

The Functional Reconstruction of Rural Revitalization Strategy and Rural Regulations in Grassroots Governance

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Abstract: *The rural revitalization strategy has put forward higher requirements for the modernization of grassroots governance system and governance capacity. As an endogenous governance resource in rural society, rural regulations and agreements have unique advantages in maintaining rural order, integrating social relationships, and consolidating value consensus. The traditional rural rules and regulations, which mainly focus on moral education, conflict resolution, and order maintenance, are no longer able to meet the practical needs of grassroots governance transformation and comprehensive rural revitalization in the new era. Under the dual background of rural revitalization and modernization of grassroots governance, rural rules and regulations face practical difficulties such as content homogenization, non-standard formulation procedures, weakened enforcement constraints, and insufficient connection with the rule of law. This article is supported by the theories of pluralistic governance, the integration of three governance, and informal institutions. It systematically reconstructs the functions of rural rules and regulations from three dimensions: value positioning, functional system, and operational mechanism, promoting their transformation from traditional regulations to modern governance norms. It strengthens the foundation of autonomy, supplements the rigidity of the rule of law, enhances the guidance of moral governance, and serves rural development, thus better embedding into the entire process of grassroots governance. It provides theoretical references and practical paths for improving the rural governance system that combines autonomy, rule of law, and moral governance, and achieving effective governance.*

Keywords: *rural revitalization; township regulations and agreements; grassroots governance; functional refactoring; integration of three governance systems*

1. Introduction

Rural revitalization is a major national strategy in the new era to address the imbalance between urban and rural development and the insufficient development of rural areas. The Chinese government has clearly proposed to "improve the grassroots mass autonomy mechanism led by grassroots organizations, and improve the urban and rural community governance system", placing modernization of grassroots governance in a more prominent position. Grassroots governance is the cornerstone of national governance, while rural governance is the main battlefield and key field of grassroots governance. Effective governance is not only an inherent requirement for rural revitalization, but also an important guarantee for promoting industrial prosperity, ecological livability, civilized rural customs, and affluent living.

In the long-term development process of rural society, rural regulations and agreements are characterized by their folk, autonomous, and endogenous nature, becoming an important informal system to compensate for the insufficient coverage of national laws, reduce grassroots governance costs, and maintain rural social order [1]. Traditional rural regulations and agreements mainly focus on ethical education, customary constraints, and conflict resolution. They play an important role in stabilizing order, integrating relationships, and inheriting culture in the familiar society. However, with the rapid advancement of industrialization, urbanization, and informatization, the social structure, interest patterns, and values of rural areas have undergone profound changes. Traditional rural rules and regulations have gradually exposed problems such as outdated content, serious formalization, weakened binding force,

and disconnection from modern governance, making it difficult to effectively respond to the practical needs of rural governance in the new era.

Against the backdrop of comprehensive promotion of rural revitalization, grassroots governance is no longer limited to resolving conflicts and maintaining order, but extends to diverse goals such as industrial development, ecological protection, public services, rural civilization, and common prosperity. The new era of grassroots governance emphasizes the organic integration of autonomy, rule of law, and moral governance under the leadership of organizations, emphasizes the collaborative governance of multiple subjects, and emphasizes the democratization, standardization, and institutionalization of the governance process. This requires rural regulations and agreements to break through traditional functional limitations, achieve value reshaping, functional upgrading, and mechanism innovation.

Based on this, this article focuses on the core proposition of "the reconstruction of the function of rural revitalization strategy in grassroots governance through rural rules and regulations", and answers three key questions: firstly, what practical difficulties do traditional rural rules and regulations face in grassroots governance in the new era? Secondly, what is the theoretical logic and core direction of the reconstruction of the rural revitalization strategy and the functions of rural regulations and agreements? Thirdly, how to promote the implementation and effectiveness of rural regulations and agreements, and empower grassroots governance through institutional design and mechanism improvement? This article adopts a combination of literature research, normative analysis, and practical induction to construct an overall framework for the reconstruction of the functions of rural rules and regulations based on the theoretical basis and practical difficulties. It provides theoretical support and practical reference for promoting the modernization of rural governance system and governance capacity.

2. Theoretical basis and logical premise

2.1 Definition of core concepts

The development of this study is based on the logical premise of clarifying the connotation of core concepts, combined with the context of the implementation of rural revitalization strategy and the modernization of grassroots governance construction, to systematically define the three core concepts of rural revitalization strategy, township rules and regulations, and modernization of grassroots governance, laying a solid conceptual foundation for subsequent research [2].

Rural revitalization strategy: As a major national strategy in the new era to address the imbalance between urban and rural development and the insufficient development of rural areas, rural revitalization is based on the overall requirements of "prosperous industries, livable ecology, civilized rural culture, effective governance, and prosperous life". It covers the comprehensive revitalization of rural industries, talents, culture, ecology, and organization, rather than a single dimension of economic revitalization. Among them, effective governance is an important guarantee and key support for rural revitalization. Its core essence lies in building a modern rural governance system that is systematic, scientific, standardized, and operates effectively, achieving standardization, institutionalization, and efficiency of rural governance, and providing a stable governance environment for comprehensive rural revitalization.

Rural regulations and agreements: As an endogenous informal system rooted in rural society, rural regulations and agreements are gradually formed by villagers in long-term production and life practices, and formulated through joint consultation and discussion among villagers. They are used to regulate individual behaviors of villagers, coordinate internal interests in rural areas, maintain rural public order, and promote the core values of rural areas. As an important practical carrier of grassroots self-governance system, rural regulations and agreements have distinct characteristics of folk, autonomous, flexible and regional, which are different from the rigid constraints of the formal legal system of the state and the simple folk customs. They are an important link connecting national governance and rural autonomy.

Modernization of grassroots governance: As an important component of the modernization of the national governance system and governance capacity, the modernization of grassroots governance is guided by the humanization of governance concepts, emphasizing the shift of governance entities from single government leadership to diverse collaborative participation, governance methods from traditional control to legal guarantee, governance processes from passive response to democratic consultation, and governance methods from extensive management to precise and refined. In rural areas, the modernization of grassroots governance is specifically reflected in the construction of a co construction, co-governance, and shared governance pattern led by grassroots organizations, coordinated by village committees, with villagers as the main body and extensive participation of social forces, achieving comprehensive

improvement in rural governance efficiency.

2.2 Theoretical basis

This study focuses on the functional reconstruction of the rural revitalization strategy's rural regulations and agreements, which needs to be supported by relevant mature theories and clarify the theoretical logic and analytical framework of the research [3]. Based on the practice of grassroots governance and the institutional attributes of rural rules and regulations, the core theoretical foundations are selected from the theories of pluralistic co governance, autonomy, rule of law, moral governance, and informal institutions, providing theoretical support and analytical perspectives for research [4].

The theory of pluralistic governance: This theory breaks the traditional model of government led governance, emphasizing the diversity and synergy of governance entities. It advocates for the participation of various forces such as grassroots organizations, village collective economic organizations, individual villagers, new elites, and social organizations in the grassroots governance process, forming a governance pattern of co construction, co-governance, and shared benefits. In the field of rural governance, village rules and regulations serve as a concentrated embodiment of the common will of villagers, providing a consensus basis and unified code of conduct for multiple governance entities. They can effectively reduce the negotiation costs between multiple entities, resolve differences in interests, and unite the joint governance force. They are an important institutional carrier for promoting the effective implementation of diversified collaborative governance in rural areas.

The theory of combining autonomy, rule of law, and rule of virtue: This theory is the core guiding theory of rural governance in the new era, clarifying the logical relationship of the three-dimensional support of rural governance - autonomy as the foundation, and the core is to stimulate the endogenous governance motivation of villagers and ensure their subject status; Rule of law as the foundation, emphasizing adherence to the bottom line of the law, and regulating governance behavior with rule of law thinking and methods; Moral governance comes first, emphasizing the use of moral education to lead social trends and consolidate consensus on values. Rural regulations and agreements naturally possess the triple attributes of autonomous carriers, legal supplements, and moral support. They can not only meet the practical needs of villagers' autonomy, but also supplement the rigidity of the rule of law. They can also rely on moral education to lead rural civilization, and are the key link to promote the integration of the three governance in rural areas.

The theory of informal institutions holds that informal institutions complement and co-exist with formal institutions such as laws and policies, jointly forming the institutional system of social governance. In rural society, formal systems are limited by the complexity and diversity of governance scenarios, making it difficult to achieve full coverage and no blind spots in governance. As a typical informal system, rural rules and regulations can compensate for the inherent shortcomings of formal systems in terms of rigidity and lack of flexibility through flexible constraints, which are in line with the governance characteristics of rural acquaintance society, effectively enhance villagers' sense of identity with governance rules, and thus enhance the pertinence and effectiveness of grassroots governance.

2.3 The intrinsic logic of rural revitalization and rural regulations and agreements

The comprehensive promotion of the rural revitalization strategy provides a clear historical background and clear goal orientation for the modern transformation of rural regulations and agreements. As an endogenous governance resource in rural society, rural regulations and agreements also provide solid internal governance support for the implementation of the rural revitalization strategy, forming an inherent logical relationship of mutual empowerment and coordinated promotion. In the process of modernizing rural governance, achieving effective governance is an important guarantee for rural revitalization. Relying solely on one-way control by administrative power and rigid constraints by legal systems is difficult to solve the complex problems of grassroots governance, and even more difficult to achieve long-term good governance in rural areas. Only by fully leveraging the unique advantages of rural rules and regulations that are close to grassroots reality, meet the needs of villagers, and conform to local practices, activating local governance resources in rural areas, can we build a diversified and collaborative governance pattern. As the spiritual core of rural revitalization, the construction of rural civilization cannot be separated from the value guidance of institutionalization. Key tasks such as changing customs, cultivating family traditions, and cultivating civilized literacy urgently need to be transformed into specific, operable, supervised, and evaluative behavioral norms through the carrier role of rural rules and regulations, in order to achieve the normalization and institutionalization of rural

civilization construction. In addition, comprehensive development tasks such as rural industrial development, land transfer, improvement of living environment, ecological protection, and supply of public welfare services all require the establishment of a stable, recognized, and executable common rule system. Township rules and regulations are important institutional carriers that meet this demand. In summary, the functional reconstruction of rural regulations and agreements is not a simple institutional adjustment, but an inevitable choice that conforms to the trend of modernization of grassroots governance and adapts to the needs of rural revitalization strategy. It is not only an inherent requirement for the improvement of grassroots governance system, but also an important institutional guarantee for promoting the implementation and rooting of rural revitalization strategy.

3. Realistic review: the functional dilemma and transformation motivation of rural regulations and civil contracts

3.1 The main functions of traditional rural regulations and agreements

In the maintenance of order in traditional rural society, rural rules and regulations, as endogenous informal governance norms, undertake indispensable multiple functions, mainly covering four core dimensions: one is the moral education function, guided by traditional ethics and morality, regulating the daily behavior of villagers through clear behavioral advocacy and value guidance, shaping the common value consensus of rural society, and maintaining the ethical order of acquaintance society; The second function is to maintain order, by clearly constraining behaviors such as theft, fighting, indiscriminate logging, and encroachment on public resources that disrupt the order of rural production and life, delineating behavior boundaries, and ensuring the basic stability of rural society; The third function is dispute mediation, relying on the logical reasoning of rural society to resolve neighborhood disputes and family conflicts in a flexible manner, effectively reducing the escalation of conflicts and petition events, and lowering the cost of grassroots governance; Its fourth function is cultural inheritance, carrying the cultural core of rural local customs, family traditions, folk customs, etc. It is an important carrier for maintaining rural cultural identity and consolidating rural community consciousness. Overall, the functional positioning of traditional rural regulations and agreements presents distinct characteristics of the times, with a focus on post remedy and flexible constraints at the moral level. Their content design and functional orientation revolve around the order needs of traditional rural society, and fail to fully respond to modern governance needs such as development empowerment, public services, democratic participation, and legal protection in grassroots governance in the new era. There are obvious functional limitations and lagging behind the times.

3.2 Realistic challenges faced by rural regulations and civil contracts in the new era

With the deepening of the rural revitalization strategy and the continuous development of modernization of grassroots governance, the modern transformation process of traditional rural rules and regulations is gradually accelerating. However, in practical operation, due to multiple factors such as changes in rural social structure and upgrading of governance needs, rural rules and regulations in the new era still face many practical difficulties, which seriously restrict their full governance effectiveness, mainly focusing on the four core dimensions of content, procedure, execution, and coordination.

At the content level, there are generally problems of homogenization, formalization, and lag in rural regulations and agreements. At present, a large number of rural regulations and agreements lack specificity and practicality, often blindly copying models from other villages, presenting a homogeneous feature of "one size fits all" for every village, and failing to combine personalized design with the local characteristics, industrial structure, and prominent issues of the village. At the same time, some rural regulations and agreements are merely formalities, mostly staying at the level of abstract moral advocacy, lacking specific and actionable clauses, and failing to respond effectively to prominent issues in rural governance in the new era such as high priced dowries, comparison of personal relationships, large-scale operations, improvement of living environment, development of collective economy, supply of elderly care services, and standardization of land transfer, making it difficult to effectively solve practical problems in grassroots governance.

At the procedural level, there are prominent shortcomings in the lack of democracy and legitimacy in the formulation. In some rural areas, the drafting of village rules and regulations is led by a small number of officials from the village "two committees", with extremely low participation from villagers. There is a lack of standardized procedures such as villagers' proposals, full consultation, democratic voting, and

public record filing, which makes it difficult for the village rules and regulations to reflect the common will of villagers, thereby reducing their sense of identity and willingness to comply. In addition, some provisions of rural regulations and agreements conflict with the national constitution, laws, regulations, and related policies, resulting in imbalanced obligation settings and infringement of the legitimate rights and interests of villagers. Their legality and legitimacy are questioned, making it difficult to gain the conscious recognition and active compliance of villagers.

At the execution level, there are practical challenges such as weak binding force, lack of supervision, and difficulties in implementation. As an informal system, rural regulations and agreements rely heavily on villagers' conscious compliance and rural public opinion supervision, lacking rigid constraint mechanisms and effective disciplinary measures. At the same time, the supervision mechanism is not sound, the reward and punishment measures are blurred, and there is a lack of clear punishment standards and execution paths for behaviors that violate township rules and agreements, resulting in the embarrassing situation of "not paying attention to the wall and not taking action verbally", which is difficult to transform into actual governance effectiveness and fails to truly play the core role of regulating behavior and maintaining order.

At the collaborative level, there is a problem of poor integration with autonomy, rule of law, and rule of virtue. At the level of autonomy, township rules and regulations have not been effectively embedded in grassroots autonomy processes such as village decision-making, village affairs transparency, and democratic supervision, making it difficult to fully stimulate the autonomy vitality of villagers; At the level of the rule of law, there is a disconnect from national legal policies, either by excessively strengthening rigid constraints and infringing on the rights of villagers, or by being too flexible and ineffective, failing to achieve effective complementarity with the formal legal system; At the level of moral governance, the relevant content mostly stays at slogan style propaganda, without deep integration with practical activities such as civilized family selection, family ethics cultivation, and point evaluation, making it difficult to fully play the leading role of moral governance.

3.3 The era motivation for the reconstruction of rural regulations and civil contract functions

The comprehensive promotion of rural revitalization strategy and the deepening development of modernization of grassroots governance have led to profound changes in the field of rural governance. The functional positioning of traditional village rules and regulations is no longer suitable for the governance needs of the new era. Its functional reconstruction has become an inevitable choice to adapt to the development of the times and solve governance difficulties, which contains profound historical reasons in four dimensions: social structure, governance goals, governance methods, and governance focus. The profound transformation of rural social structure is its practical foundation. Industrialization and urbanization are accelerating the frequent flow of rural population, breaking the social pattern of acquaintances, miniaturizing family structures, diversifying interest subjects, and weakening traditional blood and geographical constraints. It is urgent to reconstruct the interest coordination mechanism, resolve differences, and gather consensus through modern rural rules and regulations. The comprehensive upgrading of grassroots governance goals is the core orientation. In the new era, grassroots governance has moved away from the single goal of "maintaining stability" and turned towards multiple goals centered on rural revitalization. The focus of governance has shifted from "control oriented" to "service-oriented", requiring rural regulations and agreements to break through the single function of maintaining order and transform into composite functions. The continuous promotion of modernization of governance methods is an inherent requirement. The modern governance concept is deeply rooted in rural areas, and the awareness of villagers' rights and participation is enhanced. It requires the standardization, institutionalization, and democratization of township rules and regulations throughout the entire process. The continuous downward shift of the focus of national governance is an important driving force, with policies, resources, and services continuously sinking. Grassroots governance tasks have become heavier, and it is urgent for rural regulations and agreements to serve as autonomous carriers to undertake governance tasks, build connecting bridges, and bridge the "last mile" of policy implementation.

4. Path construction: functional reconstruction of rural revitalization and going to the countryside regulations and civil agreements

4.1 Value positioning reconstruction: from traditional norms to modern governance standards

The primary prerequisite for the functional reconstruction of rural regulations and civil agreements is to achieve a systematic reshaping of their value positioning, break the inherent limitations of traditional rural regulations and civil agreements, promote their transformation from traditional moral norms to modern governance norms, and align their value orientation with the requirements of rural revitalization strategies and the modernization goals of grassroots governance. Based on the practical needs of rural governance in the new era, combined with the institutional attributes and practical values of rural rules and regulations, the new era of rural rules and regulations needs to achieve a triple core value shift: from "control and constraint" to "co governance and negotiation", abandoning the traditional one-way control logic, highlighting the direction of democratic negotiation, following the common will of villagers, consolidating diverse co governance consensus, and stimulating the endogenous motivation of villagers; Shift from "moral advocacy" to "interdependence between morality and law", adhere to the bottom line of the law, follow national laws and regulations as the fundamental principle, achieve the organic unity of moral guidance and legal constraints, and build a value orientation that combines rigidity and flexibility; Transitioning from "stable maintenance" to "revitalization support", breaking through the functional limitations of single order maintenance, deeply linking value positioning with the overall requirements of rural revitalization, serving the goal of comprehensive rural revitalization, and becoming an important institutional support for good governance at the grassroots level.

4.2 Functional system restructuring: building a four in one governance function

The functional system of rural regulations and agreements needs to achieve a systematic transformation from traditional to modern: in terms of autonomous functions, it needs to shift from passive compliance to active participation, improve the grassroots self-governance mechanism through rural regulations and agreements, clarify the rights and obligations of villagers, standardize the deliberation process, decision-making process, village affairs openness, and democratic supervision, strengthen villagers' self-management, self-service, self-education, and self-monitoring, and activate the vitality of grassroots self-governance; In terms of the function of the rule of law, we should shift from flexible habits to supplementing the rule of law, adhere to the principle of having legal basis, not conflicting with the constitution, laws, regulations, and national policies, refine legal principles into specific rules in rural scenes, supplement and regulate neighborhood relations, public order, rural customs, and other contents, play the role of soft law supplementation, and guide villagers to respect, abide by, and use the law; In terms of the function of moral governance, we will shift from moral advice to civilized guidance, integrate socialist core values into rural regulations and agreements, and formulate detailed provisions for prominent issues such as high dowries, comparison of personal relationships, lavish funerals, and wasteful practices. We will combine selection activities such as civilized families, star rated civilized households, and the most beautiful neighborhoods to establish a new style and cultivate virtues in an institutionalized manner; In terms of development functions, the focus has shifted from maintaining order to ensuring revitalization. Around the overall requirements of rural revitalization, industrial development, collective economy, land transfer, improvement of living environment, ecological protection, elderly care and childcare, public welfare services, etc. have been included in the regulations, forming development rules that villagers jointly abide by, coordinating conflicts of interest, and providing solid guarantees for sustainable rural development.

4.3 Operating mechanism refactoring: ensuring effective implementation of functions

The implementation and effectiveness of the reconstruction of rural regulations and civil contracts require the establishment of a systematic and standardized operational guarantee mechanism. One is to improve the democratic formulation and legitimacy review mechanism, strictly follow the complete process of "proposal negotiation drafting deliberation voting public announcement filing", ensure the participation of villagers throughout the process, and establish a township legitimacy review system. The judicial office and legal advisors will conduct compliance reviews to ensure that the regulations do not touch the legal red line and do not infringe on the legitimate rights and interests of villagers. The second is to improve the guidance of building and the mechanism of diversified collaboration, adhere to the comprehensive leadership of grassroots organizations, transform the propositions of organizations into the common will of villagers, build an execution system led by the village "two committees", with village

representatives as the main body, actively participated by new elites, and coordinated by social organizations, and form a governance pattern of multi-party linkage and joint management. The third is to strengthen incentive constraints and supervision evaluation mechanisms, promote effective practices such as point system, list system, red and black list, and directly link compliance with performance evaluation, welfare distribution, credit evaluation, etc. At the same time, relying on the village affairs supervision committee and village representatives to implement regular supervision, regularly evaluate the effectiveness of implementation, and promptly correct violations. The fourth is to establish a dynamic update and publicity guidance mechanism, regularly revise the regulations in combination with rural development, policy adjustments, and changes in villagers' needs, maintain their timeliness and pertinence, and promote the implementation of village rules and regulations through various channels such as village meetings, bulletin boards, WeChat groups, and cultural propaganda, so as to truly transform them into conscious actions of villagers.

5. Conclusion

As a valuable governance resource that has long been nurtured and formed in Chinese rural society, rural regulations and agreements play an irreplaceable and important role in the grassroots governance system of the new era. With the comprehensive implementation of the rural revitalization strategy, traditional village rules and regulations are increasingly unable to meet the needs of modern rural governance. It is urgent to break through the original functional limitations and carry out systematic functional reconstruction. The current rural regulations and agreements still face prominent problems in practice, such as homogenization and formalization of content, non-standard formulation procedures, weak enforcement constraints, and poor connection with the "three governance integration" governance system, which seriously restricts their effective governance effectiveness. In the dual context of rural revitalization and modernization of grassroots governance, rural rules and regulations must be comprehensively reshaped from three levels: value positioning, functional system, and operational mechanism. In terms of value positioning, they must shift from traditional moral norms to modern governance norms; In terms of functional system, build a "four in one" pattern based on autonomy, supplemented by the rule of law, guided by moral governance, and supported by development; In terms of operational mechanism, we will establish a sound institutionalized system that includes democratic formulation, legitimacy review, diverse collaborative execution, equal emphasis on incentives and constraints, and dynamic updates and improvements. Through systematic functional reconstruction, rural rules and regulations can be more deeply embedded in the entire process of grassroots governance, effectively connecting the formal national system with informal rural norms, reducing governance costs, enhancing village identity, and improving governance efficiency. This provides solid institutional support and practical guarantees for improving the modern rural governance system that combines autonomy, rule of law, and moral governance under the leadership of the organization, and promoting effective rural governance.

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