



# Characteristics and Mechanisms of China's Pilot Models in Policy Diffusion: A Case Study of the Return Migrant Workers Entrepreneurship Policy

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## Abstract

**Background and Aim:** The objectives of the research titled "Characteristics and Mechanisms of China's Pilot Models in Policy Diffusion: A Case Study of the Returned Migrant Workers' Entrepreneurship Policy" were: (1) to study the general characteristics and laws of the pilot model of policy diffusion in Chinese society (2) to study the characteristics and diffusion paths of the returning migrant entrepreneurship policy in two intergovernmental dimensions.

**Materials and Methods:** This research was quantitative. The population was the returning home and entrepreneurship workers from the central government and 24 provinces totaling 44,156. The sample was 341 by Taro Yamane and analyzed by the statistic ready program. The instrument was a questionnaire.

**Results:** Major findings: (1) The general characteristics comparison: Central and Local: Central policies paid more attention to the promotion of pilot projects and the implementation of policy reforms. Local policies focused more on providing services and promoting community building comparison of local pilots. The policy tools of the three places were all supply-oriented, but with different emphases. (2) The characteristics and diffusion paths of the returning migrant entrepreneurship policy in two intergovernmental dimensions between the relationship between domestic governments at various levels and local governments at various levels could be divided into two types: horizontal relationship and vertical relationship. Thus, by comparing local texts with the final central text, we could observe how China's home-returning entrepreneurial policy had diffused.

**Conclusion:** A comprehensive cluster structure diagram was devised to categorize central policies into three pivotal dimensions: supply, demand, and environment, with diverse policy programs within each. The research findings highlight that these dimensions work synergistically, fostering a "synergy-driven" structure to propel return-to-hometown entrepreneurship. This integrated approach empowers the development of hometown entrepreneurship through a collaborative framework, thus advancing regional economic growth.

**Keywords:** Characteristics; Mechanisms; China's Pilot Model; Policy Diffusion; Return Migrant Workers' Entrepreneurship

## Introduction

Western policy innovation and diffusion theory, represented by the United States, emerged in the late 1960s as an important window to observe how government departments make decisions. According to the research paradigm of policy innovation and diffusion theory, the core of policy diffusion research was to answer why local governments adopted new projects (Walker, 1969). However, in China, the diffusion of policies showed its own characteristics, mainly through policy experiments, local pilots, and other ways to carry out trial operations of policies. Policy experiments were a common pattern in the process of formulating and implementing public policies in my country. Since the founding of New China, especially since the reform and opening, the Chinese government has carried out a series of reforms in the political, economic, and social aspects, most of which were first tested locally and then extended to the whole country, try point. This "experiment first, then popularize" policy operation mode was developed by the Chinese government to solve China's actual problems.

Policy experimentation in the process of my country's reform was a mechanism for injecting suggestions from the grassroots and accumulated local experience into national policies. It was generally considered to include two core links: pilot (first try) and promotion (from point to area). Among them, the pilot-link was to test the unit (or region) or propose a solution to a certain policy problem to innovate. When a local government experiments with a policy that it had never implemented before, it is considered that the government has adopted a policy innovation; the promotion link in the policy experiment process was to summarize the experience of the pilot policy and promote it to other regions or In the process of the whole country, a certain policy experiment could be regarded as policy diffusion when it was replicated and promoted from one local government to other local governments.





It could be seen that the process of policy experimentation by the Chinese government was the process of policy innovation and diffusion. (Nair, S., & Howlett, M. 2016)

The diffusion process was basically carried out through the framework of intergovernmental relations, that was, the relationship between domestic governments at all levels and local governments at all levels. This relationship could be divided into two types: horizontal relationship and vertical relationship. The connection between local governments at all levels usually came from various administrative management and administrative orders and was usually guided through policy formulation. Horizontal relationship refers to the mutual connection between local governments at all levels. The connection and cooperation between regions were communicated through various joint activities and activities. This kind of policy flow and connection between localities was usually related to the distance between regions. (Rogers (1983)

At present, my country is in a new period of economic transformation and development. The economic system was gradually shifting from a "management-oriented" economy to an "entrepreneurial" economy. All regions had also incorporated innovation and entrepreneurship development into regional development plans. From September 2008 to December 2017, the central level issued 142 relevant documents to promote the development of innovation and entrepreneurship, and among them, the entrepreneurship of returning migrant workers was one of the important types. As of the end of 2017, the number of pilot areas approved by the state to return home to start businesses had reached 341. Returning home to start a business was one of the most important aspects of China's economic development. Through the analysis of the policies in this part of the region, we could observe and study the diffusion process of the return home entrepreneurial policy.

This paper selected the diffusion of entrepreneurial policies as the observation object, and the data came from the pilot cities of entrepreneurial policies and constructs a research framework of "policy diffusion-intergovernmental network-regional entrepreneurial performance" to study the characteristics and mechanism of policy diffusion in China. On the one hand, the research included condensing the characteristics of the pilot model of the return home entrepreneurial policy. On the other hand, it included further clarifying the operating mechanism of policy diffusion in Chinese society.

### Significance of the Problem

**Academic Part:** First, this study would innovate the diffusion research method of return home entrepreneurship policy. This article used grounded theory to code and analyze the collected policy texts and used Nvivo14 to construct a policy diffusion characteristics and mechanism framework for return home entrepreneurship, including institutional environment optimization, financial support, fiscal and tax incentives, training intervention, and industrial platform construction. Based on this theory, a comparative analysis of quantitative changes, subject structures, and frequency distributions was carried out. To a certain extent, this enriches and improves the quantitative analysis method for the diffusion of return-home entrepreneurial policies. Second, this study would expand the comparative dimension of the diffusion of returning home entrepreneurship policies. Constructing group samples and using the ready program for data analysis to test and discuss the actual results of policy diffusion, further deepened the comparative dimensions and methods of policy diffusion for returning home entrepreneurs.

**Practical Part:** First, this study helped people to re-understand the diffusion characteristics and mechanism of returning home entrepreneurship policy. Based on the analysis of a series of policy texts collected by migrant workers returning to their hometowns to start a business, this paper revealed the diffusion types and contents of the policies on returning to their hometowns to start a business, and explores the quantitative changes, subject structure and frequency distribution of each policy diffusion, so that people could comprehensively to systematically understand the diffusion characteristics of returning home entrepreneurship policy. Secondly, this study provided a reference for the government to adjust support strategies for migrant workers returning to their hometowns to start businesses. This paper adopted a more reasonable comparative dimension to study the diffusion of policies for migrant workers returning to their hometowns to start businesses in my country, summarizes the perceptions and attitudes of migrant workers returning to their hometowns to the existing diffusion strategies, and analyzes the supply and demand forms of these diffusion strategies. In addition, a more practical optimization path was proposed in terms of the supply and demand of policy diffusion, the coordination of executive entities, and the linkage effect, to effectively solve the current ineffectiveness of migrant workers returning to their hometowns to start businesses. It further provided operational suggestions for migrant workers to return to their hometowns to start businesses, and better serve my country's strategic tasks of coordinating urban and rural development and building new countryside.





## Objectives

1. To discern the general characteristics and laws of the pilot pattern of policy diffusion in Chinese society.
2. To explore the specific features and diffusion paths of the return-to-hometown entrepreneurship policy across two intergovernmental dimensions.

## Literature review

### Policy diffusion

Rogers (1983) proposed that policy diffusion was a process in which a policy spreads among adopters within a certain space-time range. Lucas (1976) believed that it was "a process in which a policy spreads from one region or sector to another and was adopted and implemented by new subjects. Regarding policy diffusion, scholars generally adopt E.M. Rogers' definition of diffusion: The process by which an innovation spreads among members of a social system through specific communication channels within a certain period. E.M. Rogers believes that the diffusion of innovation includes four elements: innovation, time, communication channels, and social systems. Integrating perspectives from different disciplines.

### Policy Pilot Theory

Nair, S., & Howlett, M. (2016) Poorly designed or implemented policies impede a society's ability to adapt to changes in the policy environment. To avoid such situations, pilot projects and other forms of policy experiments could and were often used to test new approaches before their full-scale roll-out. Policy experimentation could provide meaning to policymaking by helping in framing or projecting the future, deriving alternate response strategies, and monitoring any changes in the policy environment. At least in theory, the small-scale and experimental nature of pilots could encourage policy innovations and reduce policy risks. The discussion in this paper examines three key challenges to policy experimentation all of which center on questions of meaning in terms of understanding the future, and power in terms of the ability of governments to design and implement such actions. These were (1) the influence of politics and key stakeholders therein on the design and evaluation of experiments, (2) problems in the technical evaluation of policy experiments, and (3) problems encountered in the diffusion of experiments and retaining the lessons drawn from them.

### Intergovernmental Relations.

Henry (2015) argued that intergovernmental relations were interrelationships between different levels of government or government departments, including political, economic, and administrative relationships. Intergovernmental relations mainly included the relationship between the central and local governments vertically, and the relationship between local governments horizontally. Intergovernmental relations (IGR) described significant changes in relationships among levels of government and among the officials who hold important policymaking posts. (Krane & Wright, 2018)

### Analytical Framework for Policy Instruments

Kirschen (1964) first tried to sort out policy tools and divided them into 64 categories. However, due to the lack of systematization, the theoretical significance and practical guidance of policy tool categorization were not strong. Thereafter, McDonnell, & Elmore (1987) divided policy tools into four categories: command tools, incentive tools, capacity-building tools, and system change tools according to the needs of policy-making objects. Howlett, Ramesh & Perl (1995) divided policy tools into three categories: voluntary tools, mixed tools, and mandatory tools according to the degree of government involvement.

### Policy text analysis

Dunn, Mitroff & Deutsch (1981) believed that policy analysis should use a variety of research methods comprehensively. In this process, all kinds of information were sorted out, and contradictions could be extracted from massive amounts of information for decision-makers. Finally, an effective reference plan was made for decision-makers Quade (1989). That policy analysis was an applied methodology. Its goal was to solve various problems arising from the formulation of policies by the subject and provide optimal solutions. The rest of the researchers hold similar views. Policy analysis is a process that evaluates proposed policy options and selects the best option among many alternatives.



## Conceptual Framework

In this paper, the diffusion of entrepreneurial policies was selected as the object of observation, and the data comes from 341 pilot cities of entrepreneurial policies. The research framework of "Policy diffusion -- inter-governmental network -- regional entrepreneurial performance" was constructed to study policy diffusion in China.

The model was divided into two parts, central and local government, and how policies diffuse. The model was divided into two parts: between the center and local governments, how policies were diffused; and between localities, how policies were diffused. These two parts of the study were combined into a general framework that can be used to observe the characteristics and mechanisms of the pilot model of policy diffusion in China. This paper mainly takes the policy of returning to the hometown to start a business as a case study.

To better analyze policy texts, this paper will use text coding techniques. The content-coding software used in this paper was Nvivo, which was widely used for qualitative data analysis. Qualitative data analysis (QAD) was a type of semantic analysis based on reading comprehension. It originated from linguistic and ethnographic research in the 20th century and was mainly used in the fields of information science, linguistics, and philology.

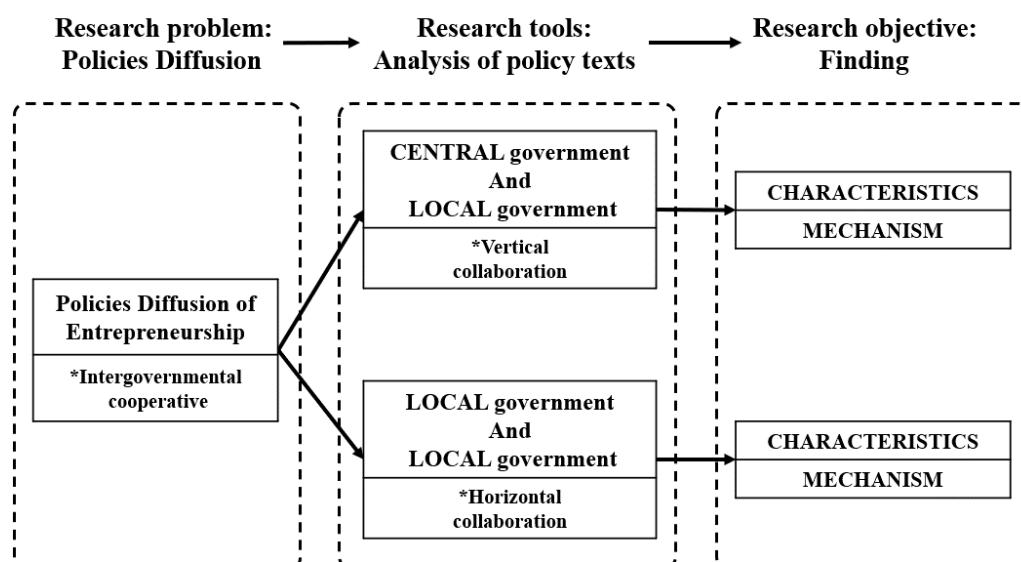


Figure 1. Research Conceptual Framework

## Research Methodology

### Research Methods

#### (1) Literature Research Method

This paper mainly used the evidence of entrepreneurial pilot cities in China to study the influence mechanism of policy diffusion based on inter-governmental cooperation networks on regional entrepreneurship.

#### (2) Grounded Theory

In this paper, the third method, specifically, the qualitative analysis was to analyze the policy text of supporting rural migrant workers to return to their hometowns and start their own businesses in 24 provinces by open coding, spindle coding, and selective coding with the root theory, and to establish the framework theory including the supply-type policy tools, demand-type policy tools, and environment-type policy tools.

#### (3) Text Analysis

In this paper, the third method, specifically, the qualitative analysis was to analyze the policy text of supporting rural migrant workers to return to their hometowns and start their own businesses in 24 provinces by open coding, spindle coding, and selective coding with the root theory, and to establish the framework theory including the supply-type policy tools, demand-type policy tools and environment-type policy tools. Statistical analysis of the above policy classifications in terms of





quantitative changes, main body structure, specific features, etc., to come up with a summary of the central and local features and mechanisms.

#### (4) The Case Study

Predominantly, this paper collected case data via online platforms, to select representative Chinese policy pilots to establish a research sample case database.

#### Research Procedure

This study was qualitative. The conclusion was finally drawn. The research steps were as follows:

Step 1 Concept Clarification and Theory Elaboration

Step 2 Establish the construction of a two-dimensional analysis framework for policy texts.

Step 3 Coding Process. (1) Open coding (2) Axial coding (3) Selective coding

Step 4 Reliability Testing

Step 5 Data analysis of "central-local".

Step 6 Data analysis of "local-local".

Step 7 Summary of Policy Innovation Diffusion Characteristics and Paths.

#### Data source and study sample

Policy documents from 24 provinces were collected, including policy data from 341 entrepreneurship policy pilot cities.

#### Research Instruments

This research was qualitative. Collected policy documents for returning home and entrepreneurship from the central government and 24 provinces. Auxiliary coding and data analysis were carried out with the help of analysis software Nvivo14. (1) Establish the construction of a two-dimensional analysis framework for policy texts; (2) Open coding, axis coding, selective coding, saturation, and reliability testing; (3) Data analysis of central-local pilot projects; (4) Data analysis of "local-local"

#### Data Collection

(1) Official website of the government.

Visit the official portals of the people's governments of 31 provinces and municipalities and select government information disclosure under the section on government affairs Disclosure.

(2) Peking University Magic weapon database.

Visit the Peking University Magic weapon database, select keywords for search, and then batch download according to the search results.

(3) China City Statistical Yearbook. An annual statistical publication that comprehensively covers key social-economic indicators for cities, from which sulfur dioxide and GDP data were collected.

## Results

### 1. General Characteristics: Overall Sample Analysis Results

(1) Supply-oriented policy tools accounted for as high as 50.82% of the total policy tools, making them the most important of the three types of policy tools. Looking at the internal composition of supply-oriented policy tools, there were significant differences in the proportions of various types of subdivided policy tools. Among the supply-oriented policy tools, Entrepreneurial park, public service, and talent training accounted for the largest proportion, accounting for 10.84%, 10.2%, and 9.72% respectively. Relatively speaking, social security accounted for a relatively low proportion of 1.87%.

(2) Demand-oriented policy tools accounted for 23.7%. Among the policy tools, the frequency of demand-side policy tools in policy texts is relatively low. At the same time, among the existing demand-oriented policy tools, most of them were related to the policy of reducing business barriers, accounting for 7.32%. Encouraging e-commerce followed, accounting for 4.35%. Other policy tools were at low levels.

(3) Environmental policy tools accounted for 25.47% of the total use of policy tools, close to supply-oriented policy tools. There was a large gap in the distribution of various policy instruments within the environmental policy instruments. Among them, financial service accounted for the largest proportion, accounting for 9.81%; followed by reduced taxes and fees, accounting for 5.4%; demonstration drive was the lowest, accounting for only 1.34%.

### 2. Sample Comparative Analysis Results

(1) Central-local feature comparison: The data showed that the most frequently occurring keywords in the central policy cluster sample included "pilot" (3.52%), "reform" (1.84%), "region" (1.66%), "department" (1.48%) and "new type" (1.26%). The keywords with the highest frequency in



the sample of local policy clusters included "service" (1.76%), "construction" (1.21%), "enterprise" (1.04%), "rural" (0.97%) and "employment" (0.90%).

(2) Comparison of characteristics between local pilots : In policy design, supply-oriented policies accounted for the highest proportion in the western region, accounting for 52.96%. The east was lower at 48.22%. Demand-oriented policies had the highest proportion in the eastern region, at 26.76%. The West was lower at 21.53%. The proportion of environment-oriented policies was the highest in the central region, accounting for 26.26%.

### Synthesize the overall finding as a diagram

Based on previous theoretical coding results, we construct a cluster structure diagram including central policies. Under the framework of policy tools, central policies were divided into three main dimensions: supply, demand, and environment. The supply dimension includes fiscal policy, personnel training, public services, infrastructure, entrepreneurial land, entrepreneurial parks, social security, and organizational leadership. The demand-oriented dimension focuses on solving business barriers, industrial transfer, industrial upgrading, industrial convergence, intermediary services, new subjects, and electronic commerce. The environmental dimension involves programs such as financial services, tax and fee reductions, demonstration drives, publicity and guidance, innovation and entrepreneurship, and coordinated operations. These three dimensions promote the realization of policy goals through their respective policy programs.

Theoretical research results show that the central return-to-hometown entrepreneurship policy cluster has formed a "synergy-driven" structure in the three dimensions of supply, demand, and environment, which jointly promote the development of return-to-hometown entrepreneurship. This means that the central return-to-hometown entrepreneurship policy cluster has provided policy empowerment for the development of return-to-hometown entrepreneurship through the "cooperative drive" structural relationship of these three dimensions. Here is the respective analysis.

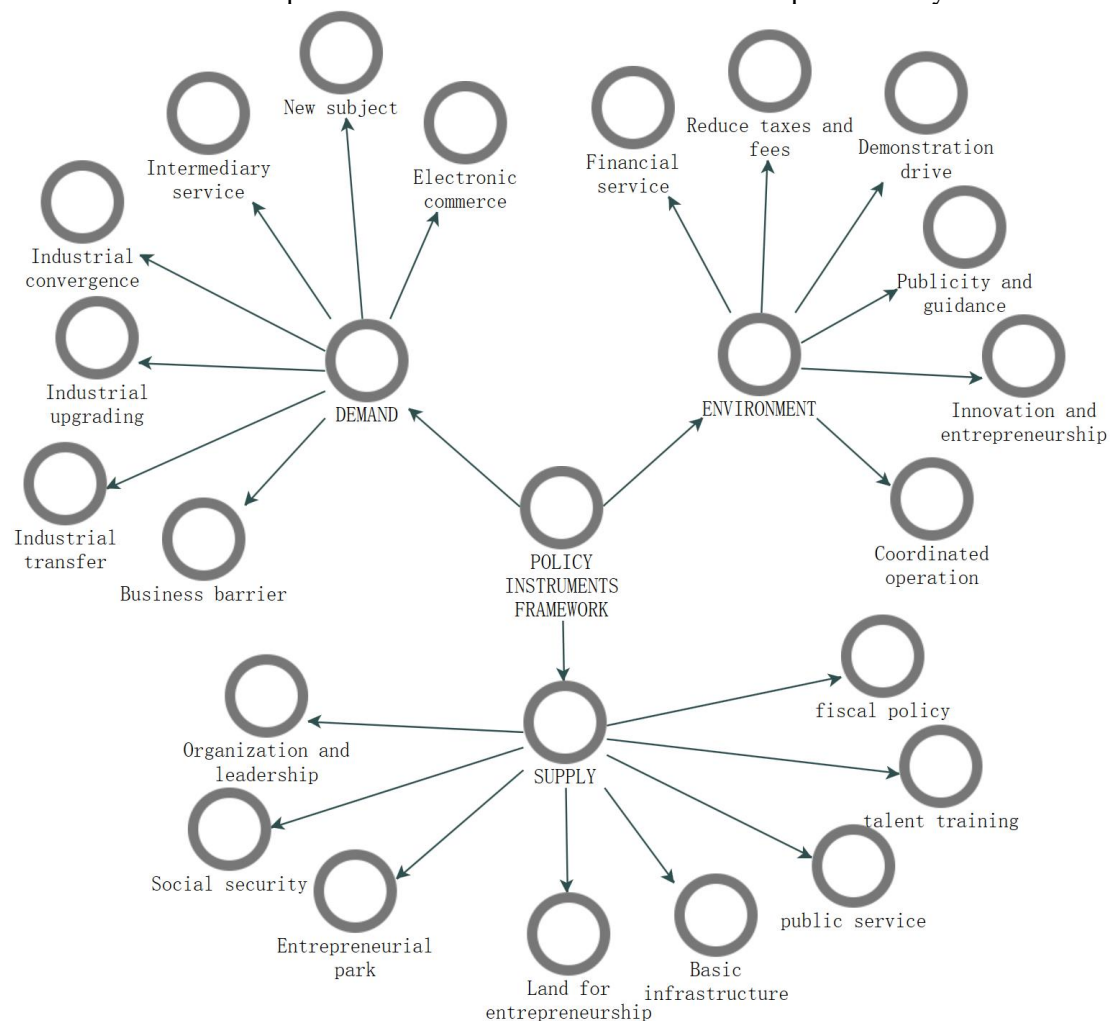


Figure 2. Schematic diagram of the policy instrument framework model



## Discussion

**1. From Goal “the general characteristics and laws of the pilot mode of policy diffusion in Chinese society”. The study found that,**

### **(1) Supply-Oriented Policy Tools**

Supply-oriented policy tools were the most important of the three types of policy tools. Obviously, the state attaches great importance to the application of supply-oriented policies in the formulation of policies for migrant workers returning to their hometowns to start businesses, which had laid a solid foundation and provided a strong impetus for the development of migrant workers returning to their hometowns to start businesses.

Looking at the internal composition of supply-oriented policy tools, there were significant differences in the proportions of various types of subdivided policy tools. Among the supply-oriented policy tools, the government paid more attention to entrepreneurial parks, public service, and talent training, while social security rarely appears in policy texts.

### **(2) Demand-Oriented Policy Tools**

Demand-oriented policy tools mainly reduce market uncertainty and potential risks through government procurement, business barriers, and service outsourcing, and enhance the stability of entrepreneurship, thereby promoting the development of rural entrepreneurship. No doubt actively developing and stabilizing the entrepreneurial market and promoting the profitability, industrialization, and internationalization of entrepreneurial achievements would have a more direct and obvious effect on the development of start-ups.

Among the policy tools to promote migrant workers returning to their hometowns to start businesses, the frequency of demand-side policy tools in policy texts was relatively low. At the same time, among the existing demand-oriented policy tools, most of them were related to the policy of reducing business barriers.

### **(3) Environmental Policy Tools**

Environmental policy tools mainly promoted rural entrepreneurship by optimizing the rural entrepreneurial environment, statistics showed. There was a large gap in the distribution of various policy instruments within the environmental policy instruments. Among them, financial service accounts for the largest proportion; since migrant workers returning home to start a business belongs to the social low-profit field, it had the characteristics of large investment, long construction period, limited sales channels, and slow return of capital, so the problem of funds had become a "barrier" for migrant workers returning home to start a business. bottleneck". Financial measures and tax incentives had played an important role in the start-up stage of enterprises, especially the policy of interest-free loans and small secured loans had played an irreplaceable role in the process of migrant workers returning to their hometowns to start businesses.

**2. From Goal “The characteristics and diffusion paths of the returning home entrepreneurial policy in the two intergovernmental dimensions”. The results of the study found that,**

### **1) Character**

#### **(1) Central-local Character Contrast.**

There was a remarkable consensus between the central and local governments on the setting of goals and directions for returning home entrepreneurship in the return home entrepreneurial policy cluster, such as the high attention to "service", "construction", "enterprise", and "employment". However, the two also showed significant differences in specific keywords, which might reflect differences in macro policy orientation and micro policy implementation.

Keywords that frequently appeared in the sample of central policies, such as "pilot", "reform" and "region". The frequent occurrence of these words meant that the central policy paid more attention to the promotion of pilot projects, the implementation of policy reform, and the implementation of policy reform in different regions, considering differences. On the other hand, words with high frequency appear in the sample of local policy clusters, such as "service", "construction", "enterprise" and "rural". The frequent occurrence of these keywords reflected that local policies were more focused on providing various services, promoting community building, helping enterprises develop, and strengthening the construction and development of rural areas.





## **(2) Comparison of Characteristics between Local Pilots**

In policy design, supply-oriented policies had the highest proportion in the Western region, and the entrepreneurial foundation was stronger in the East and weaker in the West, so the West placed more emphasis on improving the foundation. Managers also tended to provide more supply to help backward areas.

Demand-oriented policies had the highest proportion in the eastern region. West was lower. This situation reflected that the basic resources for entrepreneurship were stronger in the East and weaker in the West, so the focus of the East was on how to improve vitality and increase entrepreneurial demand.

There was little difference in environmental policies in the three regions, and the differences are not strong.

In general, the policy tools of the three regions were all supply-oriented, but the emphasis was different. The eastern part had a good foundation, so we needed to pay more attention to stimulating vitality. The foundation in the west was poor, so more supplies needed to be provided.

### **2) Mechanism**

#### **(1) Central-Local Mechanism**

The relationship between domestic governments at all levels and local governments at all levels and this relationship could be divided into two types: horizontal relationships and vertical relationships. Vertical relationship was the connection between the central government and local governments at all levels. The connection usually came from various executive management and executive orders, often guided through policymaking. So by comparing the local text with the final central text, we could observe how Chinese policies spread and circulate.

In the pilot mode of policy diffusion in China, the central government provided the general route and framework. After determining the pilot area, the pilot would explore and try and make mistakes on its own. Finally, the central government would summarize the experience of the pilot and promote it.

The absorption of pilot local policies by the central government was as follows, and the degree of acceptance of supply-oriented and demand-oriented policy tools was relatively high. The adoption of environmental policies was relatively low, which might be closely related to environmental policies and localities. The feasibility of experience induction and generalization was limited.

#### **(2) Mechanisms between Local Pilots**

The relationship between domestic governments at all levels and local governments at all levels and this relationship could be divided into two types: horizontal relationships and vertical relationships. The horizontal relationship was the mutual connection between local governments at all levels and the connection and cooperation between regions. Through various associations and activities to communicate and communicate, this kind of policy flew and connection between places was usually related to the distance between regions.

### **3. Revelation of the Results:**

Use pilots to verify the rationality of the plan: When a pilot had defined the direction of reform and formulated the framework at the beginning of the launch, but the actual effect after the first pilot needed to be observed, the central government could verify and adjust the plan in practice through the pilot. This would include taking stock of the experience of the first pilot and selecting selected locations for secondary pilots to assess the actual implementation of the program. Before full promotion, the central government should use policy re-piloting to provide sufficient opportunities for testing the plan, foresee and solve possible practical problems, and adjust the plan based on this. This in-depth practice and adaptation would meet the requirements of the pilot to the greatest extent, adapt to the actual situation, and lay a solid foundation for summarizing experience and gradually promoting the pilot policy.

Use pilots to explore feasible solutions: For those cases where only principled and framework pilot programs were formulated at the initial stage of the launch, the implementation rules and operational methods needed to be explored by the pilot regions themselves. After the first pilot, although certain experiences had been accumulated, due to the complexity of the problem and the large geographical differences in China, the conditions for direct national promotion were not yet mature. In







this case, the central government should make full use of policy pilots, compare and evaluate the effectiveness of various schemes in practice, eliminate poor solutions, and determine the final feasible solutions. This policy pilot mechanism could explore solutions to problems to the greatest extent and continuously improve policy solutions through repeated adjustments.

## Recommendation

### 1. Suggestions for Use

#### 1) Recommendations of the Central Government

The central government should give full play to the integration benefits of policy pilots. In short, policy pilot was a basic methodological tool for the organic integration of positive elements, through which relevant elements could be repeatedly compared and identified, to find out policy innovations that truly adapted to China's actual situation and meet the needs, to absorb local innovation practices and flexibly grasp the rhythm of diffusion. At the same time, the gradual benefits of policy pilots should also be fully utilized by the central government. Specifically, in the process of policy diffusion, the central government could effectively respond to the uncertainties in the pilot through the pilot strategy and maintain the stable progress of the pilot, which was conducive to the control of pilot risks and the alleviation of implementation resistance.

(1) Fully absorb local innovative practices: When local governments were looking for effective policy options to solve problems, spontaneously conducting innovative practice pilots could help promote local development and improve governance. When the central government absorbed it, it could integrate and adjust the results of innovative practices through pilot methods, to provide a reference for other local governments and the entire reform enterprise.

(2) Flexible grasp of the rhythm of diffusion: Through policy pilots, the central government could flexibly grasp the promotion rhythm of pilots. If the initial pilot effect did not meet expectations, you could choose to carry out single or multiple pilots, and continuously adjust and integrate the pilot plan accordingly, flexibly adjusting the speed and scope of pilot promotion.

(3) Effectively control pilot risks: In the face of a reform environment with significant regional differences and complexity, the central government could track and understand the new situations that the pilot might encounter through the pilot method, to avoid the risks caused by the large-scale promotion of policies under the condition of high uncertainty.

(4) Alleviate the resistance to pilot implementation: After the first pilot, due to the lack of deep understanding of the pilot policy, non-pilot areas might maintain a wait-and-see and doubtful attitude. Through the pilot, the perception of the pilot policy in the non-pilot areas would gradually change, making the full rollout more acceptable.

#### 2) Recommendations of Local Governments

(1) local governments needed to actively promote policy innovation. The spontaneous pilot policies of local governments could provide continuous new cases and new solutions for various reform areas in China. Local governments should actively explore their jurisdictions to promote their innovations. This was not only conducive to encouraging local governments to continue to innovate and promote their development but might also enter the pilot stage after being absorbed by the central government, providing a sample for other local governments to refer to. At the same time, local governments needed to make full use of various ways to attract the attention of the central government convey their strong willingness to innovate to the central government, and maximize the central government's pilot resources with the help of a good pilot environment.

(2) There was a need to strengthen the dissemination of the pilot experience. Pilot areas could carry out large-scale publicity of the phased results of the pilot by forwarding central reports, microblogs, and other platforms to publicize the pilot results, display the pilot results, and introduce the pilot experience, giving full play to the important role of the central media and other official media in promoting the pilot process, to disseminate the pilot information in a timely and effective manner, which could not only highlight the good results achieved after the implementation of the pilot but also further promoted the understanding and support of the non-pilot areas for the main purpose and key content of the pilot.

(3) local governments needed to develop pilot programs that met central policy signals and local realities. By sending policy signals with strong policy intentions to local governments, the central government could provide guidance or pressure to local governments. Local governments could use these signals to develop pilot programs that were in line with central policy signals and adapted to local development. If the pilot program was developed that better reflects the preferences and intentions of the central government, then the opportunity to enter the central vision would be greater, and thus the



possibility of entering the pilot stage of the central organization. Therefore, local governments should formulate pilot programs that are in line with the central policy signals and local realities to promote the diffusion process of the pilots. If the pilot had achieved results and had been piloted by the central government, the local government needed to judge the future policy direction based on the pilot signal of the central government, and actively tried the policy innovation related to such pilot to obtain strong support from the central government.

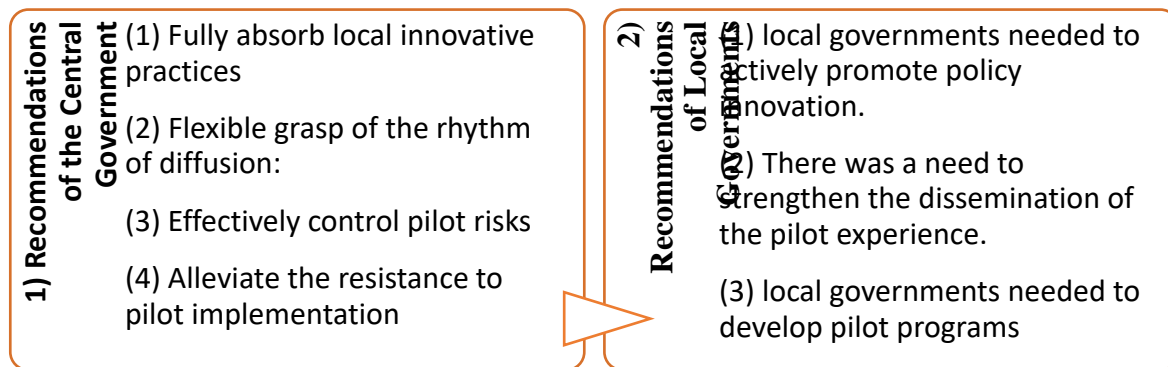


Figure 3 Suggestions for Use

### 3) Suggestions for Future Research

- (1) Use relevant policy diffusion analysis conclusions to provide ideas for government governance.
- (2) From other theoretical perspectives and other cases, further explain the characteristics and mechanisms of policy diffusion
- (3) Combining more levels of policy texts, using methods such as big data and machine learning to conduct more detailed text analysis.

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