

The politics of greening practice in contemporary rural China: a case study of Yang Village

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Abstract

This article takes Yang Village as a case to analysis what the specific implementation of the Three-North Shelterbelt Project is like. This village leader Laoyang gets afforestation projects through chasing project and mobilizes all the villagers by the method of economic benefits. While these afforestation projects promoted Yang Village economic income, it also ruins its local traditional pattern of production and living such as raising sheep. The study found the following conclusions: 1) Economy supremacy ideology plays a dual role. Not only does this strategy redirect the publics' attention from environmental protection on to economic development, it also mobilizes the public's will power to participate in such afforestation project. 2) Traditional rural culture and local production practice plays a subtle role in the designing and implementation process of environmental policies, projects and regulations.

Keywords: environment, afforestation, The Three-North Shelterbelt Project, chase project, rural society, economy supremacy

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1. Introduction

Northeast of China is characteristic of its material affluence. Even in 1969 there were numerous fish, pheasant, and roe, not mention to say other forests and resources. However, as a result of intensive government initiations on agricultural developments as well as resource extractions, a myriad of severe ecological problem began to emerge in Northeast China. This issues include, forest loss, soil degradation, drought and desertification. This environmental crisis extends beyond Northeast of China, in fact, it is symptomatic of the entire Northern China. "From Xinjiang Province to Heilongjiang Province, eight deserts and four sands stretch continuously and form a distinct sand line of thousands of miles. Desert, Gobi and desertification land account for in total about 1.49 million square kilometers. Ninety percent of Loess Plateau suffers soil erosion; furthermore, some riverbeds in lower course of Yellow River are even 3-5 meters higher than embankment ground, becoming 'Perched River'." (2004, 4-5) Such hostile ecological environment has severely hampered the economic and social development in the three northern regions. Thus for a long time local people have been living in a state of poverty.

Faced with such grim situation, Chinese government put forward the Three-North Shelter belt Program in 1978 so as to reconstruct, restore and improve the ecological environment in these regions. On November 25 of that year, the State Council approved the "Shelterbelt Construction Plan on Soil Erosion and Sand Hazards Key Areas of Northwest, North, and Northeast", which was viewed as the official launch of the Three-North Shelterbelt Project. This project was undertaken at approximately the same time as when the Chinese government was set out to reform and to open up its economy, a policy with far-reaching impact on the development direction of China in following years. With the state shifting from class struggle to economic development, the Chinese Communist Party incorporated ecological protection issues into its political agenda, and this was noticeable in China's environmental policy making efforts. However, with the "economic construction as the center" as a guiding ideology, the Three North Shelterbelt Program aims not only to restore vegetation of these regions but also to promote local economic prosperity by acquiring ecological resilience. Therefore the Three-North Shelterbelt Project was designated as a key national economic development project (2013). The project operates based on the guiding principle of "local government operation with support from central government". This implies that the central government provides financial subsidies as well as positive policies to support local governments while local governments adopt corresponding policies to mobilize labors to participate in the project. In 2005, the State Forestry Administration revealed in an report that from 1978 to 2004, the total funds invested on Three-North Shelterbelt Project by Chinese government had reached 3.4 billion yuan (2005a). Just Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region among other provinces has received 6.616 million special funds from central government at the fourth stage of Three-North Shelterbelt Project (2008).

The Three-North Shelterbelt Project is so huge and it is much more spectacular than "Stalin plan to reform nature" of Soviet Union, "Green Dam Project" of Algeria, and "Roosevelt project" of American terms of scale. It has already been thirty years since the launch of this project. There are noticeable achievements, but at the same time there are also much controversy. In respect of resilience of local ecological environment, Congjun Li, who is currently president of the Chinese State Xinhua News Agency, gives out strong evidences after comprehensively investigating the actual implementation. In his long documentary literature *Afforestation Record about Three-North*, Congjun Li wrote, "so far the accumulative total afforested are a has reached 26.47 million hectares. If these trees were planted in a row every 3 meters, the whole length would be 2,300 times of Earth's equator" (Li, 2013). In respect of local economic development promotion, rural farmers indeed benefit a lot from this project. "In the case of arable land remained in balance, the total grain output and the acre yield both have increased 1.6 times, that is, the total production increasing from 60 million up to 153 million as well as acre yield from 118 kilograms to 311kilograms; annual growth of nuts and fresh fruits is nearly 20 times from less than 2 million tons to 36 million tons; farmers' per capita income has increased 30 -fold from the 100 yuan up to 3600 yuan" (Hui, 2009). Heilongjiang by itself has obtained an overall economic benefit of 30 billion yuan (2005b). Scholars and experts engaged in ecological resilience experiments of desert

regions have argued otherwise. Behind the controversy lie two kind of actual situations. On the one hand, there is the disappointing reality that, combating desertification and degradation occur simultaneously and even the speed of former is not as good as the latter; on the other hand, mankind have always held the believe that human can conquer nature, but even more – man can restore damaged nature! Confronted with the unsatisfying reality and so as to reflect on the arrogant anthropocentric belief, some scholars and experts point out that "...nature has the ability to achieve ecological restoration...and the current large-scale tree plantings profit-driven ...present policy emphasizes on returning farmland to forest because planting trees, rather than grasses, could get financial subsidy from government. A few Forestry Bureau charges 300 yuan just for a pinussylvestris (a kind of tree) less than 1.5 meters... It is obviously evident that afforestation could bring huge economic benefits to local government." (2005c).

As shown above, the Three North Shelter belt Project aligns with the Party's central guiding principle – to "keep economic construction as the central task." Firstly, central government launched Three-North Shelterbelt Project with an ultimate goal to promote the economic development of three northern regions, thereby big financial incentives from central government could be offered in the process of implementation of this project. Secondly, the economic improvement of these project areas is one of criteria whether Three-North Shelterbelt Project is successful or not Last but not least, local leaders and officials of related provinces, cities, counties and townships always consider Three-North Shelterbelt Project, along with the financial subsidy behind it, as a kind of resource to expand their fiscal revenues.

Following the macro analysis of how and why the Three North Shelterbelt Project was proposed, this paper offers the case of Yang Village in Shanxi Province as a point of analysis from a micro level. On the basis of multiple of first-hand primary data, gained from intensive field investigation into Yang Village this study answers the following question: how are the greening or tree planting programs perceived by local farmers and how do these programs intersect with their daily production and life practices? Does the Shelterbelt project improve their economic situation, if so to what extent? How does the top-down environmental public project, attempting to reshape the relationship between human beings and nature, intersect with local rural life experience of remote areas and the mode of production of the rural society?

2. Chase Projects

Yang Village is situated at the margin of The Loess Plateau and Mu Us Desert. Before 2000, Yang Village was infamous for being impoverished for even food and clothing was an issue. Per capita income of Yang Village was less than 350 yuan by the end of 1999 but increased to 6,500 yuan till 2009.* Such dramatic change could have not occurred without the leadership of Lao yang for he brought numerous public projects into the Yang Village. Lao yang is used to being a businessman who always cares his poor hometown even when he got his own successful enterprise. At the end of last century, Lao yang made his mind to go back countryside to transform his hometown and lead folks to be rich. He devoted one million yuan, by selling out his stone mill, to building road, restoring electricity and water for his Yang Village. Lao yang's kind acts undoubtedly drew a lot of attention from higher level of government and leadership, but also got their recognition and praise. Since central government started to call for new socialist countryside construction from 2005, thus Yang Village became the exemplar village. Meanwhile, Lao yang also became a celebrity in the village. He was often invited to give speech to factories, schools or towns, even later being elected as delegate to the provincial people's congress. Various media joined to promote his excellent deeds, even *People's Daily*, the official newspaper of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, praised Lao yang of being a good village leader. However, in reality, the problem persists, Yang Village is still suffering poverty! How to increase revenue for local farmer is the primary concern of Lao yang and

*An introduction of Yang Village history, on the wall of villagers committee.

local government. In outlining the development blueprint of Yang Village, public projects, such as afforestation, appeal to Lao yang strongly given the possible economic benefits. He not only introduced the concept of afforestation to Yang village, but also initiated a number of tree planting projects.

An interesting paradox, found by one of the authors of this article (Yao Sha) while participating in the Northwest Five Provinces Forestry Conference held by State Forestry Administration in 2008, perhaps may be able to explain why afforestation or other similar projects could bring economic advantages to village like Yang. At that time, nearly all attendees, came from the Forestry Sector of different provinces, claimed that tree planting was a difficult task to finish. On the contrary, the statistical data showed that these local Forestry Sectors were fighting for more afforestation allocation. This seemingly contradictory phenomenon could be easily understood if considering that Three-North Shelterbelt Project state guideline always emphasizes the combination of ecological effect and economic effect, and on this basis provide the central financial subsidy. Where as for these local governments, they have their own plans: firstly, reforestation area is proportional to the central government's fiscal subsidies, that is, the more planting trees the more money. Secondly, once local official sover ful fill the afforestation task on time, although they always claim its impossibility at public conference, it will prove not only the serious and responsible attitude of these officials toward the project, but also implicate that their work performance. Thirdly, besides the seorna mental plants like pine or cypress, the cash plants like jujube or walnut could also be in the optional list. Furthermore, restoring an oasis at the edge of the desert promotes local economy growth by creating tourist attraction sites that develops local tourism industry. The common logic shared with Lao yang and these local participant official sis exactly that winning more afforestation allocation means more central financial subsidy could flow into their respective administrative region. Given that "much of the currently available literature on forest conservation accepts as givens the goals and forms of China's current 'greening' efforts, focusing on technical difficulties rather than the politics of redistributing peasants' access to land resources or the political-economic factors shaping their environmental and social effects" (Yeh, 2013) findings in Yang Village reflect that in village, the lowest administrative body in China, political-economic factors are always powerful especially in the process of implementation of environmental policy. Moreover, these findings verify the existing research conclusion: many non-environmental factors have been used to determine actual implementation; the implementation of these programs is inescapably political (Yeh, 2013).

Therefore Lao yang needs to apply for afforestation project on behalf of Yang Village. But how does he apply? And what are the procedures? In general, local forestry sector needs to report its annual afforestation plan to superior forestry sector. Once the superiors approve the plan, the applicant will receive corresponding fiscal assistance on the project. Then each village, town, school, hospital, enterprise, etc., or other local governments could submit an application to the town forestry sector according to their own situation. In other words, all local forestry sectors hold distribution power to allocate afforestation amount and supply financial subsidy. Bauer called this phenomenon on *chase projects* (paoxiangmu) favored by local officials as a way to capture state subsidies (Bauer, 2005). However it should be noticed that *chase projects* is risky, that is, there is no guarantee application must be passed. But for Yang Village, however, it can often be successful. The reasons are the following: Lao yang's personal charm plays a lot. As a "Star Village Leader", Lao yang owns comparatively more influential lobbying power. On top of this, Lao Yang is integrates vegetation restoration plans such as "planning trees" into the economic development project of the Yang Village.

The greening goal of Yang Village is "to create a clean environment, to plant numbers of shady trees, to maintain ecological environment construction, to insist planting trees and grasses on hillside, and to build dams in valley in accordance with local conditions, adhering to implementation, protection and construction simultaneously."*In particular, Yang Village tries to accelerate the implementation of several specific projects, "Returning Farmland to Forest", "Closing Hillsides for

*An introduction of Yang Village future, on the wall of villagers committee.

Afforestation", "Natural Forest Protection Program", and "Hydraulic Engineering". In schedule of Yang Village, 1000 acres farmland should be transferred to forest by 2010, and at the same time 2300 acres of reconstruction of low-function forest, 2000 acres of grass, and 1000 acres commercial forest plantation should also be completed. But unfortunately this goal is not finished until the end of 2011. As it said above, Yang Village has gained "Model Village" hon or in the process of new socialist countryside construction, and now it pays special attention to the ecological environment and finished the planting jobs. All these eventually lead to Yang Village accumulated advantage, forming a kind of virtuous circle from proactive application to approval, to task completion, and to application again.

However, it is worth noting that Yang Village's development path above, from its origin to the actual operation, is individual foresight of Lao yang as the village's leader rather than collective will of farmers of Yang Village. In the survey, we found that Lao yang is at otalitarian leader in Yang Village. Using public projects (especially those related to ecological environment) to promote local economy development a unique developing path for Yang Village. However this decision-making does not go through fully democratic discussion and consultation. Obviously, this decision-making process violates the procedural justice in environmental justice. The so-called procedural justice refers to "procedural equity", the need for democratic decisions, which encompasses inclusiveness, representation, parity, and communication (Kuehn, 2000). Due to farmers' absence in decision-making process, some hidden problems naturally are left over, which will be discussed later. But violating procedural equity during the process of making environmental policy in China is not uncommon, hence various problems could be observed in *Not-In-My-Back-Yard* social movements one after another in recent years, which happened in Xiamen, Fanyu, Wukan with the purpose to fight for environment al justice. It can thus be seen that procedural injustice is a common problem during China's environmental policy-making, and what happened in Yang Village is just microcosm or so.

As the totalita rian leader of Yang Village, Lao yang' spolitical wisdom, also one of his success secrets to chase projects is reflected on a technique he used, that is, starting execution before application approval. This does not only go against project approval process, but itis also seen as a survival taboo of Chinese bureaucratic rules. Nevertheless, in our survey, Lao yang supplied us a quite reasonable explanation for his risky behave or. Farmers as labor involved in the afforestation project should be paid. Even when the afforestation project has been started up before its official application gets approval from superior forestry sector, farmers still believe that they should and could obtain salaries once they participate in planting trees. Then at this time rejection by superior forestry sector means that the project is illegal and farmers have no right to get their initial rewards. Such institution undoubtedly will irritate local farmers, who have contributed/invested their labors, and even transfer to a threat that has ripple effects in stirring angst from other famers. In recent years group events have exerted a lot of pressure on social stability, thus being viewed as a severe issue by local government. For the reasons above, on the condition that related laws and policies would not be violated, planting trees applications of Yang Village would be passed successfully, in case that some incidents under mining social harmony and stability occur.*It can conclude that Lao yang here makes use of the urgent needs of government to maintain social stability and local farmers' labor cost simultaneously, as well as the unique balance relationship between the two elements. Fortunately, the original intention of Laoyangis to develop Yang Village and to improve income of farmers.

Financial subsidies are granted shortly after the chasing project is approved. Despite the money, it is insufficient to meet the actual expenditure (Table 1). But public project like afforestation is a good item for Yang Village to loan from the bank. This is also in line with national policy. In August 2012, at the Three-North Shelterbelt Project working meeting held in Shaanxi Province, Lian gyu Hui, vice Premier of the State Council, stressed "...investment protection should be strengthened, the central and local governments at all levels should establish a steady and continu alinvestment mechanism for project construction, and meanwhile increase credit support, expand financing channels to attract all kinds of funds into a wide range of construction, ...to mobilize the enthusiasm of farmers and society

*Fieldwork interview of Lao yang, December 15th, 2009, in Lao yang's village office, by Yao Sha.

sectors..."(Hui, 2012). It could thus be seen that this kind of afforestation projects, which would introduce national financial subsidy but also bring in bank loan, is bound to be crucial for the economy development of Yang Village. In the "Project Construction Fund Account Details of Yang Village from October in 2008 to June in 2009", findings demonstrate that in just eight months Yang Village had operated eight public projects in total. Two of these projects were directly related to environmental governance (Table 1), and the actual cost had reached 4.41 million yuan. However, an interesting observation is that farmers of Yang Village, even the leader Lao yang, never considered returning the loan. So in this way will this lead an economic crisis to Yang Village in the following years? It is a problem worthy of continual attention and research.

Table 1: Document of Yang Village committee, The details of public project funds of Yang Village from October 2008 to June 2009.

Project Name	Project Units and Fund Account (yuan)	Expenditure Amount (yuan)
Project of Farmland Making and Infrastructure Development	The City Water and Soil Conservation Bureau:594 thousand	total expenditure:2,993,220 including: Machinery costs:1,254,720 Fuel costs:1,718,900 Labor costs:19,600
	The City Land Bureau:150 thousand, The City Animal Husbandry Bureau:196 thousand New Terraces:1300 acres Warping Dam Management:11	
Project of Spring Afforestation	The County forestry administration : 0.3million Afforestation : 600acres	total expenditure:253,876 including: sapling costs::23,141 traffic costs:12,464 management costs:10,000

3. Greening Program in Yang Village and the Villagers Mobilization

The next problem is how to carry out this program and organize villagers to engage in trees planting activities. If Lao yang has overcome chasing project with his excellent outreach capacity, then to implement the project in Yang Village will testify Lao yang's mobilization ability.

How and where to plant trees is the first concern of Lao yang. According to the policy, there are two ways, reclaiming wasteland to plant trees and returning farmland to forest. The former needs lots of machinery costs and labor costs, the latter, besides the expense, needs to pay farmers additional arable land compensation. Lao yang prefers the first option to maximize the benefits of all the villagers for the following reasons: Firstly, around Yang Village there are many barren mountains and hills, which should be exploited fully. Secondly, returning farmland to forest means that the farmers will lose their farmland, then, what should local farmers do once the central government subsidies end (8 years for ecological forest, and 5 years for economy forests)? Thirdly, it is a way to increase the villagers' income by encouraging farmers to reclaim wasteland as laborers.*After determining afforestation way, another obstacle, namely how to mobilize villagers to participate in, draws Lao yang's attention.

*Fieldwork interview of Laoyang, April 30th, 2010, in Lao yang's village office, by Yao Sha.

Here we can summarize three kinds of different strategies used in Yang Village. First, is to advocate the benefits and importance of environment protection. Although, there are potential economy purposes behind this Greening project, still, as a part of The Three-North Shelterbelt Project, afforestation in Yang Village is aimed to improve the environment. In fact, Yang Village has suffered the threat of desertification for a long time. For instance, the river that supplies drinking water for the villagers are drying up. Moreover, people are plagued with sandstorm during winter times. However, when Lao yang first announced the commencement of the afforestation program, the project was not well received by the villagers. This illustrates that the first attempt to implement the project has failed for the project did not appeal to the villager's value/interest. According to Tim Jackson's research, value is one of the key factors that influences people's attitude and actions to environmental issues. As he argued, values are relatively stable, trans-situational beliefs about what is good or bad. Values enable effective, compelling and persuasive communication. There are three types of values; they are egoistic (self-regarding), altruistic (other-regarding), bio spheric (nature-regarding). Those holding egoistic values are less likely to engage in pro-environmental behavior or than those holding altruistic or bio spheric values. Campaigns which emphasize personal benefits of behavior or will prime egoistic values. Campaigns that emphasize social/environmental benefits of behavior or will prime altruistic and/or biospheric values (Jackson, 2005). At least, the failure of first strategy has illustrated that bio spheric is not the values of villagers in Yang Village.

The second strategy is to resort to social contract, as a defining what forcing power is would be helpful. There is a paper named "The regulation of villagers (*cunquiminyue*)" on the wall of village committee of Yang Village, which was passed in the villager congress after a democratic discussion by the all the villagers. The provision of article 2 states that each adult man in Yang Village must attend compulsory labor for 30 days; otherwise one must pay 30 yuan as a punishment even for those with a disability or for irresistible reasons. In other words, this is an obligatory agreement or contractual relationship for all the villagers to attend compulsory labor. But in fact, no one volunteers to plant trees for the contract on the wall. In their consciousness, words on the wall are just a kind of performance, which are written for the outside visitors. It is the custom and practice logic that regulate villagers' behaviors. To some extent, it could be concluded that the contract spirit, prevailing in western civilization, may be decomposed when colliding with Chinese rural society even in 21st century.

When it comes to the third strategy, it is personal incomes. The villagers would rather be punished by 30 yuan per day, because they know if they don't plant trees, no one is going to plant, but the program can't be cancelled for the political reasons. They will attend this program only when the village committee calls for labors with current market price, that is, 80 yuan per day in 2010 in west China. This is the strategy that worked.

From these three strategies and their respective effects, the conclusion is that villagers in Yang Village care about their personal economic profits much more than environmental benefit or villagers' social contract. This reflects on their egoistic value, this also explains why just the third strategy worked eventually.

In fact, public projects like afforestation in Yang Village can bring about not only economical benefits but also ecological goods, that is, increasing villagers' incomes and improving environment by afforesting barren hills. But when looking deep into the whole process of this project, there are obvious hidden interest and unfair resource allocation. In all the expense, 40% is labor fees for all the villagers, while 60% (except for saplings fees) is for machinery costs. But the primary machines used in this project are two Excavators and a loader, owned by Laoyang. So Lao yang is the biggest winner in the afforestation project as a hero who has brought about public projects, despite his slogan is to improve the ecological circumstance and to increase farmers' income. To be fair, nowadays Yang Village owns more greening areas and everyone gets economic benefits from afforestation project.

4. Shepherds' Dilemma

As illustrated above, Lao yang single handedly manages the afforestation project from its conception to implementation. In this process, none of the villager's interest had been taken into consideration. However, on the one hand, most of the villagers get the profits as they want from the Greening program, on the other hand, the laws and regulations followed by the program put some villagers in an awkward position.

On November 24, 2007, the People's Congress of Shaanxi Province has passed the bill Grazing Prohibition which was to take effect on March 1, 2008. It requires all people's governments at or above the county level to take the duty to protect forest and grass vegetation, and close planning hillsides for afforestation and grass, and prohibit grazing. So, in 2008 the county government of Yang Village is sued its No.19 document called "Administrative Measures of Grazing Prohibition and Livestock Raising", in which article 12 claimed to fine the villagers grazing illegally for 30 yuan for every sheep, and 50 yuan for every big animal(cattle or horse).

Many locals in Yang Village raise sheep for living. For example, 30 sheep for Xia Chonggui, 25 for Yang Ruide, 15 for Xia Qibin, but over 100 sheep for Xia Long fang. Each sheep can be sold for nearly 800 yuan, so over 100 sheep is about 80,000 yuan, which consists of the main income of Xia Long fang. The key problem is that grazing is forbidden by the regulation. Local government requires that every village committee take care of their own territory; what's more, the county and township government will organize the law enforcement officers to check irregularly. If grazing is found, they will impose a fine to the shepherd, or confiscate the sheep, and criticize the leader of the shepherd.

Cao, Li Chen and Xin xiao Yu argue that simply prohibiting cultivation and grazing (Cao, Li Chen & Xin xiao Yu, 2009a) is not an effective solution. All the sheep raisers think that it will increase the cost by raising sheep in captivity. Due to this kind of mutton's taste not as good as the grazing ones they could be not sold out at the same high price as those grazing ones. To some extent, these villagers are seemed to be rational economic man in this case. They understand this regulation in the way as my sheep cannot eat the grass of my village, but they can eat in other villages. In this way, we can understand why everybody in Yang Village knows Xia Long fang is grazing, but no one care about him. In fact, the leader of village nearby once came to Yang Village to find Lao yang and told him someone was grazing, and he wanted Lao yang to help him to find the shepherd and punish him. Interestingly, Lao yang said, "yes, I knew somebody was grazing, but I didn't exactly who it was, and if you can find him, then you can punish him."*In this way, Lao yang protected his own villager, even one who broke the law.

It is necessary here to further analyze the principle of Lao yang's attitude and behavior. As previously mentioned, Lao yang is the biggest winner in afforestation program in Yang Village; secondly, as the leader of Yang Village, when faced with an interest confrontation between his villagers and the village nearby, he unhesitatingly chooses to protect his villagers even at the expense of ignoring regulations; thirdly, confronting with the worrying prospect of his hometown, he would rather use all his political economy resources to apply for the biggest profits for Yang Village to solve the poverty problems. It is obvious that the principle of Lao yang is flexible, depending on concrete reference in different context. Specifically, like a concentric circle, his individual interest locates at the center; the periphery is arranged according to others' importance to him in diminishing order. So, the principle, in the view of the sociologist Fei Hsiao-tung (Fei Xiaotong), is pattern of differences (Hsiao-tung, 2007), which is the typical characteristic of Chinese traditional rural society.

Another dilemma the sheep farmers face is the risk that their sheep will be confiscated at any time. As Xia Long fang said, the policeman often drove to the village, killed the sheep and dragged it to the car as soon as they found the sheep in hillsides. "These officers were just like robbers. They fined me

*Fieldwork interview of Lao yang, May 5th, 2010, in Lao yang's village office, by Yao Sha.

and ate my mutton. They should not eat my mutton."*Xia Long fang here tries to explain this phenomenon using contradicting framework between officials and civilians. But in fact the shepherds' dilemma is more conflict between villagers' pursue it for higher economic benefits and the rude management methods, even the paradox between modern concept of environmental protection and local, traditional mode of production mode. In Xia Long fang's discontent discourse, no words referring to ecology or environment appears. This shows that the villagers of Yang Village either don't care about the local ecological environment, or choose the latter weighing between the overall environment value and the individual economic interests. "They may be stigmatized for being unable to 'understand' the importance of ecological restoration or properly value the environment" (Cao, Xu, Chen & Wang, 2009b). However at the other level, this situation also suggests that environmental consciousness is still weak in China rural areas. Under this circumstance, environmental policies during executing process would suffer much resistance if without considering all the influential people's interests when making environmental policies. In other words, the procedural justice in the formulation and implementation of environmental policy is important.

5. Conclusion

Above all is an ethnography story happened in a far away village in west China. The afforestation project is a part of the national project, The Three-North Shelterbelt Program. The case of Yang Village demonstrates how a village leader through chasing project mobilized local villagers to participate in the implementation of the program. Throughout this process, there was also emerging tensions and conflicts amongst the locals, demonstrated by the conflicting mode of production as well as controversial environmental policy. It can be concluded that natural ecological protection is never the only dimension of a whole ecological policy or environmental project, it cannot be carried out in the vacuum. On the contrary, all the policy should be put into practice in the interaction among specific social political, economy, cultural, social psychology, and customs. As far as Yang Village case is concerned, there is especially the following two kind of interaction:

In the case of Yang Village, economy ideology plays a dual role. Not only does this strategy redirect the publics' attention from environmental protection on to economic development, it also mobilizes the public's will power to participate in this afforestation project.

It is a typical ecological modernization perspective for the central government to plan The Three-North Shelterbelt Project to realize both environmental and economic benefits. The general persuasiveness of environmental modernization thesis rests, however, refusing to see the supposed trade-off between environmental concerns and economic growth in zero-sum terms. What are known as "win-win" examples of ecological control are increasingly emphasized? Given the power of money, it is vital to show that ecological modernization can be profitable (David, 1998). However, the original intention of the Three-North Shelterbelt Projects is to restore the ecology and to protect the environment. But when it comes to Yang Village, faced with village leader who cares village economic development and villagers who are concerned with their own pockets, this project either becomes a useful flag for Lao yang to chase project or is ignored completely by the villagers. That is to say in Yang Village, where economic benefits are the primary concern, the values and meanings contained in environmental policies and projects are neglected. Instead financial subsidy and bank loans behind the project are focused even magnified.

However, economy supremacy is the important driving force to mobilize villagers to participate into planting trees. Fortunately, most of waste hills and mountains have been green again in the last decade. While protecting the environment is not inner drive for villagers to participate in the afforestation project, but the economic benefits as an external stimulus effectively lead the villagers to join in, thereby eventually realizing the aim of the Three North Shelter forest Project to some extent.

*Fieldwork interview of Xia Long fang, October 5th, 2009, in Xia Long cai's home, by Yao Sha.

Will these greening practices potentially change the villagers' environmental consciousness? Anyhow, a further observation and research is needed.

Secondly, traditional rural culture and local production practice plays a subtle role in the designing and implementation process of environmental policies, projects and regulations. Yang Village still retains strong culture heritage of traditional rural society. "The regulation of villagers (*cunguiminyue*)" is kind of surface practice rather than a factually binding social contract; Those attitudes and behaviors of Lao yang demonstrates the differences of social relationship; Lao Yang and the villagers all ignore the grazing prohibition rules in order to protect their villagers. All of these above demonstrate that some profoundly complicated intertwined consciousness have appeared after decades of modernization in China. On the one hand, seeking for economical profits has become the general behavior principal for all the villagers. But on the other hand the cultural traditions of rural society still has strong vitality, even to some extent these traditions could resist the invasion of the spirit of social contract and modern management institutions with modernity characteristics. In addition, the problem why the traditional production mode like shepherding become illegal, inspires a further thinking about whether environmental policy makers should take the production practice of traditional rural society into account, how to effectively integrate this contradiction, making the environmental protection compatible with the life style and production mode harmoniously. This article at least contributes one living case to deal with this problem. Specifically, in rural China areas, it is the cultural tradition and production practice that should be taken into consideration, instead of framework of just only modernity and social contract, when the environmental policies or projects are designed.

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