Study on Chinese Farmers Unemployment Aid Predicament under the Domain of Administrative Ethics

ZHANG Zhen  LIU Zhao  SHAO Yi-Yang
University of Electronics Science and Technology of China, Chengdu, Sichuan Province, P.R. China, 610054

Abstract Currently, unemployment problem resulting from land expropriation in rural China has kept cropping up, which deserves attention from two levels including “metaphysical” speculation and “sub-physical” thinking. With respect to the previous one, priority should be given to the confirmation of value orientation of public administrative institution arrangement as it is fundamental to public administration. As regards “sub-physical” thinking, two aspects will be focused on including review on institution arrangement of aid to unemployed farmers under the domain of administrative ethics and review on re-arrangement of Chinese farmers unemployment aid procedures under the domain of administrative ethics. Once implemented, the above-mentioned measures will to a certain extent make up for the defects in aid institution of Chinese farmers unemployment in the process of urbanite-transformation.

Key words Process of urbanite-transformation, Farmers unemployment, Institution predicament, Ethical review

1. Introduction
Whether in urban and rural integration or in the process of “integrating villages into towns” in new rural construction, two-way development of urban pastoralization and rural urbanization have been experienced by advanced countries without exception. China, as a new-emerging modernized country, will undoubtedly undergo the travail. Contemporarily, domestic conditions have inevitably led to unemployment of farmers and great difficulty lying in their re-employment. As social administrators, governments, especially local governments, are stuck in a predicament against their will, in which inaction is undesirable while it is more than hard to do something. Newspapers are rife with notorious affairs caused by unemployment of farmers resulting from land expropriation and city demolition, raising a hue and cry among the public and receiving high attention from relevant state departments. Academia has also kept up with the trend and put forward beneficial suggestions after careful thinking from different domains and perspectives. The thesis is aimed at briefing on predicament, reasons and strategies as to Chinese farmers unemployment aid institution arrangement under the domain of administrative ethics.

2. Predicament of Chinese farmers unemployment aid institution arrangement
Against the backdrop of urban and rural integration prevailing nationwide under the guidance of new socialist rural construction spirit, unemployment problem resulting from land expropriation has kept cropping up. According to data available, in the past three decades since the reform and opening-up, expropriation for infrastructure construction and commercial projects has brought about more than 83 million landless farmers.[1] It’s more alarming that acceleration of urbanization coupled with growing need for construction land has caused escalating population of landless farmers, which directly leads to increasing unemployment. Statistics in overall national land use outline has shown

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1 Zhang Zhen (1959), male, philosophy doctor in China Renmin University, professor and doctor tutor at University of Electronic Science and Technology, mainly researching into ethics, ideological political education and administrative ethics
2 Liu Zhao (1974), female, doctor in Marxism Education College of University of Electronic Science and Technology, deputy secretary of Party Branch and associate professor in Art College of Xihua Normal University, mainly researching into ideological political education and ethics
3 Shao Yi yang (1986), male, graduate in Political and Public Management College of University of Electronic Science and Technology
unemployment, we cannot jump to sweeping conclusion that government is all for their own sake, nor relative, quite a few problem formulation and implementation of public administrative policy is for the sake of administrative That is, which group of people does the public policy or pub problem is a cognitive one as to unemployment caused by landless farmers in urbanite previous disputes in academia. Thus, in public decision development of administrative field, which has won recognition among a majority of people after retrospect on reductionism (also called social cont fairness in weighing between administrative efficiency and social fairness. With public administrative value orientation as to whether priority should be given to efficiency or the central government has forcefully and unduly expropriating land. village leaders work hand in glove with local governments, develop maintain their position and gain control over large amount of compensation funds in expropriation, tend to disp proprietor of collective property rights is separated from right implementer, so some village leaders property, is not owned by the state. In the absence of scientific decision and democratic supervision, disposal rights regarding land, yet farmland in the constitutional form of collective ownership of public property, is not owned by the state. In the absence of scientific decision and democratic supervision, proprietor of collective property rights is separated from right implementer, so some village leaders tend to dispose of collective assets on behalf of farmers without democratic consultation. In order to maintain their position and gain control over large amount of compensation funds in expropriation, village leaders work hand in glove with local governments, developers and land-use companies in forcefully and unduly expropriating land. Just as many scholars hold, current land-loss process for farmers in urbanization may be well considered as “a non-marker free transaction occurring between the mighty public rights agency (local governments) and vulnerable farmland proprietor (rural collective)”. As a result, the excessive behavior naturally has been questioned by public opinions and the central government has corrected it. From a theoretical perspective, the above-mentioned is related with public administrative value orientation as to whether priority should be given to efficiency or fairness in weighing between administrative efficiency and social fairness. According to government reductionism (also called social contract theory), social fairness is sure to be the core value in public administrative field, which has won recognition among a majority of people after retrospect on development of Max Weber’s bureaucracy theory into new public administrative theory despite previous disputes in academia. Thus, in public decision-making and implementation, the primary problem is a cognitive one as to unemployment caused by landless farmers in urbanize-transformation. That is, which group of people does the public policy or public administrative activity work for? After value orientation of public administrative policy is determined, nameless, supposing formulation and implementation of public administrative policy is for the sake of administrative relative, quite a few problems lying in this regard remain to be solved. As regards farmer unemployment, we cannot jump to sweeping conclusion that government is all for their own sake, nor can we say the government has completely forsaken their own interests. It calls for an explanation that
government has an inclination of “public person”. Actually, such kind of government is not rarely seen in real life. They provide necessary supporting measures such as employment training, guidance, help and aid for unemployed farmers in urban and rural integration and the new socialist rural construction and issue relevant policies, laws and regulations as systemic guarantee. Thus, they indeed take farmers’ interest into account, so have they fulfilled their obligations. From time to time, however, disputes arising from unfair compensation for farmers will evolve into social problems and problems from farmers running out of compensation fund within a couple of years after becoming urbanites will crop up. In the final analysis, farmer unemployment is influenced by both internal and external factors. As to previous one, qualities of farmers themselves remain to be improved while regarding the latter one, objective environment of market economy exerts a certain limit. It is the double factors that lie behind the problem. The expropriated land, after reasonable arrangement, cannot completely solve future troubles. Re-employment doesn’t necessarily mean competency, let alone consistency. From a theoretical point of view, farmer unemployment also involves external factors including government and market. Faced with arrangement for unemployed farmers, government tends to more expectant than it is capable of, impressing people with a “dysfunctional” one. If arrangement is totally left to the market, government function absence and dereliction of duty are inevitably suspected. Furthermore, the market itself is not competent enough for this job, thus impressing people with a “dysfunctional” market. Contemporarily, domestic conditions have inevitably led to unemployment of farmers and great difficulty lying in their re-employment. As social administrators, governments are stuck in a predicament against their will, in which inaction is undesirable while it is more than hard to do something. Therefore, in urban and rural integration and new socialist rural construction or in other words, in the process of urbanite-transformation, unemployment of farmers due to expropriation has brought rigorous challenges for government administration.

3. Reasons for predicament of Chinese farmers unemployment aid institution arrangement

Farmer unemployment arousing great attention from the public originates in urbanite-transformation process. Both China and the west have experienced or are experiencing this process. Its presence in China is no accidental, but contains its own deep reason except what it is in common with the western countries. Since the reform and opening-up adopted in the 1970s, China has achieved remarkable accomplishment in various aspects. With further social and economic development, however, China has also been encountered with a lot of difficulties, among which continuous existence of urban-rural dual structure and its trend of further escalation is an important one. It has severely restricted China’s economy in developing into an intensive one, so the difficulty has received attention from both the society and the state. It is against this backdrop that China has advocated new socialist rural construction and formulated policies on urban and rural integration with demonstration areas springing up in large numbers. There is no denying that some of them have yielded outstanding results. In this two-way process of urban pastoralization and rural urbanization, the central government has attached great importance and local governments have made active response with some farmers willingly involved. All these are attributable to the satisfaction of their interests and the result of three-party game.

As for the central government, shortening urban and rural gap from a holistic perspective is concerned with sustainable development of social economy, social harmony and stability. Solving the problem of unemployed farmer settlement is now the top priority on the country’s agenda. As it will cost a big sum, the central government is not likely to bear all the costs and the principle of taking into consideration three aspects including the state, local governments and unemployed farmers should be adhered to. The central government is mainly responsible for the supply of public products in terms of policies. Although the state is engaged in constructing social security system, emphasis is still laid on cities and some economically-advanced rural areas. Under the circumstances of severe employment pressure felt by the whole nation, urban employment is yet to be settled effectively, not to speak of unemployed farmers. Hence, the country has its own difficulty.
When it comes to local governments, it’s their bounden duty to develop social economy in the administered areas. As regards tax which is indispensable for maintaining normal operation of the government, only after the task of national tax is fulfilled, could local tax be touched upon. Some economically-advanced regions may rest assured while it’s a luxury to mention guarantee in remote and isolated areas. Even for economically-advanced regions, urban maintenance and social economic development hinge on a huge sum of money. If unpractical political performance happens to hit the governments, they’ll end up in disaster in fund management. Thus, it’s more than natural for them to shift the fund source to expropriation. As the current state-owned and collective land assets management system lacks property rights constraints and most of the land income goes to local governments, “land-sale mechanism” takes into shape. Some local governments have found a shortcut to accomplish excellent political performance, increase financial income and improve local welfare through “expropriating land at a low price while selling it high”. Then, “land-selling” governments have mushroomed. Reasons lying behind the huge sum of practical income land sale has brought to the governments are illustrated as follows. Firstly, when farmland is transformed into urban construction land, its market value will rise by dozens of times, scores of times and even one hundred times while compensation fund for landless farmers and rural collective only accounts for a tiny part. According to survey, if cost price is set at 100 (expropriation price plus various types of taxes levied by governments at all levels), farmers only receive 5% to 10% and rural collective economic organization 25% to 30% while 60% to 70% goes to hands of governments and all departments. The huge amount of value-added benefits arising from cost price to sale price is obtained by brokers or local governments. Secondly, expropriation expansion is beneficial to investment attraction. A large number of local governments rely on cheap land as the main advantage to attract commercial investment and in the absence of projects, enclose land to construct development zones and various parks on the grounds of “planting plane trees to attract golden phoenix”. They have achieved “good political performance” but wasted arable land. Thirdly, expropriation expansion helps raise urban-construction fund. More expropriated land means more urban manageable land, which also implies more urban-construction fund for the implementation of larger-scale urban renovation and extension. Contemporarily, actual occupation of arable land in some coastal provinces and cities has broken through the planned target and some of them even overdraft the construction land intended for several years later in the particular year. On the other hand, rent-seeking behavior of interest groups has further abetted expropriation towards farmland. Government monopoly in first-class land market has made rent-seeking behavior of interest groups as a matter of course. Prevalence of rent-seeking in current society begins in collective form of two-way profit-gaining by interest groups and governments. For governments, rent-seeking is passive. Interest groups prevail on governments to implement control policies in their favor through giving them illegal payments, hence the rent. Influenced by interest groups, governments make use of their powers to protect vested interest of interest groups. Thus, land enclosure at a low price, land hoarding and land speculation inevitably run rampant. Land expropriation not only provides development land, but also helps raise construction fund. No wonder it has become the meat and potatoes for local governments. Nevertheless, where to fund the land and how to utilize it have haunted the thoughts of many local governments as land is a scare resource and the state has set restriction of 1.8 billion acres of basic protected arable land. As an old saying goes, “When there is a policy issued, there must be a strategy in response”, some local governments think of making up for the occupied or would-be occupied arable land by using substandard homesteads. Then, the limit set by the state hasn’t been broken through. Isn’t it a good idea for these governments! For the sake of policy implementation, farmers are invited to “go upstairs”, so they have lost the original homestead, private plot and even the arable land. If it happens, what can the farmers, who are so called just because of the land they live by, rely on to seek a living and settle down? The monetary settlement “jack-of-all-trades” approach taken universally now pushes farmers to the verge of unemployment without providing them with a substitute employment security mechanism. According to relevant provisions, the total of land compensation fees and resettlement fees should not exceed 30 times the average output in three years before the expropriation of arable land, which means farmers and the groups they belong to can only receive less than 30 years of agricultural income of the land. For those seeking a living on their own,
personal resettlement compensation fees reach four to six times the average output in three years before expropriation. Even if output is calculated at 1200 Yuan per acre, each person will only receive 6000 to 7000 Yuan, far from enough for self-settlement. It cannot be denied that local governments have indeed exerted efforts in providing employment guidance, training, resettlement and relief for unemployed farmers in the process of urbanite-transformation and some unemployed farmers have obtained security in maintaining self-interest. A number of farmers, however, are faced with another round of unemployment after they take the job and others are not willing to find a job resting on the compensation fees or expropriation fees they get. Once they run out of money, they’ll be bogged down in precarious life. Of course qualities of farmers to a certain extent explain the phenomenon, but do local governments have any responsibility in this regard? If so, what kind of responsibility is it?

For unemployed farmers, “being invited upstairs” has after all satisfied their long-cherished dream of becoming urbanites. Now they no longer need to obtain residency status through buying a house in the city, which was commonly adopted in the past. It seems to them a beneficial thing to receive local government compensation fund while having the opportunity to move out of homesteads into buildings. Many worries arise over whether compensation is fair and whether farmers can be fully qualified for the new positions, so local governments are expected deal with the “follow-ups” in a proper way. In fact, local governments only play a limited role, sometimes they turn into dysfunctional ones. Market role and qualities of farmers are also the key part. It is the interplay of three predicaments that have thrown farmers into a dilemma in the urbanite-transformation process of employment to unemployment and vice versa. To sum up, predicament of Chinese unemployed farmers aid institution arrangement in urbanite-transformation is mainly attributable to existence of dysfunctional governments and markets and qualities of farmers which are yet to be improved.

4. Strategies regarding predicament of Chinese farmers unemployment aid institution arrangement

A way out must be found in a predicament. As farmers are the vulnerable part guided by the government in the problem, attention should be paid to government. It needs to be made clear in public decision-making and implementation as to what policies have been implemented and what have been neglected. Among them, it should also be questioned which are reasonable and which have problems. Regarding implementation, whether government information is transparent or not? Whether farmer participation rights have been secured? Whether social supervision is ensured and accountability system is settled? A key to the problem is not difficult to find once the studies on these questions are delved into. It cannot be denied that this track is resorted to only on the precondition that some people in academia have paid attention to the problem to different extents. What is lacked now is the value judgment towards existent farmers unemployment aid institution arrangement and the advancement of corresponding improvement measures. Compared with the first method, this kind of research focuses more on “why” than on “what” and it can be regarded as the in-depth study on the basis of previous one. Since administrative ethical perspective is typical of this kind of research, it might as well be considered as an effective approach. The ethical perspective tends to be impartial and fairer, avoiding taking stance for one party, thus it’s looked on as an important perspective or approach in understanding and solving the problem. In specific implementation plans, two levels dominate the perspective including “metaphysical” speculation and “sub-physical” thinking with the former guiding the latter and the latter serving as the implementation of the former. In terms of the former one, it is categorized in public administrative ethics and for most part ignored in public administration. Especially when it comes to Weber’s bureaucratic way of thinking, public administration often lost its way and basic functions of public administration in maintaining and promoting the realization of public interest could not be given into full play. Therefore, “metaphysical” speculation is adopted in solving unemployment of farmers, which is first and foremost aimed at determining the value orientation of public administration institution arrangement (also called administrative ethical review on public administration value orientation). In other words, the problem is “what group of people is targeted at?” This is a fundamental problem and it’s futile to choose other paths. The latter one is
categorized in public administration scientific outlook. It played a leading role in public administration field in the past and contributed to the establishment and protection of bureaucracy. Then, “sub-physical” thinking is utilized in unemployment of farmers. The focus involves two dimensions: First of all, review on unemployed farmers aid institution under the domain of administrative ethics requires fast formulation of policies, improvement of policies and regulations as well as the correction of outdated policies. The following aspects are suggested to be focused on: Firstly, farmland ownership institution shall be set up characterized by new-type property relationship to meet demand of market economy. Now, three kinds of viewpoints dominate the academia on land ownership. The first one is total cancellation of collective land ownership and confirmation of final and coercive ownership of the state towards all the land. The second one is cancellation of collective ownership and realizing rural land privatization. The third one is partial cancellation of collective land ownership and actualizing three-party co-existence including state-owned rural land, collective-owned land and private land of farmers or two-party co-existence including collective-ownership and farmer privation. The author of the thesis believes that the key to aid to unemployed farmers lies in whether there exists a proprietor to take effective responsibility for value-increasing of the assets and protect rational use of land rather than in who is the land owner. Therefore, what we should do now is not haggle on whether collectivism shall be cancelled. Instead, traditional collectivism should be reformed and optimized and farmland ownership institution that meets demand of market economy shall be set up featuring new-type property relationship. Secondly, farmland compensation mechanism should be improved to ensure that farmers share value-added benefits of land. Land expropriation compensation shall be calculated according to market price before the expropriation. With interest of land owners taken into account, compensation shall include the current value of expropriated land, expectant future value of the land and the loss caused to owners of adjacent land by expropriation, so that interest of land owners is fully guaranteed. Compensation standard hearing system and judicial arbitration system over land expropriation disputes shall be built up, allowing and encouraging farmland to participate in cooperative development of operational projects or self-development through using owner shares and leasing. Thirdly, re-employment training system is expected to be optimized for landless farmers to explore more job opportunities. Government should spare no efforts in solving employment problems of landless farmers at labor age from multi-channels through various means. Employment opportunities shall be provided for landless farmers and their children in first time. The government also needs to ensure that relocates have fixed income and landless farmers are entitled to the same policy favor and tax preferential treatment with urban laid-offs. Fourthly, a sound social security system must be set up, clearing away all the worries left in hearts of landless farmers. Currently, farmers are most vulnerable in land expropriation and they sell land at a low price, but are not accessible to huge margins between land expropriation and use. Facing this unfair phenomenon, government has the responsibility to minimize loss caused to farmers and establishment of a sound social security system is a good choice. Government, collective and farmers can cooperate with each other in raising funds to set up a security fund for landless farmers, entitling farmers to minimal living security, endowment insurance and medical insurance reducing their risks and promoting social stability. Fifthly, efforts in reforming domicile system should be intensified to transform landless farmers into urbanites. In order to facilitate role transformation of farmers, priority shall be given to China’s domicile system reform and consistent residence registration system should be launched in both urban and rural areas. Domicile system reform is expected to expand from small towns to major cities, removing human-made urban-rural barriers and breaking through residential status limits. Thus, role of landless farmers receives re-positioning. Citizen preferential treatment is endowed to landless farmers through removing obstacles in thought, policy, system and information left in their minds and such means as developing economy, deepening reform and adjusting policies, to ensure equality of landless farmers with urban citizens in employment, pension, medical care, education, birth giving and affordable housing. Thus, they could successfully transform into urbanites.

Secondly, review on re-arrangement of unemployed farmers aid procedures under the domain of administrative ethics requires government information transparency, farmer participation rights guarantee, procedure design standardization, social supervision accuracy and accountability system
implementation. Specifically speaking, firstly, government information is transparent. Emerson, an American scholar once satirically pointed out, “All the evil things with government involved are all done furtively. If public know them beforehand and hold discussions, they’re not possible to happen. Therefore, we shall stick to the principle of disclosing everything instead of concealing them before we sometimes make exceptions which are necessary.” [7] As a result, government information must be open in expropriation process and local governments are suggested post announcements once the expropriation compensation re-settlement plan is decided. The government should also host hearings to poll opinions from rural collective economic organization and farmers owning the land. People present are not limited to some rural authority. Rather, each farmer is focused on so that they could take part in expropriation negotiation as an independent subject of rights. Secondly, farmer participation rights are guaranteed. National administrative departments have the obligations to inform land owners and all stake-holders of land of the expropriation and set a necessary announcement deadline. When stake-holders are objective against the decision, endowed with objection rights, they’re entitled to resorting to second arbitration procedure. If they feel dissatisfied with compensation, they could also put forward objection or administration suit to upper-class reconsideration departments or court to protect their legitimate rights. Thirdly, social supervision is ensured. The most important measure to ensure social supervision is the introduction of hearing procedures. According to Act 22 of Ministry of Land and Resources, National Land and Resources Hearing Regulations, hearings shall be introduced in land expropriation and land expropriation compensation hearing rules should be launched to prevent expropriation rights from being abused. Once resettlement compensation which is related with interest of farmers is involved in expropriating contracted land, farmers have the rights to require attendance in hearings. Administrative departments cannot act as judges in their own cases. They shall improve transparency of the activity, increase acceptability of administration and ensure hearing rights of farmers from objective rules. The introduction of hearing procedures is of great importance to supervising the legality of expropriation procedures, protecting legitimate rights of farmers and maintaining social fairness and stability. Fourthly, accountability system is implemented. Interim Provisions on Implementing Accountability System for Party and Government Leaders enacted by the central government is aimed at standardizing and legalizing accountability and restricting administration of leaders through a system. Its implementation makes a great contribution to preventing rights abuse of officials. Then, how to stop leaders from regarding the accountability system as an unpractical one? Principles must be adhered to. Four “mores” shall be laid emphasis on, including more public recognition, more standardized procedures, more strict standards and more appropriate positions, eliminating “chance mentality” of officials which is conducive to the authority and solemnness of accountability rules.

5 Conclusion

In conclusion, the above-mentioned measures will to a certain extent make up for the defects in Chinese farmers unemployment aid institution in urbanite-transformation process. In public administration field, however, encountered with double pressure from both optimizing bureaucratic system and transcending the system, China still has a long way to go in improving the aid system, which surely will cost time.

References
