

Analysis of China's "three supports and one assistance" policy from the perspective of policy tool

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Abstract:

This paper takes China's "three supports and one assistance" policy implemented from 2018 to 2023 as the research subject and conducts a quantitative analysis of policy texts through the establishment of a two-dimensional analytical framework. The study reveals that the overall policy structure in China is unbalanced, evident in issues such as an overemphasis on environmental policies, a lack of supporting construction policies, low participation from universities and rural entities, a relatively homogenous type of policy texts, and a dearth of authoritative legal and regulatory control documents. Consequently, it is imperative to appropriately optimize the overall structure of policy tools, comprehensively consider the rational layout of various policy instruments, enhance the development of supporting facilities, laws, and regulations, promote the long-term and sustainable role of universities and rural subjects in policies, and further supplement the diversity of relevant policy texts.

Keywords: three supports and one assistance, Policy instruments, Two-dimensional analysis, Text analysis

1. Introduction

The "three supports and one assistance" policy is a policy issued by China in 2006 to organize college graduates to work in rural communities to support education, agriculture, medical services and poverty alleviation. It not only plays a leading role in guiding and encouraging college graduates to employment at the grass-roots level, but also supplements valuable talents for the grass-roots front line. By 2023, the "three supports and one assistance" program has recruited 42,000 college graduates across the country to serve at the grassroots level, of which 4,996 college graduates have been selected to go to the national key rural revitalization counties ^[1].

2. Literature Review

Yan Rui summarized and reflected on the challenges faced in the work of "three supports and one assistance" in Wenxi County, Shanxi Province, and put forward effective suggestions ^[2]. Shao Yonglu reflected on the practice of the "three supports and one assistance" plan in Heze City, Shandong Province, and discussed the practical problems existing in the actual practice of the "three supports and one assistance" plan and how to improve it ^[3]. Yu Dejun summarized the following three problems from the policy level, university level and individual level: the lack of healthy long-term development mechanism of the "three supports and one assistance" program, the need to

improve the degree of attention of universities, the need to increase publicity, the low sense of identity of college graduates, and the lack of a strong sense of belonging, so as to promote further strategic optimization of the "three supports and one assistance" program ^[4]. Li Wenmin also mentioned in the Empirical Study of the "Three Supports and One Assistance" Plan taking Hubei as an example, the evaluation of the effect of the "three supports and one assistance" policy, the analysis of countermeasures and the judgment of the future policy development trend ^[5]. As for the research and analysis of "three supports and one assistance" policy texts from the perspective of policy tools, this paper will introduce an instrumental perspective into the text analysis.

3. Theoretical basis and policy analysis framework

Policy tools are specific means and methods used to solve a certain social problem or achieve a certain policy goal. Howlett and Ramesh divided it into three categories: voluntary, mandatory and hybrid ^[6]. Mc Donnell and Elmore divided policy tools into five categories: command type, incentive type, exhortation type, capacity building type and system change type ^[7]. Rothwell & Zegweld divided the policy tools into supply side, demand side and environment side, which can well reveal the structure of policies and the scope of different policies through the

division of dimensions, which is a classic policy analysis framework [8]. The existing research points out that for the main body of policy, the supply side and the demand side show a push-pull role, while the environment side plays an indirect influence role.

3.1 X dimension: Basic policy instrument di-

mension

As shown in Figure 1, environmental policy tools, supply policy tools and demand policy tools jointly influence and play a role in the “three supports and one assistance” [9]. Table 2 provides the classification, function and examples of corresponding policy tools for the “three supports and one assistance” policy.

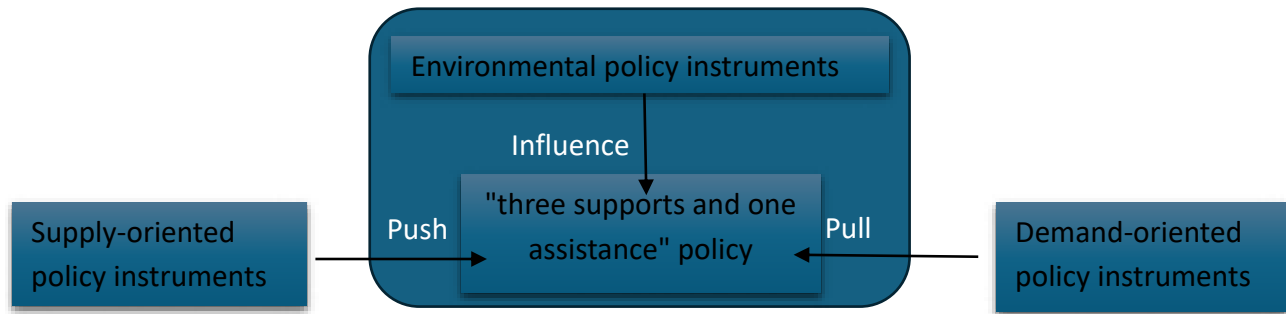


Figure 1: The effect of policy tools on the “three supports and one assistance” program

Table 1: Classification and examples of X-dimension policy tools

Tool Type	Tool Name	Function	Examples
Environmental policy instruments	Goal programming	Show the way	Plans and policy objectives to guide and encourage college graduates to work at the grassroots level
	Service guarantee	Improve the mechanism and increase the enthusiasm of personnel	Encourage community-level service units to strengthen work and life security, pay housing provident funds in accordance with actual conditions, and handle supplementary medical and commercial insurance
	Regulatory control	Standardized management	Organize and carry out mid-term evaluation to make a comprehensive summary of the completion of goals and tasks, the improvement and implementation of policies, and the implementation of management services
	Strategic measure	Implement the target	In order to optimize the structure of grassroots talent team and promote the development of grassroots economic and social undertakings, the feasible strategy is the specific implementation of the target

Supply-oriented policy instruments	Capital investment	Increase support for matching funds	Provide central financial support for training, grant subsidies to remote areas in hardship, and provide corresponding subsidy funds to ensure the smooth implementation of the “three supports and one assistance” plan
	Personnel training	Professional support	Implement the special plan to improve the ability of “three supports and one assistance” personnel, organize and carry out training at various levels, and incorporate it into the training scope of agriculture and rural areas, health, water conservancy and other industries, and constantly improve the comprehensive quality and professional level of “three supports and one assistance” personnel
	Information service	Publicity and guidance	Carry out policy publicity, push and guide policies and measures to encourage college graduates to work at the grassroots level
	Facility construction	Improve environmental conditions	Strengthen the construction of infrastructure such as office and accommodation conditions for grass-roots personnel
Demand-oriented policy instruments	Talent need	To meet the demand for young talents at the grassroots level	Optimize the selection and recruitment structure and encourage places where conditions permit to appropriately expand the scale of recruitment in light of actual conditions
	Employment demand	Ease employment pressure	In the public recruitment of county and township grass-roots institutions, a certain number or proportion of posts are taken out of the special recruitment of qualified personnel after the expiry of the service period
	Market shaping	Create an environment	Through a series of relevant policies to form college graduates actively participate in grassroots education, agriculture, medical support, to help rural revitalization of the atmosphere
	Performance supervision	Improve the comprehensive quality of personnel, establish personnel management system	Strengthen daily supervision and work style, and improve assessment and incentive mechanisms

3.2 Y-dimension: “three supports and one assistance” policy participation main dimension

As the decision-maker of policy making, the government should ensure the scientific, representative and authoritative nature of policies, and have a full and specific understanding of policy theory and practice, thus playing a leading role in the process of policy implementation^[10]. As the source unit for transporting graduates, whether universities attach importance to the “three supports and one assistance” plan, whether the publicity is in place, and whether the management mechanism is sound all determine the service quality of project volunteers and the long-term development of the project^[4]. Young college graduates are the main force of this policy, their career

outlook, values, for the reality of the situation, national conditions and the understanding of this policy, including self-cognition, their own ability level, the sense of identity of this policy and other individual factors have a profound impact on the implementation of “three supports and one assistance”. Rural grass-roots party organizations are important grass-roots forces and policy implementators, and have unshirkable responsibilities for the governance and publicity of rural image and rural environment. At the same time, due to the property of the policy object stakeholders in rural areas, their interest demands will directly affect the implementation efficiency of the “three supports and one assistance” policy. In the process of policy implementation, the policy text is the main axis, connecting

the “interest game” between the whole policy implementation subject and stakeholders, so that it forms a policy synergy. If the interests of one party are damaged in this process, the government will pay attention and feedback the relevant situation to policy makers for adjustment in a purposeful and targeted manner, thus improving the efficiency of policy implementation^[10].

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3.3 Two-dimensional analysis framework

Based on the above analysis, this paper constructs the following two-dimensional framework for policy analysis of “three supports and one assistance”, as shown in Figure 2.

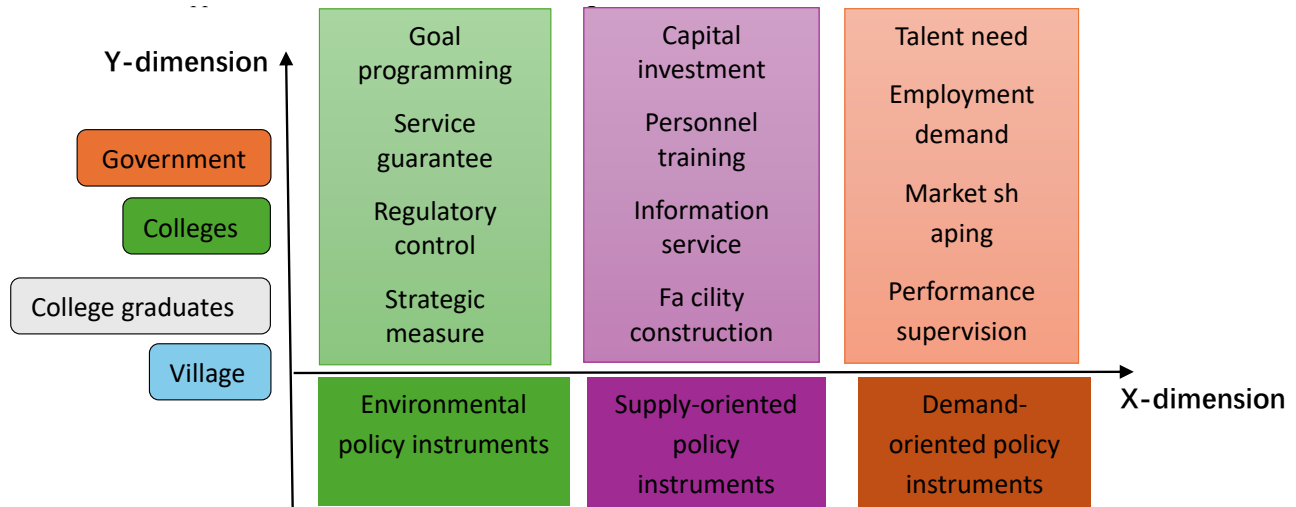


Figure2: Two-dimensional analysis framework of “three supports and one assistance”

4. Text analysis of China’s “three supports and one assistance” policy

State Council of China, this paper searched and screened 9 documents related to the policy theme of “three supports and one assistance” in China from 2018 to 2023, as shown in Table 2 for details.

4.1 Policy text selection and statistics

According to the policy document database system of The

Table 2: Text of the “three supports and one Assistance” policy at the national level in China from 2018 to 2023

Policy Number	Policy Name	Publication Time
1	《Notice on the Implementation of the “Three Supports and One Assistance” Plan for college Graduates in 2018》	2018.4.12
2	《Notice on the issuance of the 2018 “Three Supports and One Assistance” Personnel Capacity Improvement Special Plan Training Project》	2018.5.29
3	《Notice on the implementation of the “Three Supports and One Assistance” plan for college graduates in 2019》	2019.3.14
4	《Notice on the work related to the “Three Supports and One Assistance” plan for college graduates during the prevention and control of the novel coronavirus pneumonia epidemic》	2020.2.5
5	《Notice on the implementation of the “Three Supports and One Assistance” plan for college graduates in 2020》	2020.5.19
6	《Notice on Implementing the fourth Round of the “Three Supports and One Assistance” Plan for College Graduates》	2021.5.28

7	《How to register, how to treat, how to flow - focusing on the 2022 “Three Supports and One Assistance” plan》	2022.6.23
8	《Notice on the implementation of the “Three Supports and One Assistance” plan for college graduates in 2022》	2022.6.7
9	《Notice on the Implementation of the “Three Supports and One Assistance” Plan for college Graduates in 2023》	2023.6.2

From the text type, 8 of the 9 documents are department documents of The State Council, and all are in the form of “notice” text. Only one government document cited Xinhua as an interpretive text. At present, the “three supports and one assistance” plan has passed the stage of the government’s design and vigorous drive for policy implementation, but gradually according to the policy implementation process, according to the national conditions and problems found to make new policy changes, improve all aspects of the mechanism, in order to promote the better and faster realization of policy objectives.

4.2 Policy text coding and statistics

In order to further study and analyze the policy text content of “three supports and one assistance”, the policy text content of eight department documents of The State Council is coded according to the way of “policy number - chapter (clause) - item”. Among them, the “policy number” will continue to be numbered “1-9” according to the policy order in Table 2, but will no longer continue to include the interpretation of the government quoted by Xinhua News Agency in the analysis. The “Section (Terms)” number is numbered numerically according to the Policy

content section (terms) number, while the “entry” number is numbered numerically according to the specific entry order of the Policy section (terms) content. For example, the code “1-2-4” means “first policy text - second clause - fourth clause”, and the code “5-1” means “fifth policy text - first clause”. After encoding the text content of 8 policy texts, a total of 70 coding units are obtained.

4.3 Two-dimensional feature analysis

By further organizing and classifying the above codes according to the two-dimensional framework of “three supports and one assistance” policy analysis in the X and Y dimensions and making statistical data, for example, the text content “Strengthening education and training work” coded “1-2-4” is classified from the basic policy tool dimension of X dimension to the supply-oriented policy tool. From the Y-dimension, the “three supports and one assistance” policy participation main dimension belongs to the government. By analogy, after the classification of all codes is completed, the number of codes of each policy tool is counted and the percentage is calculated, as shown in Figure 3.

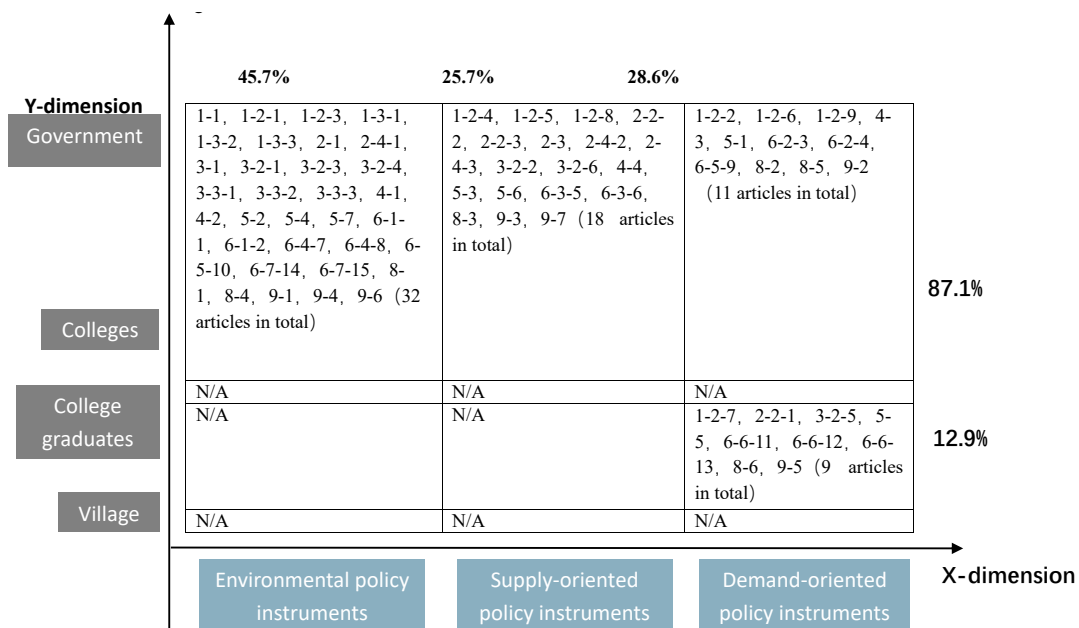


Figure3: Two-dimensional statistical diagram of policy text coding

4.3.1. X dimension analysis

On the whole, the three types of policy tools are involved in the “three supports and one assistance” policy, but it can be seen that the environmental policy tools are used most frequently, accounting for 45.7% of all policy tools. The use frequency of supply policy tools and demand policy tools was 25.7% and 28.6%, respectively. It can be seen that environmental policy tools have dominated the “three supports and one assistance” policies in recent years, preferring government authority; Supply-oriented policies and demand-oriented policies also play a considerable auxiliary role in the “three supports and one assistance”. However, the relatively few use of supply-oriented policy tools and demand-oriented policy tools, especially weakening the improvement of infrastructure construction, is not conducive to the long-term nature and stability of policies.

4.3.2. Y-dimension analysis

China’s “three supports and one assistance” policy is largely government-oriented, accounting for an overwhelming 87.1%. This reflects local governments’ focus on long-term top-down policy implementation in the implementation of the “three supports and one assistance” plan. The second is the number of policies among college graduates, accounting for only 12.9%, in order to emphasize expired service and talent flow. However, universities and villages are not involved, and there is a serious imbalance. The coordination of the diversified subjects of this policy is lacking, especially the role of universities and rural areas needs to be improved.

5. Research conclusions and policy recommendations

It can be found that the overall policy structure is unbalanced, the environmental policies are overflowed, and the facilities and supporting construction policies are insufficient. In addition, the participation of universities and rural subjects is too low, which relatively ignores and weakens their role in the policy, and the relevant content involved in the policy text is relatively lacking. At the same time, from the perspective of promulgated policy documents, the current “three supports and one assistance” policy text type is relatively simple, only the notice, the lack of opinions, notices, schemes, methods, announcements, guidelines, etc., especially the authoritative control documents of laws and regulations, and the legalization of policies has a significant impact on the inevitable path of policy evolution, laws and regulations have higher effectiveness and wider scope of adjustment. More systematic and normative^[11]. In view of these problems, in the process of using policy tools, it is suggested

that the reasonable distribution of various policy tools should be considered comprehensively to improve the working environment and facilities of “three supports and one assistance” personnel. Secondly, the diversity of policy text content should be further improved, especially the relevant laws and regulations. More importantly, it is necessary to guide and encourage the participation of colleges and villages in the policy, give full play to their role in publicity, guidance and support for college graduates, help improve and improve the enthusiasm of college graduates to participate in the “three supports and one assistance” and grassroots work, and promote more complete and deeper development of policies.

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