

Localization Mechanisms and Optimization Pathways of the New Era “Fengqiao Experience” in a Multiethnic County with Returned-Overseas-Chinese Settlements: A Case Study of Yuanjiang County, Yunnan Province

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Abstract

The practical form of the New Era “Fengqiao Experience” varies considerably across grassroots settings, and its effective operation is closely related to local social structures, interest relations, governance resources, and institutional foundations. Taking Yuanjiang County in Yunnan Province as the case, this study examines the basis, operating mechanisms, and practical constraints of localization against a county context in which multiethnic settlement, the resettlement of returned overseas Chinese, the development of specialty agriculture in a hot-climate zone, and increasing openness and mobility overlap. Through embedding in local social relations, adapting governance methods to specific contexts, coordinating multiple actors, and integrating resources through governance platforms, Yuanjiang has gradually developed grassroots governance practices suited to local conditions. Yet growing social complexity and the increasing specialization of governance tasks continue to place pressure on grassroots capacity, platform coordination, and the institutionalization of local experience. Further improvement is therefore needed in cultural adaptation, professional support, and platform linkage so that existing practices can evolve into more stable governance mechanisms.

Keywords: New Era “Fengqiao Experience”; Grassroots Social Governance; Localized Governance; Composite County; Yuanjiang County

1. Introduction

1.1. Problem Statement

The New Era “Fengqiao Experience” has become an important part of grassroots social governance in China. It emphasizes identifying and addressing disputes at an early stage, using multiple channels to resolve conflicts, and bringing governance resources closer to local communities. Its application in different regions is not a matter of simply copying an existing model. Rather, the specific form it takes needs to respond to local social structures, cultural traditions, and available governance resources, so its operation may vary across different local settings [1].

Research on the New Era “Fengqiao Experience” has largely examined its theoretical foundations, approaches to dispute resolution, rule-of-law development, digital governance, and its application in ethnic minority areas. Much of this work has concentrated on broad principles or particular governance settings, while less attention has been given to counties where several social factors are present at the same time. In practice, grassroots disputes are often connected to ethnic culture, historical ties, economic change, and population movement rather than to a single cause. How governance is organized and adjusted under these more complex county-level conditions therefore remains an issue that needs further examination.

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Yuanjiang presents a rather complex county-level setting. As a Hani, Yi and Dai autonomous county, it is also the location of the Honghe and Ganzhuang overseas Chinese farms. The coexistence of different ethnic communities and returned overseas-Chinese settlements means that local governance often involves questions related to language, customary practices, land use, employment, and rights protection. At the same time, the growth of specialty agriculture in the county's hot-climate areas and the opening of the China-Laos Railway have brought new issues concerning land transfer, commercial exchange, logistics, and population movement. Taken together, these conditions make grassroots governance in Yuanjiang both relatively complicated and closely shaped by local circumstances.

Over time, Yuanjiang has developed practices such as bilingual mediation, litigation-mediation coordination for overseas-Chinese-related disputes, field-based mediation, industry-oriented policing, coordination through comprehensive social governance centers, and micro-grid inspections. These practices are not direct copies of an existing model but have been adjusted gradually across different governance settings. This study therefore focuses on three questions: how Yuanjiang's multiple county-level characteristics shape grassroots governance needs; through what mechanisms the New Era "Fengqiao Experience" is localized in practice; and what constraints remain and how existing arrangements may be improved. Addressing these questions can offer a more concrete understanding of how the New Era "Fengqiao Experience" operates in a composite county and may also provide reference for similar localities.

2. Governance Contexts in a Composite County and the Practical Foundations for Localizing the New Era "Fengqiao Experience"

2.1. Ethnocultural Differences Shape Grassroots Governance Needs

Yuanjiang is a Hani, Yi and Dai Autonomous County. In 2024, its registered population was about 210,900, of whom ethnic minorities accounted for 82.62 percent; Hani, Yi, Dai and other ethnic groups have long lived in intermingled settlement patterns [2]. This gives grassroots society a rich mix of languages, customs, and social relations, while disputes involving marriage and family, neighborhood relations, and land and forest rights often carry distinct local features. In such cases, standardized and procedure-centered approaches may not fully address the parties' concerns, because language, customary practices, and interpersonal relations within villages all affect mediation. Grassroots governance in ethnic minority regions needs to take local culture, village norms, and patterns of social interaction into account and connect formal institutions with existing local mediation resources [3]. In recent years, Yuanjiang has gradually developed bilingual mediation, village consultation, and mediation based on local familiarity. Village-group cadres, mediators, grid workers, and residents who know local conditions play important roles not only in transmitting information and identifying problems but also in reducing misunderstanding and confrontation through trust built in everyday interactions.

Ethnocultural differences directly influence the choice of grassroots governance approaches in Yuanjiang. The local application of the New Era "Fengqiao Experience" must take account of the language environment, cultural practices, and relational structure of local society. Combining law-based governance with forms of communication that residents can understand and accept helps bring dispute resolution into the everyday workings of grassroots society.

The importance of ethnic diversity in Yuanjiang is reflected not simply in how many ethnic groups live there, but also in the way local social relationships are formed and maintained in everyday life. Residents may view the same dispute differently depending on language, customary practices, kinship connections, and standing within the village. For this reason, a decision that is legally or procedurally sound may still leave tension unresolved when the underlying social ties are ignored. Bilingual mediation and the involvement of locally trusted figures can therefore be especially useful. Their role is not to replace formal law, but to make legal rules easier to understand in the local context and to reduce confrontation during communication.

2.2. Changes in Overseas-Chinese Affairs Expand the Boundaries of Grassroots Governance

Yuanjiang is known not only for its multiethnic population but also for its long-standing connection with overseas-Chinese communities. The Honghe and Ganzhuang overseas Chinese farms have been part of the county for many years, and returned overseas Chinese together with their relatives remain an important group in local society. As reforms to the overseas Chinese farm system have continued, the nature of related affairs has also shifted. Issues that once focused largely on resettlement and basic living support now extend to land interests, employment relations, community participation, and unresolved historical matters, making local coordination more complicated than in the past.

Many of these issues are difficult for one agency to handle on its own. They may arise from ordinary community management but at the same time involve policy rules, legal questions, and historical circumstances. Disputes over

identity status, land use, or employment rights often call for joint participation from the federation of returned overseas Chinese, the courts, judicial departments, subdistrict authorities, and local communities. In response to this need, Yuanjiang set up a litigation-mediation coordination workstation for overseas-Chinese-related disputes, creating a more direct link among these actors and helping cases that were once dealt with separately move into consultation and mediation at an earlier stage.

As overseas-Chinese-related issues have become more varied, grassroots governance has gradually moved beyond routine community affairs to include the protection of group-specific rights and the handling of more complicated interest relationships. In Yuanjiang, these matters need to remain part of the wider grassroots governance framework while still reflecting the particular historical background and social conditions of overseas-Chinese communities. Issues that were once dealt with mainly by a single organization are now more commonly handled through cooperation among several departments, and the process has also begun to shift from post-dispute mediation toward earlier referral, joint handling, and continued follow-up.

Yuanjiang's experience with overseas-Chinese communities also sets it apart from many typical rural counties. The lives of returned overseas Chinese and their families have been influenced by earlier resettlement policies, shifts in the management of overseas Chinese farms, and their gradual incorporation into surrounding communities. As these conditions evolved, the range of issues regarded as overseas-Chinese-related also became broader. Matters once focused mainly on resettlement and basic welfare now increasingly involve property interests, employment, participation in community life, and access to public services [6].

2.3. Industrial Development and Greater Openness Reshape the Grassroots Governance Environment

Yuanjiang has favorable hot-climate conditions, and specialty products such as mangoes, lychees, and dragon fruit play an important role in the county economy. As these industries expand, interest relations at the grassroots level have become more complex [4]. Issues involving land transfers, labor employment, fruit purchasing, contract performance, and logistics have increased, extending grassroots disputes from traditional everyday life into production and business activities.

Compared with ordinary disputes between neighbors, conflicts linked to industrial development usually involve a wider range of participants and tend to occur more frequently at certain times of the year. During fruit-ripening seasons, peak purchasing periods, or times of high labor demand, disagreements over land transfers, wage payments, and produce sales are more likely to arise. If intervention comes only after tensions have already intensified, relations between farmers and business operators may deteriorate and normal production can also be affected. For this reason, dispute prevention and mediation need to move closer to orchards, production bases, cooperatives, and trading sites. Yuanjiang's use of field-based mediation and industry-oriented policing shows this move toward identifying and addressing problems directly at the frontline of production.

After the opening of the China-Laos Railway, Yuanjiang became more closely connected with outside areas. Passenger movement, freight transport, and logistics trade increased, and some problems that could once be resolved within villages, communities, or townships began to involve transportation, logistics, market regulation, public security, and other departments. The scope of grassroots governance has therefore expanded beyond fixed communities to railway stations, logistics nodes, and commercial circulation links.

These developments have added new complexity to grassroots governance in Yuanjiang. Alongside long-standing neighborhood and village disputes, the county now faces more issues connected with production, population movement, and links across different areas. Local governance has therefore had to respond earlier, identify potential problems sooner, and improve coordination among the departments involved. Against this background, the New Era "Fengqiao Experience" has gradually taken on a more locally adapted form in Yuanjiang, with attention extending beyond the settlement of disputes to early detection, timely intervention, and joint handling.

Industrial expansion and improved transport connections have affected both the frequency of disputes and the places and periods in which they arise. Because agricultural production follows a seasonal cycle, disagreements over employment, purchasing, and payment often become more concentrated during harvest time or busy trading periods. The people involved may have little lasting connection with the local community. Farmers, temporary laborers, buyers, and logistics providers are often linked mainly through short-term production and market activities rather than long-standing village relationships. In such situations, mediation that relies largely on neighborhood familiarity is often not enough on its own.

3. Localized Operating Mechanisms of the New Era "Fengqiao Experience" in Yuanjiang

3.1. Embedding in Social Relations Improves Governance Reach

Yuanjiang's multiethnic settlement patterns, long-standing overseas-Chinese communities, village ties, kinship, neighborhood relations, and familiar social networks all form an unavoidable social foundation for grassroots governance. In ethnic villages in particular, disputes that appear to concern land, marriage, or neighborhood relations may also involve language differences, everyday customs, and long-standing interpersonal tensions. If local circumstances are not understood and cases are handled only through general procedures, the visible problem may be settled while the underlying tension returns later. Grassroots governance in Yuanjiang therefore cannot rely solely on the downward extension of administrative authority. It also depends on village-group cadres, people's mediators, grid workers, and others who understand ethnic languages and local customs. Bilingual mediation addresses communication barriers while also narrowing the distance between residents and grassroots governance actors. Mediators familiar with local conditions are better able to identify the source of a dispute and find a workable balance between legal norms and local social expectations.

The same applies to overseas-Chinese communities. Social networks, historical memories, and interest ties formed through the long-term lives of returned overseas Chinese and their family members give some disputes distinctive features. Without an understanding of this historical background, it is difficult to handle issues involving land, labor, and rights accurately. For this reason, overseas-Chinese-related governance requires participation by the federation of returned overseas Chinese, communities, and grassroots workers familiar with local overseas-Chinese affairs. The localization of the "Fengqiao Experience" in Yuanjiang first takes shape through governance actors entering grassroots society via existing local relationships and resolving disputes on the basis of familiarity with residents and local conditions.

The need to work through existing social relationships is particularly clear in Yuanjiang, where many grassroots disputes cannot be fully understood through official records alone. A written complaint may only show the immediate cause, while deeper tensions may come from earlier interactions, family connections, village standing, or language-based misunderstandings. For this reason, effective grassroots governance requires more than simply having administrative bodies present. Officials and mediators also need access to reliable local information, ways of communicating that residents can accept, and the ability to engage with local social networks without creating a sense of distance.

3.2. Differences across Governance Settings Drive Adaptation of Governance Methods

Grassroots governance in Yuanjiang covers different types of matters, including ethnic disputes, overseas-Chinese-related issues, industrial conflicts, and new problems arising from greater openness. No fixed method fits every setting. Governance tools need to be adjusted according to the nature of the matter, the actors involved, and the way the conflict develops, so that governance resources can be matched with practical problems through coordinated action [5].

Different grassroots matters in Yuanjiang call for different emphases. Disputes in ethnic villages are often shaped by language, customs, and village relationships, making bilingual communication, village consultation, and locally knowledgeable mediators especially useful. Overseas-Chinese-related affairs often involve identity, rights, and historical legacy issues and usually require litigation-mediation coordination and participation by relevant departments. Industrial disputes often arise in orchards, production bases, cooperatives, and trading sites and tend to cluster in particular periods, so field-based mediation and industry-oriented policing place greater emphasis on early intervention. Since the opening of the China-Laos Railway, increased logistics, trade, and population movement have pushed some matters beyond traditional territorial boundaries, requiring coordination among transport nodes, circulation links, and relevant departments. Through long-term practice, Yuanjiang has gradually developed approaches suited to the characteristics of different types of affairs.

Adaptation across settings also prevents a common problem in grassroots governance: using one familiar method for every kind of dispute. In Yuanjiang, bilingual mediation is effective in some ethnic village cases because language and custom are central to the dispute. It is less useful, however, for a contract disagreement involving buyers and producers, where legal knowledge and evidence may matter more. Likewise, the experience of a community worker may be essential in an overseas-Chinese-related matter but insufficient when the issue concerns transportation regulation or commercial logistics.

3.3. Coordination among Multiple Actors Improves Dispute Resolution

As grassroots disputes involve more actors and increasingly complex interest relations, a single department can no longer cover the full process of problem identification, mediation, and follow-up. The value of multi-actor coordination lies less in increasing the number of participants than in establishing clearer divisions of responsibility and smoother links among them, allowing different governance actors to enter the relevant stage according to the nature of the matter^[4]. Yuanjiang's current governance pattern no longer depends on one department or one kind of actor. Instead, it involves overall coordination by Party committees and government, together with comprehensive social governance centers, public security agencies, judicial bodies, courts, the federation of returned overseas Chinese, township and subdistrict governments, villages and communities, and grid workers. These actors possess different resources and responsibilities, and their coordination helps prevent disputes from repeatedly circulating among departments.

At the practical level, village-group cadres and grid workers usually have the closest contact with residents, which means they are often the first to notice emerging tensions. Routine disputes can generally be settled within villages, communities, or local mediation bodies, while cases involving more complicated legal questions may need timely support from judicial agencies or other professionals. Matters related to overseas Chinese, industrial activity, and increasing openness often involve a wider range of participants and interests, so coordination may be needed among the federation of returned overseas Chinese, public security departments, judicial authorities, and relevant business actors. The key is to involve the right governance body according to the nature of each case.

Grassroots coordination in Yuanjiang depends mainly on the connection among different governance actors. Grid workers carry out routine inspections and report problems they identify, after which the comprehensive social governance platform classifies the matter and refers it to the relevant department. Overseas-Chinese-related disputes are handled through the litigation-mediation coordination workstation with participation from the federation of returned overseas Chinese, courts, judicial agencies, and communities. Agricultural and production-related disputes rely more on field-based mediation and industry-oriented policing, bringing mediation directly into orchards, production bases, and trading sites. Through this division of labor and cooperation, some matters that previously required repeated coordination can enter the appropriate handling channel more quickly, and Yuanjiang has gradually developed a relatively stable form of grassroots collaborative response.

When a dispute becomes too complex for a single grassroots actor to manage, coordination with other bodies becomes necessary. At the same time, involving several actors can also slow the process if their responsibilities are not clearly defined. Yuanjiang's experience shows that effective cooperation depends not only on who takes part, but also on when each actor becomes involved. Grid workers and village cadres are often best placed to notice early signs of tension and make an initial judgment, rather than handle every complicated case themselves. Once legal, sector-specific, or cross-departmental issues emerge, more specialized institutions can then step in.

3.4. Platform Integration Supports the Routine Operation of Governance Mechanisms

Yuanjiang has developed locally distinctive practices in bilingual mediation, overseas-Chinese-related dispute resolution, and industrial conflict handling. Without a common platform to connect them, however, these practices may remain fragmented and fail to develop into stable operating mechanisms.

Comprehensive social governance centers and micro-grid systems help connect otherwise scattered governance actors. Micro-grids focus on frontline inspections and problem identification, while the centers handle intake, classification, referral, and coordination. Routine matters can be settled locally, more complex cases are passed to relevant departments, and cross-departmental issues are coordinated through the platform. After a case is handled, the outcome is returned to the grassroots for follow-up.

The function of platform governance goes beyond centralized acceptance of cases. It also promotes the flow of information, resources, and handling responsibilities among different actors and links problem identification, classification, coordinated response, and feedback [5]. Bilingual mediation, litigation-mediation coordination for overseas-Chinese-related disputes, and field-based mediation thereby gain more stable organizational support and gradually move from scattered practices toward routine operation. The localization of grassroots governance in Yuanjiang therefore involves not merely creating several local methods but incorporating them into a connected county-township-village governance system in which actors, settings, and resources can operate within a common framework. Embedding in social relations, contextual adaptation, multi-actor coordination, and platform integration together constitute the localized operation of the New Era "Fengqiao Experience" in Yuanjiang.

Platform integration, however, does not mean that every issue should be centralized in one place. Its main purpose is to connect different handling channels and make it clearer where each type of case should go. Minor neighborhood disputes may still be settled within the village, while complex contract cases or overseas-Chinese-related matters can be transferred to more appropriate bodies. The platform helps reduce confusion during referral and allows later progress to be tracked. In this way, local practices can become more consistent without losing the flexibility needed in grassroots governance.

4. Practical Constraints on the Localization of Grassroots Governance in Yuanjiang

4.1. Overlapping Disputes Lengthen Grassroots Handling Processes

Some grassroots disputes in Yuanjiang are not single-issue problems. Disputes in ethnic villages may involve language, customs, and village relationships; overseas-Chinese-related matters may combine historical legacies with land and rights protection; and industrial disputes often involve farmers, cooperatives, and business operators with different interests. Once several factors become intertwined, a single mediation channel is often insufficient.

In practice, some matters pass through villages or communities, township or subdistrict governments, comprehensive social governance centers, and relevant functional departments before they are finally resolved. The more complex the issue and the more actors involved, the longer the handling process may become. Matters with unclear divisions of responsibility are especially prone to repeated coordination and multiple referrals, increasing the workload at the grassroots and slowing dispute resolution.

The challenge with overlapping disputes is that a single case may involve several issues at the same time. A disagreement over land, for example, can also be connected to ethnic customs, family background, or earlier administrative decisions. Likewise, an industrial conflict may start with a payment dispute but later raise questions about contract terms, labor rights, and the responsibilities of several business actors. If these different aspects are not recognized early, the case may be passed back and forth between departments, with each one dealing with only part of the wider problem.

For Yuanjiang, this creates pressure on both time and coordination. The more actors involved, the greater the need for a clear lead body and a shared understanding of the case. Otherwise, grassroots workers may spend considerable time relaying information rather than resolving the substance of the dispute. Repeated referral also affects residents' experience of governance, especially when they have to restate the same facts to different offices. The challenge is therefore not only to shorten procedures but to improve the quality of early identification. A more precise first assessment can reveal whether a matter is mainly a neighborhood dispute, a legal dispute, an overseas-Chinese-related affair, or a cross-departmental case requiring joint action.

4.2. Specialized Affairs Exceed Routine Grassroots Capacity

Grassroots governance in Yuanjiang now covers far more than ordinary neighborhood or civil disputes. Ethnic-related cases often require knowledge of language and local culture, while overseas-Chinese affairs may involve specific policies and historical issues. Agricultural and industrial conflicts can include land transfers, contracts, labor relations, and business risks, and the China-Laos Railway and growing logistics activity have also brought new mobility-related problems. These changes place greater professional demands on frontline workers.

Village-group cadres, grid workers, and local mediators already handle a wide range of daily tasks, so it is unrealistic to expect them to be experts in law, overseas Chinese affairs, ethnic issues, and industrial management at the same time. When complex cases arise, they may struggle to judge the nature of the problem or choose the right handling channel quickly. Routine matters can often be managed through experience, but cases involving policy rules, contractual responsibility, or several departments usually require outside professional support, and such temporary assistance may also affect continuity in case handling.

The growing number of specialized issues reveals a gap between local familiarity and professional expertise. Village cadres and grid workers are often the first to notice tensions, but they cannot be expected to master law, overseas-Chinese affairs, contracts, and industry regulation at the same time. The real challenge is to give them timely access to professional support without losing the local knowledge they already have.

Temporary assistance may solve a single case, but it does little to improve the system as a whole. If support depends on personal contacts or emergency coordination, similar problems may need to be handled from the beginning each time.

Yuanjiang therefore needs more stable links between grassroots workers and professionals in judicial, public security, overseas-Chinese affairs, and relevant sectors. Regular support can improve case handling and help local workers build experience for future disputes.

4.3. Platform Referral and Final Feedback Have Not Yet Formed a Complete Closed Loop

Yuanjiang has established comprehensive social governance centers and a micro-grid system, but several links between problem identification, reporting, referral, handling, and feedback still need to be clarified. Grid workers identify problems, comprehensive social governance centers accept and classify them, and specific matters are then transferred to relevant departments. In practice, classification may sometimes be inaccurate, departments may repeat communication, or feedback may arrive slowly. Matters involving several departments can take even longer when no clear lead unit is designated. After a case is closed, the result may not always be returned promptly to the original community or grid worker [6], leaving the grassroots unable to follow subsequent developments in a timely manner.

In addition, some local practices still rely heavily on the experience of particular individuals. Bilingual mediation, litigation-mediation coordination for overseas-Chinese-related disputes, and field-based mediation have been used in practice, but classification standards, operating procedures, and case records remain underdeveloped. When similar issues arise again, grassroots actors may have to coordinate and explore solutions anew, while previous experience is not fully reused.

A complete governance process requires information to return to the grassroots level where the problem was first found. In Yuanjiang, if a grid worker reports a dispute but never receives the final result, follow-up becomes difficult and the experience from that case is easily lost. Incomplete case records can create the same problem, leaving later workers with little reference for similar situations.

This matters especially in Yuanjiang, where ethnic village disputes, overseas-Chinese-related issues, and agricultural conflicts often show recurring patterns. Recording how earlier cases were classified, who became involved, and what difficulties emerged can reduce repeated trial and error. Better feedback and case records would therefore help turn individual cases into practical experience for future governance.

5. Optimization Pathways for the Localization of Grassroots Governance in Yuanjiang

5.1. A Classification and Identification Mechanism Can Shorten the Handling Process for Complex Matters

Yuanjiang can make better use of its existing comprehensive social governance centers and micro-grid network by improving how grassroots disputes are identified and directed. Since different disputes involve different parties, interests, and handling needs, their basic nature and level of complexity should be judged as early as possible. Routine neighborhood conflicts can usually remain at village or community level, ethnic village cases may call for bilingual mediation, overseas-Chinese-related matters can be directed to litigation-mediation channels, and industrial disputes may require support from judicial, public security, or sectoral departments.

The handling process also needs clearer connections between early discovery, preliminary judgment, referral, and later feedback. Grid workers and village-group cadres are well placed to notice problems and make an initial assessment, while township authorities or the comprehensive governance platform can confirm the category and send the case to the proper channel. This would help reduce repeated reporting, overlapping departmental involvement, and unnecessary transfers. At the grassroots level, classification rules should remain practical rather than overly technical. Frontline workers do not need to become specialists; they mainly need enough guidance to recognize where a case is most likely to be handled effectively. Simple disputes can stay within the community, while cases involving historical overseas-Chinese interests, contracts, or more complex legal questions should move into specialized channels earlier.

The system should also allow a case to be reclassified when new issues appear. A wage dispute, for example, may later involve contract terms, employment status, or several business entities. In such situations, the case should be able to move to a higher or more suitable level without requiring the parties to begin again. For Yuanjiang, where different social settings often overlap, this kind of flexibility can reduce avoidable transfers while still ensuring that complicated matters receive the support they need.

5.2. Bringing Professional Support Closer to the Grassroots Can Improve Capacity for Specialized Affairs

Professional resources should be brought closer to practical grassroots needs and provided on a more regular basis. For overseas-Chinese-related affairs, the litigation-mediation coordination workstation can play a greater role by clarifying the responsibilities and connections among the federation of returned overseas Chinese, courts, judicial agencies, subdistrict offices, and communities and gradually creating a continuous process from acceptance and mediation to follow-up. For industrial disputes, field-based mediation and industry-oriented policing can be extended further into orchards, production bases, purchasing points, and trading sites, with earlier inspection of issues involving land transfers, labor, and produce transactions. In ethnic villages, Yuanjiang should continue to cultivate mediators familiar with ethnic languages, village customs, and grassroots legal knowledge, making bilingual mediation a more stable governance resource.

Grassroots actors should also be able to obtain outside professional support promptly when facing complex matters. When a village or community encounters a difficult dispute, it can use the comprehensive social governance platform to contact judicial agencies, overseas Chinese affairs bodies, public security departments, or other relevant functional agencies quickly [7]. After professionals intervene, they can also explain the basis for handling the case and key risk points to grassroots personnel, helping them accumulate experience in dealing with similar matters [8].

Professional support should reach the grassroots through regular arrangements rather than only through occasional visits or temporary responses to urgent cases. Existing institutions can provide a stable basis for this kind of contact, especially in areas where similar problems appear repeatedly. In overseas-Chinese communities, for example, the litigation-mediation coordination workstation could maintain closer and more consistent links with legal and judicial professionals. In agricultural areas, mediation and public security personnel could become involved earlier during peak harvesting and purchasing seasons, when disputes are more likely to arise. In ethnic villages, bilingual mediators and people who understand local customs could also be included in a more stable network of grassroots governance support.

Regular access to professional support can also make intervention more timely. Complex disputes are often easier to manage when specialists become involved before positions become fixed and relationships worsen. Early participation can help clarify legal issues, correct misunderstandings, and keep a minor disagreement from developing into a longer conflict. It also gives grassroots workers a clearer basis for deciding whether a case can continue to be mediated locally or should be referred to a higher or more specialized level. In Yuanjiang, the goal is not to place every professional service permanently in villages, but to ensure that reliable expertise can be reached quickly whenever local conditions make it necessary.

5.3. A Closed-Loop Feedback Mechanism Can Stabilize the Transformation of Local Experience

Stable operation of a collaborative network depends on clear allocation of responsibility and smooth connections among actors. On this basis, Yuanjiang can further improve a chain of "grid identification - platform referral - departmental handling - grassroots feedback - case archiving," specifying responsible actors, handling progress, and feedback requirements at each stage [9]. After reporting a problem, grid workers should also receive information on subsequent handling so they can continue following residents' concerns. When referring a matter, the comprehensive social governance platform should identify the responsible body, progress requirements, and feedback expectations. Once a case is handled, the responsible department should return the outcome to the village, community, and grid frontline, avoiding situations in which grassroots actors know only that a case was reported but not how it was ultimately resolved [10].

For recurring disputes involving overseas-Chinese-related affairs, agriculture and industry, and ethnic villages, representative cases can be reviewed regularly and converted into concise handling guidance and working registers. Over time, the locality can clarify which matters are suitable for initial community mediation, which should enter litigation-mediation coordination, which industrial disputes require early intervention, and which mobility-related matters call for multi-department handling. Such arrangements can preserve the flexibility of local governance while reducing dependence on individual experience and temporary coordination [11]. The proposed feedback mechanism should link different stages of governance over time, rather than simply connecting institutions. A case starts with its initial discovery, then moves through assessment, classification, handling, and eventually feedback and documentation. If any part of this process is missing, later cases may need to repeat work that has already been done [12]. Case files should therefore include more than the final result. They can also record the type of dispute, the actors involved, the main difficulties encountered, and the way the matter was ultimately resolved, making earlier experience easier to consult and apply in similar situations.

Reviewing representative cases on a regular basis can also help show whether a problem is isolated or appears repeatedly. When similar disputes continue to arise in the same industry, type of village, or administrative process, the response should go beyond resolving one case at a time and consider earlier preventive measures [13]. In this way, case records can gradually support wider policy improvement. For Yuanjiang, a stronger feedback process would help both current dispute handling and the accumulation of longer-term governance experience, while reducing reliance on personal memory, informal relationships, and temporary coordination.

6. Conclusion

The effectiveness of grassroots governance ultimately has to be tested in concrete social relations and practical problems. Yuanjiang's experience shows that local governance cannot be separated from institutional norms, but neither can it ignore the historical formation, cultural differences, and ongoing changes of local society. Within a unified institutional framework, grassroots governance in Yuanjiang needs to retain the capacity to respond to local differences and changing local conditions. As industries, population mobility, and social relations continue to change over time, existing practices should also be adjusted in light of actual conditions so that local experience can better serve concrete governance needs. More stable connections among institutional requirements, local experience, and residents' practical needs can help grassroots governance maintain its capacity to respond in a changing social environment.

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