Role of Digital Government in Public Crisis Management in the Post-epidemic Era

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Abstract: The construction of digital government is an important way to promote the modernization of national governance system and governance capacity, and plays a key role in strengthening social governance. The rapid development of digital technology provides new technologies and means for public crisis management, but the government still has weak links in its governance capacity. Based on the background of the post-epidemic era, this paper analyzes the dilemma of digital government in public crisis management, and discusses the optimization measures of digital government to deal with public crisis from the construction of digital government.

Keywords: Post-epidemic era; Digital government; Public crisis management

Foreword

In the post-epidemic era, social instability and uncertainty increase, and unstable factors lurk, which makes the occurrence of public crisis more hidden and accidental. With the development of digital economy, the modernization of national governance system and governance capacity is imperative. As the way of governance in the new era, digital government has become a new carrier for the government to release authoritative information to the society, provide government services, allocate social resources, and strengthen risk communication. Exploring the application of digital government in the current public crisis management is not only conducive to the sustainable and healthy development of digital government in the future application, but also conducive to promoting the development of public crisis management.

1. The connotation of digital government

In 2019, the Third Plenary Session of the 19th CPC Central Committee first proposed "promoting the construction of digital government", which issued a signal for the digital reform of the government, and the attention of digital government also increased. Some scholars have analyzed and understood the meaning of digital government from various stages of the historical evolution of human society. In their view, "data convergence" and "people-centered intelligent services" are the core contents of digital government. Other scholars start with digital government itself and believe that the resources, goals and motivation of digital government are the key to understanding digital government. These dimensions mainly include data flow, information capability, knowledge application, decision optimization and so on. According to the characteristics of digital government, some scholars have also pointed out that digital government can be roughly summarized into seven aspects, namely dynamic, digital, precision, mobile, platform, collaboration and intelligence[1].

To sum up, we can think of "digital government" is in today's society huge data volume as the main resources, supported by a new generation of information technology, with the help of flat network structure comprehensive through data channel, data resources as a whole, streamline administrative process, convenient government services, reshape government functions, form "dialogue data, decision-making data, service data, innovation data" of the modern governance model.

2. The dilemma of public crisis management in the post-epidemic era

2.1 Lack of overall management of information fragmentation

In response to the public crisis, information sharing between departments is crucial. With the advent of the era of big data, the rapid development of Internet technology has brought about the fragmentation of information. While fragmented information allows people to access their information quickly and pay close attention to current affairs and politics, there are some drawbacks in a public crisis. First, misleading information: the fragmentation of information may lead to different sources to provide conflicting information, which may mislead people about the crisis. Second, spread panic and rumors. Fragmentation of information makes rumors and unconfirmed news easier to spread. In a public crisis, this can lead to panic and confusion, and may have a negative impact on the crisis. Third, the lack of a global perspective. Information fragmentation may cause people to focus only on local information and ignore the overall situation[2]. This may lead to a lack of comprehensive understanding of the crisis to make accurate judgments and decisions.

2.2 Inadequate coordination and coordination of crisis management

In the post-epidemic era, the complexity, contingency and dynamics of the crisis require the coordination and coordination of multiple departments and fields, that is, the joint participation and coordination of people from different organizations and groups with government governance as the core. If the public crisis management process in cross-domain collaboration is not clear enough and the information sharing is not smooth, the "golden" response time may be directly lost, leading to more serious consequences.

In addition, the shortcomings of the current plan system and non-socialization have evolved into a major obstacle to the effective fight against the changeable crisis. The public's participation and cooperation ability of digital emergency response and intelligent emergency response platform is relatively backward, which seriously affects the timeliness and effectiveness of the implementation of the plan. In some areas, the digital and intelligent platforms of emergency response plans are more focused on the upgrading of technical means, rather than the improvement of services to the public end. Therefore, in the case of high uncertainty, disorder and disruption in the situation of crisis response, individual government agencies will face the pressure of limited emergency resources and heavy urgency of the crisis, which will pose severe challenges to coordinate their response capacity and the need for information sharing.

2.3 A crisis of confidence and an improper response to public opinion

Consolidating the public's trust in government governance has always been the focus of public management theory and practice. In the process of dealing with public crises, the legitimacy of government governance behavior depends on the recognition and support of local people, which emphasizes the importance of immediate, accurate and transparent response to public opinions. At the present stage, we are in an era of big data-driven, which leads to the rapid transformation of media ecology and social environment, and the public's focus is easy to be amplified and transformed into a "break point" on the Internet. To some extent, this increases the difficulty of public opinion guidance and response to the public crisis. On the mobile Internet platform, if some individuals' examination of specific matters without effective clarification from the relevant parties, secondary public opinion may induce. Keeping quiet about this could instead lead to negative public sentiment. What's more, the improper response to such inquiries will even directly weaken the credibility of the government, break down the social trust bond, and even trigger the so-called "crisis of trust".

3. Use digital government to improve public crisis management

3.1 Coordinate the data and information, and build an overall governance structure

The government should gradually build a set of powerful framework with the digital government overall construction management center as the core and large-scale cross-level management coordination, and ensure the strong promotion of the overall linkage mechanism of the government's digital reform. On the one hand, to clarify and refine the tasks and responsibilities of various departments and institutions. In particular, the standards and specifications for the management of government data and information resources should be planned from the perspective of overall strategy to adapt to the digital development of the government; on the other hand, cloud computing, mobile Internet, Internet of Things, Internet of Things, big data, block chain and other communication technologies should be used to build an integrated digital government infrastructure and form data and information resources jointly built, co-managed and shared. In addition, national unified and standardized information technology standards should be established to effectively solve the phenomenon of government departments and local governments at the same level, so as to reduce the cost of creating the information system, extend the information chain, accelerate the transmission of decision-making information from the superior, and then effectively promote the business integration and service integration in collaborative governance.

3.2 Promote digital inclusion and guide citizens to participate in the decision-making process

Establish digital democracy and digital equality to increase the well-being of citizens and participate equally in public crisis

decision-making. Citizens' participation in public crisis decision-making is one of the important issues in modern society. Public crises involve a wide range of interests and influence, so public participation and opinion are very important for making effective decisions. Citizen participation in public crisis decision-making can be achieved in many ways. First, the government can set up a special agency or committee to invite public representatives, experts and stakeholders to participate in the discussion and research of crisis decisions. This approach can ensure that the public voice is heard and considered, increasing the legitimacy and acceptability of decisions. Second, the government can solicit public opinions through an open and transparent information release and consultation mechanism. In addition, the government can encourage citizens to organize themselves and participate in the discussion and implementation of crisis decision-making. The government can provide training and support to help citizen organizations form independent opinions and suggestions and play an active role in the decision-making process.

3.3 Intelligent response to the crisis, and transparent management process

On the one hand, the digital government can build a digital early warning system and risk management platform to realize the early warning and risk assessment of the crisis, timely detect the potential risks and take corresponding measures to reduce the possibility and impact of the crisis. On the other hand, with the help of information technology, the digital government can realize intelligent emergency response and improve the efficiency and accuracy of crisis management. For example, using artificial intelligence technology to predict and analyze crisis information can timely detect danger signals and take corresponding measures, and use the IOT technologies to realize real-time monitoring and control of dangerous areas.In addition, transparency and openness is the best regulator of public relations management. Through the openness and transparency of the government crisis management process, combined with the scientific interpretation of the government new media, the field reports of the mainstream media and the in-depth analysis of relevant experts, the public attention can be diverted back to the essence of the event, so that it can understand, cooperate with and participate in the whole process of public crisis management.

Epilogue

In the post-epidemic era, digital government can play a key role in public crisis management through data-driven decision-making, information transparency, public participation, intelligent emergency response and other ways, providing new ideas and methods for crisis management. However, digital government still faces many challenges in public crisis management. Therefore, in the future, it is necessary to further strengthen the technology application and system construction, promote the development of digital governance, and realize the organic combination of digital transformation and crisis management, so as to better cope with the increasingly complex public crisis challenges.

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