



AgEcon SEARCH
RESEARCH IN AGRICULTURAL & APPLIED ECONOMICS

The World's Largest Open Access Agricultural & Applied Economics Digital Library

This document is discoverable and free to researchers across the globe due to the work of AgEcon Search.

Help ensure our sustainability.

Give to AgEcon Search

AgEcon Search
<http://ageconsearch.umn.edu>
aesearch@umn.edu

*Papers downloaded from **AgEcon Search** may be used for non-commercial purposes and personal study only. No other use, including posting to another Internet site, is permitted without permission from the copyright owner (not AgEcon Search), or as allowed under the provisions of Fair Use, U.S. Copyright Act, Title 17 U.S.C.*

A Performance Analysis of the Supply of Public Goods in Rural Communities Based on the System Implementation Costs——Taking Chongren County Bailu village, Taihe County Yongchang Village as Examples

ZHENG Shuang-sheng *

School of Political Science and Law, Jiangxi Normal University, Nanchang 330022, China

Abstract Based on the survey of Chongren county Bailu village, Taihe county Yongchang village and by focusing on the system implementation costs, the public goods is divided into tangible products and intangible products these 2 parts to carry out a performance analysis of the supply of public goods in rural communities. It points out that in both the well-acquainted and rare-acquainted communities in rural areas there are some long-existing informal systems, such as religions. Because of their born nature, the system implementation costs are relatively lower. However, the implementation costs of the embedded foreign systems are relatively higher because of their weaker lasting features and the rare social basis. Therefore, proposing putting the efficient supply of public goods in rural communities into practice, there exist not only a need of enhancing the internal organization and coordination of the formal systems, but also paying attention to the correspondence and harmony existing between the formal and the informal systems, making good use of the informal ones. At the same time, the self-organization of the rural areas should be strengthened, their culture characteristics advocated, the continuities in drafting rural policies honored to realize the sustainable development of the rural communities.

Key words Public goods; Village community association; System implementation costs; Sustainable development; China

1 Questions proposed

The supply of public goods is a system constituted by multiple related policies. It is a shift in mode from the collective farming system with the production team as the unit to the contract responsibility system with farmers as the unit. It changes the encouraging structure and activates farmers greatly. With the upgrading income, farmers' demands for the supply of the public goods have changed. And at the same time, the original supplying system has lost their existing foundation. According to these situations, some researchers in our country have carried out some studies on the influences brought by the shifting in the rural policies on the supply and demand. Zhang Xiaoshan, etc. have made a deep discussion on the market-oriented financing mechanisms of the tangible products in rural communities. In terms of the decision-making mechanisms of the public goods and the *supply and demand*, Liu Baoping points out that the supply of the public goods is not usually decided by the real demands of the rural areas, but depends on the performances, the interests and the objective functions of the local government officials. Li Peilin, etc. from an angle of the strategic orientation of rural development, have conducted an explorative research on the significances of constructing harmonious society and relations between social integration and the rural economy.

These analyses provide much useful information in recog-

nizing public goods in rural communities. However, in these related researches at home, the social basis of the systems operation is lacking, the performance analysis of the supply is also neglected. The system operation mechanism is a method, a tool, a policy or an adoption, which is the guarantee that the systems are put into operation and play a role. It includes the corresponding institute, staff, penalties and so on. Assuring that the systems are put into practice mainly depends on the non-compliance costs of the system. Of course, the implementation of the system itself has a cost, too. Whether the economic policy complete or not and the costs higher or lower depend on not only a complete formal policy, but also the coordination between them. Therefore, the operation costs of the policy includes not only the assuring costs, but also the costs of the policy itself. According to this, the author probes into the performances of the supply of public goods from the perspective of the policy implementation costs.

2 Overview of the study areas

2.1 Overview of the Bailu village

2.1.1 Tangible public goods. Bailu village is located in Chongren county, Bailu town, which is the residence of the local government. In the southwest of the village, the villagers invested in building a temple averaging 40-50 Yuan per person. In 2005, the local government rebuilt the farmers-trading-market. The market had been set about constructing as early as in 1997. When demolishing the houses around the market, the local government asked each household to pay 200 Yuan per squaremeter. Then they could not reach an agreement on it. The case had been delayed because the local party secretary

had been transferred later. The market had only its bones, with the top covered with plastic, the ground had not been levelled yet. There is no way to make use of it. The villagers thought that the local government wasted their money without having things done well. Now the market has been started again, and the framework has been set up. However, the villagers are still irritated. Because in their minds, the local government has not kept their promise. In the past, each household had invested 10 000 Yuan. And on June 27, 2005, they invested 5 000 Yuan in repairing the cover of the market and the ditch again.

The transportation system is underdeveloped in this village. The comparatively wider sandy road running from the west to the east is full of water pools when raining. Occasionally, there was a car passing by, mud scattered. In 2002, the Bailu county built this cement road running to the county between Bailu and Sunfang with the money collected in the southern part of the village averaging 50 Yuan per person in name of building and other infrastructure, which to some extent improves the transportation situation.

2.1.2 Intangible public goods. In 2004, the Bailu committee had made a transient but unsuccessful combination with the Shangfu committee. Taking resources integration into consideration, the combination itself is much beneficial. It would save 2 000 Yuan subscription fees for newspaper, 1 000 Yuan for family planning caring at least, 500 Yuan for conscription and so on. However, the combination did not last long for the fierce argument over the leadership between the two committees. At the same time, villagers from both two countries objected their combination for being not benefitted from it. Once combined, children in Bailu village would have to go a long way to school which situated in the other village. Of course, it is not convenient. And this put the committees into a dilemma. In 2005, the general election got no result after negotiations. Above all, in 2006, the county made a general election. Therefore, the leaders delayed the combination affairs on November 15, 2005.

2.2 Overview of Yongchang village

2.2.1 Tangible public goods Yongchang committee is located in Xitou village on the south bank of Ganjiang. It is the political, economic and cultural center of the county. Taking political and economic location into consideration, the town leadership decided to move to the junction of Yongchang village and Zhoutou village next to 319 national highway in 2000. Rising in 1930 and well developed, Yongchang village has formed a marketing environment and worked orderly. After moving to the new place, in 2000, the town leaders demolished the original trading market with force after repeated ideological mobilization, intending to transfer the original market to the newly built market named Tangzhou besides to the new residence of the committee but to no avail. Until now, Supply and Marketing Cooperative, Granaries, Bank Sales, Post Office, Tax Office, Station and some other foreign institutions are all cluttered in the village. Yongchang village is still crowded and prosperous. And this is one of the important reasons why the village topped in the list of the economy around the county.

2.2.2 Intangible public goods. In Tangzhou town, there is a

christian church which was built in 1985. A villager, Xu Dayi took the charge of building it. Under the guidance of Xu Dayi and the related staff, the 3 floors church was built on a free piece of land borrowed from 12 groups. In the church, it practices three-selfs: self-support, self-autonomy, self-propagation. Because of Yongchang's important location, it plays a very important role in the village.

3 The performance analysis of public goods supply

3.1 Informal system and public goods supply Informal systems refer to those moralities, ethics and customs used to constrict behaviors, which were formed unconsciously during interactions between people. They are the direct experience of the long period existence. They are characterized by lasting attraction, bearing intimacy and a sense of trust to people. The author takes religion as an entry point to carry out an analysis.

3.1.1 Religion Christian is popular in Yongchang village, Taihe county. It has many christians. In 2003, it spent 200 000 Yuan in building a 3-floors christian church. The survey reflects that the capital for building the church was achieved mainly through 2 channels. Firstly, to the brotherhood churches, they made a planned, focused and systematic mobilization. Therefore, they drafted a plan for mobilization, wrote the fund-raising book and delivered it to provinces around the local church, especially focusing on the gathering places of the villagers in the coastal cities. Secondly, to the local christians. Persuading the christians to do their best in making contributions in building the church. So, the church had been finished in 5 months. The religious organizations have systematic doctrine. Their beliefs become more systematic through instructions by the priests and the choir. What's more, religion has its historical origins; the clergy and the christian are self-controlled. The system, the common rules and information shared by religions, has a relatively rich social foundation. The cost of the system implementation is relatively lower. So it helps to offer an efficient supply of public goods. Religious, as a social system, has its own specific rules and norms distinguished from others. Other social systems are secular. But the religious norms and standards depend on something supernatural and holy. It is this kind of holiness that influences people deeply. It strikes people that they should obey it, and they must do, or they would be punished by something supernatural. Religions make their norms covered with holiness so as to protect the holiness of the systems and the security of the existing society.

3.1.2 Village community association. Chongren county Bailu village, Taihe county Yongchang village, their basic structures of the association lie in 2 aspects: The first is economic structure determined by agricultural production; the second is clan structure by kinship. The economic structure is related to other regions around and even to the country. It is universal and it plays an important role in maintaining the integrity of Chongren county Bailu village, Yongchang county Taihe village and the society. And the religious structure is the basic foundation of separation, the villagers are born to be framed in the network of

village community associations. In Bailu village, villagers surnamed Zhu have 33, other kinds of surnames are rare, at most are 9. They call them Surnames. However, in Taihe county Yongchang village, there are 12 groups of villagers, 14 natural villages, 465 families. And villagers divided themselves into native group and Guangdong group, each has 6 families, with a total population of 1 867. In general, Yongchang village is a typical one with very mixed surnames. The villagers said that there are 76 kinds of surnames in Surnames. And the largest amount of the surname is Xu, accounting for 30% in the village and 60% in the native group. The second, the third and the fourth are Zeng, Wu, Xiao, accounting only for 10%, 8%, 5% in the native group. Other than a dozen kinds of surnames only covering around 20%. Chongren county Bailu village, Taihe county Yongchang village, the micro community and village associations of the two are comparatively perfect. The strong associations between separation and religion have formed the specific cultural features of the village, which are the very important cores of the associations. This kind of culture refers to an kind of specific culture owned by a small group of people on the basis of the common information, including ethics and norms. In natural village this small group, every member is familiar to and with each other. Everything happened here is certain to be within the reach of the villagers. Therefore, villagers of groups 3, 4, 5, 6 in Bailu village are willing to transfer the public things to somebody prestigious. So the temple had quickly achieved financing, recording and the building work had been carried out successfully. The water conservancy facilities of each group had been built and repaired as soon as possible. Because of the excellent local culture, knowledge and village memories, much significance in living together and having the same foundation of acknowledgment, the costs of implementation of the system are relatively lower. The performance of public goods supply in Bailu village and Yongchang village improves that the efficient supply of public goods has a positive relation to self-interests and the local culture, reflecting that the villagers are well satisfied.

3.2 Formal systems and public goods supply in rural communities As formal standard systems, which are created by people knowingly and composed by the written related regulations, the systems should be accepted by universal. They bear definite legality in organization and social activities and will be operated according to the official structures of the organization. So, a formal system of a society should be the embodiment of the mainstream ideology of the society. While the mainstream ideology of the society is the official one which is highly theoretical and systematic. Once being theoretical and systematic, the ideology will be distinguished from social reality. China's formal system is a kind of bureaucracy managing mode operated by an official and legal institution organized by the government. Especially, the official systems of our country were led to the rural areas as latecomer and exogenous kinds. The system had gone through land reform, people' commune, household contract responsibility system and so on. The institutional vacuum generated by the detachment in system arrang-

ment and other incomplete natures of systems themselves all contribute to higher costs of the systems implementation. Moreover, the pursuit of self-interest of some officials is so strong and universal that villagers' confidence in trusting them weakened gradually. Multiple expectations of public goods, the government, the local, the agents and the officials with their objective function are not fully consistent with each other, and the natural ideology of the market all lead to this kind of weakness. It displays lack of definite goals in administrative action. And in the supply of public goods, it shows the imbalance of supply and demand.

Keernai put forward very early the coordination problems between different systems in his *System Transformation Researches*, pointing out that the coordination and harmony between systems are the important guarantees of a stable system and the basic guarantees of the efficient operation of a system. The incoordination among systems will generate chaos and then destroy the efficiency, the rate of growth will drop at last. In the supplying systems of public goods in rural areas, the cooperation existing between the supply within the system and the one outside the system plays a very important role in the efficient supply of public goods and the management of rural communities. It reflects mainly in the supply of public goods. The supply of some public goods has not been carried out in time which may finally result in lags. Impatience for success in some fields at last leads to a kind of imbalanced supply of goods named aheadness. For example, the combination of the two committees of Bailu village and Shangfu village and the hesitation on setting about the construction of the highway result in randomness in the internal supply of systems and imbalance in supply of public goods. All of which mentioned above will lead to higher costs of goods supply.

The growth processes of systems themselves are different. They embody well the differences of supervision and constraint on committees these kinds of elite organizations and some kinds outside organizations. Comparatively, the construction of supervision and constraint on elite systems is much complex. So generally, villagers respond to public goods supplied by elite organizations negatively in a weak resistance way. This is because the shape of the organization, the arrangement of the official systems at the national level, the efficient operation of public news, the accumulation of the related human resources need higher costs. This further increases the efficiency variation of different subjects in public goods supply in rural communities.

4 Conclusions and discussions

The paper is based on a case study, pointing out different costs existing in the supplying processes of public goods in terms of formal and informal these 2 different ways and the costs of public goods supply are highly based on formal systems. The supplies of public goods are different originally, and the differences existing in selecting system routines cannot prove that they are the basic reasons of the differences existing in operation costs. The true causes are possibly ones ex-

isting in public goods themselves. The goods supply in rural areas has been carried out in a complex environment mingled with formal and informal organizations. Therefore, the efficiency of the supply depends on not only the cooperation and the harmony existing between the formal and the informal systems, but also the coordination and the inclusiveness between them.

China is a traditional country focusing on symbols, while belittling logic, focusing on imitation belittling rules. It is an emotional country lacking the kind of rational spirit of the West. It is a traditional country with its focus on village and land. Over half a century of reforms have not changed this kind of tradition completely. Tradition, as the historical deposit and memories, is a continuous process without rupture, to which human being can add some new ideology and concepts, but there is no idea to change the passing on factors completely. The traditional features of our country still play roles in restricting people's ideas and activities in many ways and at different levels. This kind of restricting tradition shows its influence especially in a strong traditional communities. It continues to play a part in rural communities in different ways of informal organizations, including the influences on public goods supply in rural areas. This kind of influence is well embodied in the efficient supply of public goods in rural areas made by the formal organizations and the informal ones. Because of the continuity lacking in the official goods supply organizations at national level and the bureaucratic mechanisms existing in the process of system operation weaken the common and the basic foundation of the national infrastructure. So all the conditions mentioned above lead to a phenomenon that everyone relies on countries to solve all the problems appeared. To some extent, it makes the society lost its vitality. So the efficiency in public goods supply in rural communities is comparatively lower. In order to construct a farmer-oriented supply mechanism of public goods in rural areas, it is a must to revive the rural vitalities. Making farmers one of the leading factors in goods supply, taking into consideration the farmers' demanding will lead to a better coordination between the formal systems and the informal ones and then finally cut down

the costs of the system operation. This is an important perspective in constructing a farmer-oriented supply mechanism of public goods.

References

- [1] ZHANG J, HE HX. Rural public product supply in China: changes after reform[J]. Reform, 1996(5):50-57. (in Chinese).
- [2] XIONG W. An analysis of supply of public goods in rural China and alternatives for its mode[J]. Chinese Rural Economy, 2002(7):36-44. (in Chinese).
- [3] ZHANG XS. Link farmers and the market[M]. Beijing: China Social Sciences Press, 2002. (in Chinese).
- [4] LIN YF. A movement of new countryside and activating domestic market demands[J]. Development of Small Cities & Towns, 2005(8):13-15. (in Chinese).
- [5] LIU BP, QIN GM. Supply mechanism of rural public goods in China: current situation, problems and reform[J]. Gansu Social Sciences, 2003(2):76-78,89. (in Chinese).
- [6] LI PL, WANG SB. Constructing social policies fit for China's development; a contribution to discussion on "social policy and coordinated socioeconomic development in China" [J]. Social Sciences in China, 2004(6):4-24, 204. (in Chinese).
- [7] ZHENG HS, LI LL. Social structure and social harmony[J]. Journal of Renmin University of China, 2005(2):2-8. (in Chinese).
- [8] WANG SB. Sociology courses[M]. 2nd ed. Beijing: Peking University Press, 2004: 190. (in Chinese).
- [9] DAI KS, PENG Y. Sociology of religion[M]. Beijing: China Social Sciences Press, 2007: 133-134. (in Chinese).
- [10] LIU SJ. Ideological differentiation and conformity in system transition[J]. Jianghai Academic Journal, 2007(1):117. (in Chinese).
- [11] KORNAI J. Economic growth does not automatically bring system reform[EB/OL]. [2005-01-17]. http://xicheng.tax861.gov.cn/ssyjj/cjdt/display.asp?more_id=370197. (in Chinese).
- [12] LI W, HU ZP. Analysis of cooperation mechanism about rural public goods supply[J]. Journal of Anhui Agricultural Sciences, 2009, 37(8):466-468. (in Chinese).
- [13] ZHAO LX, WANG Y. Strengthen governmental power in the supply of public goods in rural areas[J]. Journal of Yunnan University of Finance and Economics, 2008, 24(3):35-40. (in Chinese).
- [14] JIANG Y. Study on the obstacles and countermeasures of countryside government's response from the perspective of public goods [J]. Journal of Anhui Agricultural Sciences, 2009, 37(11):323-325. (in Chinese).

基于制度实施成本的农村社区公共产品供给绩效分析

——以崇仁县白露村、泰和县永昌村为例

郑双胜 (江西师范大学政法学院, 江西南昌 330022)

摘要 基于崇仁县白露村、泰和县永昌村调查,以制度实施成本为基点,将公共产品分为有形和无形公共产品,对农村社区公共产品供给进行绩效分析,指出在农村“熟人社会”、“半熟人社会”中长期存在宗教等一些非正式制度,由于其内生于乡村社会,农村社区公共产品供给的制度实施成本相对较小,外来嵌入性的正式制度安排由于其建制理念、制度的延续性较弱以及缺乏社会基础,农村社区公共产品供给的制度实施成本较大。因此,提出要实现农村社区公共产品的有效供给,不仅要促进正式制度内部的组织性和协调性,还应该注重正式制度与非正式制度之间的融合性和契合性,发挥非正式制度的作用;同时应加强农村社区自组织建设,倡导农村社区的自有文化特质,在制定农村政策方面保持制度的延续性,以实现农村社会的良性治理及科学发展。

关键词 公共产品;村庄社会关联;制度实施成本;科学发展