

*Zhu Xiaoning, Yang Jing*

## **Study on Orientation of a City Government's Roles Given the Context of City Basic Functions**

**1. Essence and Functions of a City.** What's a city? There are many different definitions in various disciplines, which all try to cover all the elements of a city. We have to admit it is a pretty difficult task to make out a right and proper definition of a city, because a city is not a stable thing without any changes. Since a city came into being, it has stayed in a changing condition, and a city is also a very complicated system; as a famous urban scholar said, in fact, the word "city" includes many things, we should not actually use this word "city", and we are only able to use a phrase "human living place". Thus, what on earth is the essence of a city?

In contrast to a country, creation, opening and concentration of a city meet better living and developing needs of "a social human being". It is in the progress of a city being created and reconstructed that a human being gets its development and evolution, fulfills the conversion from "a natural human being" to "a social human being". So we could consider the essence of a city to be a kind of concentrative habitation and a producing and living environment which is created by people to meet their subsisting and developing needs.

Knowing the essence of a city can help to distinguish the basic function of a city. The research of the functions of a city should be based on the essence of a city, should concern the main object, a human being, and realize that a city should meet the subsisting and developing needs of human beings. Only if these elements were covered, we would insist on the key item that a city serves people avoiding the situation when a city goes against people's needs and urban metamorphism.

People's needs consist of living and developing needs. For living needs a city should have functions insuring that people can bear and propagate and live safely with enough food, clothes, houses and communication. Developing needs are relatively complicated. First, to accomplish a human being's development a city should supply people with chances of work, education and creation, so a city should have functions of producing and educating. Second, an urban place is the home of human's spirits where people can get amusement, respect and happiness, especially they would get value agreements with each other. Thus, a city should have the function to amuse people, initiate good thoughts, and create healthy culture. Third, it is necessary for people's advanced development to arrange all elements of a city and make them orderly, so a city must also have a function to protect public interests and coordinate things from all aspects. Finally, a city or a town is an open system. And for people's healthy development, a city has to communicate fluently and cooperate closely with the outside in order to get nutrition, to serve and affect the outside. Therefore, all these demand a city to have also a function of communicating with the outside.

The functions of a city today are not like these that they used to be when they came into being; in the long river of history, they have transformed from simple to complicated, from a low level to high, and they have developed following people's development. Nowadays, in the progress of globalization and information the new contents are put into the definition of a city, and the function system of a city should be better and more complete. But however the outside changes, the basic functions of a city are relatively stable, in other words, the essence of a city does not change, so to summarize the city functions from the essence of a city we can assume that in order to meet the living and developing needs of human beings a city should have functions to supply houses, jobs, education, amusement, cultural agreements, orderly management and communication with the outside. Only if these functions work well, a city can have a power of concentration for the inside combined with a power of attraction for the outside. And only if these and other advantageous functions can get chances to develop, the

characteristics and the core competitive power of a city can.

## **2. Orientation of the City Government's Role Basing on the City Basic Function.**

Among all kinds of organizations in human society, the government is a main power to build a city's functions, especially the city government. The government's functions point the role governments play in the progress of social development and the responsibilities governments have to perform. The city government must develop the city's functions to the maximum basing on the rules and characteristics of a city's functions. Through the abovementioned comparative analyses of the functions of a city and a city government, I summarize the functions of a city government according to five roles it should play.

**2.1. A Wise Planner of a City Government.** The first function of a city government is to play a good role to plan the development of the city. Today the market economy has made a rapid progress in China, if a city government wants to act as a wise planner, its core function is to make reasonable the city developing tragedy, the economic developing plan and the industry policy and put them well into effect.

**2.2. An Effective Supplier of Public Products and Services.** Having more effective and complete public products and services fitter for people's needs is an important characteristic of the city comparing with the countryside. A city government is just the main supplier of these products and services. Among them perfect urban facilities, convenient market system and plentiful education resources are the most important.

**2.3. A Powerful Protector of Public Order.** An urban society is a typical organization of group living, people can't avoid affecting each other living in cities. If urban dwellers want to live happily and conveniently and a city wants a healthy development, a necessity to build a stable and good public order must not be overlooked. The urban public order includes market order, security order, administration order, moral order, natural environment order, etc. A city government should grasp the characteristics and rules in each field, and formulate equal, reasonable and feasible order regulations with foresight. At the same time a city government should use various methods to protect strongly the public order of a city, such as propaganda, education, examples, praises and law methods.

**2.4. An Initiator of Good Views and Protector of City Culture with Features.** Urban civilization is better than that in the countryside. A city is a perfect spiritual cradle, and a comfortable state of mind is looked after by people. A city is the main base where all kinds of mental products are produced, scattered, applied and stored, where various facilities of culture and technology are concentrated. Therefore, a good city culture will create a strong concentration power and initiate a great feeling of agreement among citizens.

**2.5. A Positive Promoter to Communicate with the Outside.** A city is an open system having to absorb products and services from the outside. Whether the functions of a city would work well depends greatly on the communication between the city system and the outside. Promoting cooperation between a city and the countryside, other cities, foreign companies and organizations is a most essential function of a city government.

## **3. The Main Points of a Chinese City Government's Role in the Transitional Period.**

**3.1. Construction of City Hardware.** The basic facilities are hardware system of urban functions and foundation of citizen's living. A city government should stress greatly the plan of that and use reasonably resources and people's money to build basic facilities for citizens efficiently and equally.

In the market economy, market is obviously important not only for a city but for citizens as well. A city government must not join in micro market, but should have necessary functions to supply public services on market cultivation and completion. In China, city governments should try their best to lead all aspects to build optimistically and reliably all kinds of markets of productive elements, especially property rights market, finance market, bond market and productive services market.

Education plays a basic and leading role for the development of urban society and economy, and it is the most important public product that city governments must supply. At knowledge economy times, people have to continue to enhance their abilities if they want development, so city governments should not spare their energy to provide enough education resources for their citizens in order to make them meet the demands of society. Here the education of career-building techniques should be stressed among the tasks of city government.

**3.2. Development of City Software.** Nowadays the society changes greatly, which demands a higher quality of a city government as the protector of public order. An acute analysis ability and capability to handle public order crises are demanded for city governments because the Internet and media supervision make public protection complicated. Otherwise international powers join in urban management, especially the international companies have joined in city politics, economy, and culture, which makes a city government have a good ability to deal with the stuff in a city.

With the development of social economy, the old social order has been destroyed, but the new one hasn't come into being yet, which is prone to cause many bad views and conducts. A city government should change physical civilization, causing only stresses, into civilization attaching importance to both physical and mental issues, and government should try to apply feasible methods to law, administration, education and public opinion to strengthen the construction of mental civilization through many kinds of ways, such as broadcasting, television, newspaper, magazine and internet, so as to conduct and help citizens to live happily and strengthen the civilization consciousness of citizens, improving at the same time the cultural environment of city.

In addition to initiate the good citizen spirit fit for modern civilization, to protect urban culture with local features is also an important task of city governments. Today in China almost all cities follow the same model. However, the special culture of a city would be an important factor in competition among cities. A good human environment with local features will make cities more absorptive and competitive. At the same step of globalization, it will have a great meaning to transmit historic traditions and protect city culture with special features.

**3.3. To Promote the Progress of Industry.** Today, industry is the key to a city's competitive power. To a deep extent a city's development depends on the economic strength of industries, so the industry plan must be emphasized in a city plan. City governments should master clearly the rule of development of world industries, examine the city's position in world industry structure and try to join in the industry chain of the world. City governments should try to initiate all resources in order to exploit the advantageous industry, especially, to cultivate high-class industry in the industry chain of the world. City governments would attach importance to grasp the great historic chance of rebuilding world industry so as to accomplish a rapid progress.

**3.4. Harmonious Development of City and Countryside.** City governments should build communication stages, in other words; construct the transport system made of roads, railways, seaports, airports and internet. To improve market systems is another step, a city government should work to establish the relationship between the city, countryside and other cities through markets and capitals, and plan to move a part of industries to the countryside in order to help the countryside develop by technological cooperation, information communication and education. At the same time, government should be open to win international companies and organizations to the city, provide convenient service for them, and promote the cooperation between local companies and international ones. In addition, government should also get rid of the separation among the city governments, and build various communicating channels among cities or city unions so that to look after a close economic cooperation in a bigger district.

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