incentive and restraint mechanisms to monitor and reward agents (operators), to induce the agent to serve the client's best interests and efforts. But, the agent's behavior (effort) is not observed; the most effective way that the client can take is through the assessment of the

enterprise performance which the agent managed to measure the agent's effort and more effectively to motivate and constraint choices of agent's behavior. The clients built up this performance measurement based on the theory of client-agent with the purpose of achieving the incentive compatibility with agents and then to access the agent's efforts, which can be changed into account value or subjective utility.

The term of "governance", emerged in the 1980s, gripped the nature of performance measurement activities with this character of supervision, and organizational performance assessment has become the main elements of corporate governance theory. What corporate governance theory mainly talked about is the main three basic relationships of constraints and teamwork among the general meeting of shareholders, board of directors, professional managers. And also, it involved in contemplating how to scientifically build a set of institutional arrangements where the owner supervise and control a business management and performance [5]. After the 1990s, under the influence of the "stakeholder" theory, corporate governance theory gradually evolved to the multi-direction control, from unilateral control by the shareholders to stakeholders in the management of the transition [6]. Organizational Performance Assessment is also increasingly emphasized the diversification of assessment bodies, but its core assessment body is still firmly in the hands of the owners of the business, the stakeholders.

So we can see that, after the appearance of Modern corporate system, corporate organizational performance measurement is totally different from the corporate staff performance measurement. The core assessment body of the former is the owner of the corporate, the stakeholder, whereas, the latter's core body is the operator of the corporate, the manager. While both of them are holding the same goal: improve the running performance of the corporate, yet their standpoints and their motivations are distinguishing totally. Strictly, corporate staff performance measurement is an important link of corporate internal management, which is called "management measurement" in the thesis. But, corporate organizational performance measurement, with the nature of surveillance and governance, is sponsored by stakeholders, which is called "governance

measurement” or” supervision measurement”. And we can learn that “ Management Measurement ” and “Governance Management” are two different Paradigms arranging from assessment bodies, assessment objects and assessment content to the process of assessment in organizations. There is no doubt that this difference is essential, which helps to make the nature and implication of Government Organizational Performance Measurement clear and mitigate the vague awareness of Government Organizational Performance Measurement, even the misunderstanding.

To sum up, as one of the organizational performance measurements, the evolution and framework of Government Performance Measurement has the same strain with that of Corporate Performance Measurement. It is better for us to identify Government Performance Measurement as “Governance Measurement” (or supervision assessment).

3.2. The raising and explaining of the idea of “Foreign-bodily Measurement”

With the idea of both “a powerful tool of external supervision” and “Governance Assessment”, the measurement body should be transferred into the external of government, namely, from “internal measurement” into “external measurement”. Attentively, the radical difference between “internal measurement” and” external measurement” lies in the core question of “who to control the performance measurement”. “External measurement” emphasizes the Government Performance Measurement must be controlled by the external body. And the external performance body can take in charge of the whole process of the initiating, organizing and conducting of performance measurement, and is able to announce the results of performance measurement, and also has some incentive ways to urge the government to make some improvements. But “external” is only a concept of set, and there are some individuals in it. So it is only the first step to put forward the notion of “external measurement”.

In order to outstand the individual elements in “external”, and to distinguish the situation of government assessing themselves, this thesis introduce the concept of “Foreign-body”. The concept of “Foreign-body” includes more meaning than “external body which only represents the meaning of set. It can also

highlight the individual elements of “external”, it is more convenient for us to use. The measurement that launched by “Foreign-body” can be called “Foreign-body Measurement”. Here we have to mention that the different definitions of “body” will directly determine understanding the implication of “Domestic-body” and “Foreign-body”. Here, in the thesis, the “Domestic-body” identifies the whole government system as a “body”, which is consistent with the narrow concept of government.

“Domestic-body measurement” refers to the measurement combinations, which can be various, of the respective units which consists of the government system. Generally speaking, we can divide the “Domestic-body Measurement” into two categories: one is the vertical measurement of “Domestic-body Measurement” which means is that the higher-level organizations assess the Lower-level organizations and the Lower-level organizations assess higher-level organizations; the either is that the same-level government departments and different departments can be evaluated interactively. “Foreign-body Measurement” is that the external various units (a certain foreign-body or the combination of several foreign-bodies in the external set) of government system evaluate the internal units of government system, which also includes many forms. And the “Foreign-bodies” mainly refers to Communist Party of China (CPC), National People’s Congress (NPC), and Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), and the eight Democratic Parties, Social organizations (including Social groups and Intermediary organizations), universities, research institutes, News media, public(a single person or more than one person united) and so on. “foreign-body measurement” is the performance measurement, to the internal units in government, made by one or more than one of them.

While “ Foreign-body Measurement ” is put forward based on “external measurement”, yet it can not deal with the puzzles in the current theory. And it is only the first step, and we should make further research to finish the second step: select one core body among the above “foreign bodies”.

Although the concept of “Foreign-body” is more specific than “external”, it is still obscure. The “foreign-bodies” outside of government

can be available easily and they are various and extensive, which can consist of combinations (many forms) of “foreign-bodies”. Every kind of combination has a distinctive character that every body foreign-body plays different roles in the combination. Selecting one core body among the above “foreign bodies” is the core question that we have to confront. The selected core body, will be the core power of the entire process of measurement, is responsible for the whole process of measurement. As the sponsor and the organizer of the measurement activity, the selected core body will announce the results of measurement after its Statistics and Analysis for the entire process of performance measurement and will take some measures to urge the government to improve its performance. Moreover, it will also decide how to cooperate with other foreign bodies to make the measurement work better and will fully discuss the technological questions with the experts. So it is very crucial for the selecting the core body of Government Performance Measurement. It really will affect the effectiveness of Government Performance Measurement designed new; what’s more, it will determine the success or failure of the Government Performance Measurement.

We have to consider the various elements of the process of selecting the core-body, since it is so important to Government Performance Measurement. As for the China’s political reality, two things have to be considered, power and politics. (1) Power, namely, whether the core selected body is in the possession of the enough power to constrain the government or not. And if not, government will ignore the measurement results, leaving them nothing but a pile of useless words; in this sense, we have to take the China’s reality into consideration. Besides, the selection must be operational other than theory passion or chasing the international trend. We have to check out whether it will work in China’s political reality, whether it works in supervising the government’s improvement performance. And we must understand the biggest failure may be the bungle of development process of performance measurement. (2) Politics, whether the option meets the modern rule spirits of law or not and whether it is consistent with our national administrative reform and the future direction of political reform or not. If not, the measurement will produce some new conflicts or just sort of forms, and will do harm

to the reform and development of the entire country. From the great significance of this question, the thoughts and reasons of the option of “core foreign-body” will be discussed in another thesis.

3.3. The difference of “foreign-body measurement” and “multiple measurement bodies”.

In fact, many scholars in China has paid attention to the foundation of “who to measure” and also realized the deficiency of internal measurement by government itself, which led them to put forward the ideas of “diversify the measurement bodies”, “introduce the third-party”. The counter-policies made by these scholars were mainly to break the pattern of government monopoly. It is a pity that they all bypass a very important question: who is the core body among the multiple measurement bodies? As an activity of measurement, the Government Performance Measurement especially is a complicated system where a core body must be specified to control the entire process of measurement. In fact, the pattern of multiple bodies will perish instantly, and if not, they will be Short-lived because of the lack of effective composition of forces. The idea of multiple bodies, no specific core body, acknowledges that government is the core body, and they are just kind of complement and improvement partially of measurement activities.

From this perspective, “foreign-body measurement” carries a revolutionary thought, instead of that of “multiple bodies’ measurement”, emphasizing the shifting of the whole power. It also highlights that the core body which emphasizes the core body must be the foreign body external of the government takes charge of the whole activity of measurement.

It is sure that “Foreign-body Measurement Idea” is not a narrow idea which excludes government from the measurement activity. In fact, since the object of Government Performance Measurement is government which takes hold lots of information resources, “core foreign-body” identifies government as a part to combine to make it be a member of multiple bodies’ measurement under control of “core foreign-body”. And the measurement process needs government to act in concert with the core body.

4. Conclusions

After analysis above, we make a conclusion that the radical way of China's Government Performance Measurement lies in abandoning the "Domestic-body Measurement" shifting to "Foreign-body Measurement". But, there are so many problems and obstacles lies ahead, among them Weak civil society and the lagging constitutional system construction are main ones. Government Performance Measurement can not work without social and political environments. The success of Government Performance Measurement in western countries is mainly because of the rather mature civil society and the constraint structure and horizontal division labor of national power. For instance, a study in America showed that the pressure and doubts from the representative bodies and elected officials are the main reasons that state government can utilize performance measurement and performance evaluation [8]. Antonelli also holds the view that the results and performance of government devoid of the supervision of National Congress will have to be new nonsense of government reform [9].

The "Foreign-body Measurement Idea" and the selection of core measurement body that will be described in another thesis really cover the two aspects above. It is unavoidable that the nature and the prerequisite for the existence of Government Performance Measurement are the same, while its patterns are different and various in different countries. The future development direction of China's Government Performance Measurement is "Foreign-body Measurement", which will require more mature and increasing improvements in Constitutional

institution-building.

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