

The logic of change in the "rebalancing" of supply and marketing cooperatives

--Analysis based on a historical institutionalist perspective

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Abstract

Supply and marketing cooperatives are an important part of China's rural cooperative economy, playing a pivotal role in the country's economic construction and social stability. Based on the analytical framework of historical institutionalism, through combing the historical trajectory of supply and marketing cooperatives, it is found that its change mode and path of change present the logic of "equilibrium-fracture-re-equilibrium" under the joint action of endogenous power and strong factors, and the interaction of the institutional environment, institutional structure, institutional concepts, and political actors constitutes the driving mechanism of the change of supply and marketing cooperatives system. The interaction of institutional environment, institutional structure, institutional concept and political actors constitutes the power mechanism of supply and marketing cooperative system change. In the context of the new era, the supply and marketing cooperative system under the trend of "rebalancing" has become an important content of rural governance, and through the "re-embedding" of the governance process and the collaborative innovation of multiple subjects, it helps to make the supply and marketing cooperatives enter into a new benign change track and realize the long-term sustainable development of the system. The long-term sustainable development of the system can be realized through the "re-embedding" of the governance process and the collaborative innovation of multiple subjects.

Keywords

Supply and marketing cooperatives; historical institutionalism; circulation economy.

1. Introduction

The report of the Twentieth Party Congress points out that, in order to comprehensively promote the revitalization of the countryside, it is necessary to develop a new type of rural collective economy and a new type of agricultural management body and socialized services. As the integration platform of the collective economy and the main business body of the cooperative organization, supply and marketing cooperatives have gone through nearly a hundred years of development, although they have experienced several twists and turns in the wave of construction and reform, and once faded out of the vast countryside in the process of transitioning to a market economy, but by virtue of their deep organizational foundation, relatively sound service system and complete experience of mutual assistance in agriculture and the market, supply and marketing cooperatives have still become an important carrier of the Party's services for the "three rural" and revitalization of the countryside in the construction of the new countryside. In the Decision of the CPC Central Committee and State Council on Deepening Comprehensive Reform of Supply and Marketing Cooperatives issued in 2015, the direction of reform of supply and marketing cooperatives was clarified to make supply and marketing cooperatives "become a forceful force and a comprehensive platform for

servicing farmers' production and life, and a close link between the Party and the government and the farmers' masses. The Party and the government closely linked to the farmers as a bridge and link", and in the following eight years, supply and marketing cooperatives have been written into the No. 1 document of the central government as the focus of the "three rural areas" work. In November 2022, the General Office of the CPC Central Committee and the General Office of the State Council issued the "Measures for the Implementation of the Responsibility System for Rural Revitalization", which will continuously In November, the General Office of the CPC Central Committee and the General Office of the State Council issued the "Measures for the Implementation of the Rural Revitalization Responsibility System", making the deepening of reforms in key areas such as supply and marketing cooperatives, and the promotion of rural reforms to expand, accelerate, and integrate rural revitalization one of the key responsibilities for the rural revitalization of the departments of the Central Government and State organs. The grassroots organizations of supply and marketing cooperatives in Hubei, Ningxia and other places have also begun to take shape.^[1]

The "return" of the supply and marketing system at the national and social levels is an important opportunity for the integration of institutional resources and change and development. In recent years, around the theme of supply and marketing reform, scholars in China have made a lot of constructive interpretations and reflections, mainly from three aspects: first, the retrospective history of change, such as the source of the effectiveness of the right to direct^[2] and the analysis of the structural function of the^[3]; second, the analysis and promotion of advanced models, such as Lanzhou's "six constant"^[4], Liaocheng's "guaranteed income + dividend" model and Shenyang's "six constant" model. Lanzhou's "Six Continuous"^[7], Liaocheng's "Guaranteed Income + Advance Dividend" model^[5] and Shenyang's "Hehe Tong"^[6], and thirdly, the exploration of integration with specific industries, such as agricultural finance, digitalization^[8], and the circulation of medicinal herbs^[9], and so on.

From their own perspectives, existing studies have contributed to the exploration of the "black box" of the system of supply and marketing cooperatives, but inevitably there are still some unfinished business, and the focus of the point of view has made the exploration of the system itself lacking. After a century of vicissitudes and vigorous vitality, the study of the system of supply and marketing cooperatives can not only elucidate the internal mechanism behind its several changes, but also help to firmly grasp the initiative of system reform under the new historical orientation. In this context, with the analytical framework of historical institutionalism, this paper combs through the historical development of China's supply and marketing cooperative system, deduces the logic of the change of the supply and marketing cooperative system state of "equilibrium - rupture - reequilibrium", and constructs its power mechanism, so as to provide reference for the realization of the grand blueprint of rural revitalization in the new era.

2. Historical institutionalism and its analytical framework

In the 1980s, the behaviorist paradigm's emphasis on single-variable relationships and individual behavioral factors made it increasingly unable to cope with the urgent needs of "return of the system" and "return of the state" in a complex environment, and the rise of neo-institutionalism became one of the most prominent phenomena in the study of Western political science. The rise of new institutionalism has become one of the most prominent phenomena in Western political science research. New institutionalism considers institutions as the basis and rules of social and organizational behavior, and more comprehensively considers the influence of institutions and power factors on social and organizational behavior in changing environments, with stronger explanatory power and predictive power.

Rational choice institutionalism, sociological institutionalism, and historical institutionalism are the three schools of new institutionalism, of which the one that was first born from traditional political science perspectives and has had the most profound impact on political science research is historical institutionalism. Peter Howell and Rosemary Taylor - the authoritative delineators of the three schools of new institutionalism - summarize the main theoretical features of historical institutionalism from four aspects: first, the importance of the asymmetry of power in the process of system generation and operation; second, the importance of path dependence and the influence of the system in the process of system generation and operation; and third, the importance of the asymmetry of power in the process of system generation and operation. The first is the emphasis on asymmetry of power in the process of generation and operation of institutions; the second is the emphasis on path dependence and unexpected institutional outcomes in the process of generation and operation of institutions; the third is the examination of the relationship between the interaction of individuals and institutions at a broader level; and the fourth is the focus on certain factors that may have a significant impact on the political consequences in the process of integrating institutional analyses^[10].

The value of the historical institutionalist paradigm should be considered in comparison with the other two schools. Although the emergence of rational choice institutionalism is the result of the shift of the rational choice school's vision from "rationality" to "system", it still adheres to the "rational man" credo on the assumption of individual behavior; sociological institutionalism analyzes the game behavior of individual actors seeking to maximize their own interests under institutional constraints and collective choice dilemmas. However, in terms of individual behavioral assumptions, it still adheres to the creed of "rational man" and analyzes the gaming behavior of individual actors pursuing the maximization of their own interests under the constraints of the system and the dilemmas of collective choice. On the basis of reflecting on the traditional theory of bureaucracy, sociological institutionalism has seen the great significance of certain cultural activities, such as symbols, signs, and so on, for the survival of the organization, and then researched the motives of specific organizations for adopting particular forms of institutions and cultural activities. In political studies, sociological institutionalism focuses on the complex interactions between the overall social structure and irrational political institutions, arguing that political actors are shaped by specific cultural patterns and that their power in the political process derives from their position in the organizational structure. Historical institutionalism, on the other hand, makes a relatively mesopic articulation between the micro-vision of rational choice institutionalism and the macro-vision of sociological institutionalism. On the one hand, in terms of individual behavioral assumptions, historical institutionalism argues that the preferences of political actors are regulated by the system, and that they are both clear about their own interests and capable of self-reflection in the context of the systemic norms; on the other hand, it incorporates the methodologies of the other two schools, arguing that in the context of an understanding of history and political institutions, political actors are shaped by specific cultural patterns. On the other hand, historical institutionalism incorporates the methodologies of the other two schools and advocates the importance of exploring the interactions between institutional systems, environments, and political actors in the time series in the analysis of historical and real political problems. In this way, historical institutionalism not only contains the function of "grand narrative" of sociological institutionalism, but also inherits the idea of "modeling" of rational choice institutionalism, and, more importantly, it realizes the analysis of political problems under the framework of institutions over time.

The analytical framework of historical institutionalism is centered on its structural and historical paradigms. In the structural view paradigm, historical institutionalism constructs the analytical logic of "macro-environment - meso-system - micro-actors", where the variable of

environment is the deeper factor influencing the generation and evolution of the system in the macro perspective, and is the sum of political, cultural and socio-economic aspects of a particular system; the system, in the view of historical institutionalism is "formal or informal procedures, rules, norms and practices embedded in the structure of the polity or political and economic organizations"^[11], the institutional system in the framework of the structural view consists of the game between institutional demand and institutional supply, and when the institutional supply fails to meet the institutional demand in a specific environment, the willingness to change the existing system will drive people to make the corresponding behavior. At the same time, the power in the institutional system is also characterized by asymmetry; the political actors at the micro level are the main subjects of the process of system generation and evolution, which can be political elites and interest groups, as well as individual citizens with institutional preferences. The historical institutionalism paradigm of history is mainly reflected in the concept of "path dependence", the so-called "history" of historical institutionalism does not only refer to a single point in time in the past, but also emphasizes a causal relationship between events that occurred in the past and the present, i.e., a causal relationship between events that occurred in the past and the present. It emphasizes a certain causal relationship between events that occurred in the past in a time series, i.e., path dependence.

The structural paradigm and the historical paradigm have constructed the analytical framework of historical institutionalism for the generation, evolution and change of institutions from the horizontal and vertical dimensions respectively, and have explained the paths and power mechanisms of institutional change. Combined with the dual analytical framework of historical institutionalism, it is not difficult to deduce its cyclic process of "equilibrium - fracture - reequilibrium" of institutional change: on the one hand, historical institutionalism emphasizes the important role of "key nodes" in the process of institutional evolution, and when supply and demand fail to reach an agreement, the political system will be in a state of flux. On the one hand, historical institutionalism emphasizes the important role of "key nodes" in the process of institutional evolution, and when the supply and demand in the institutional system fail to reach a consensus, the political actors generate a strong willingness to make changes to the established institutional arrangements, and the equilibrium of the institutional system breaks down under the impetus of the "key nodes"; on the other hand, there is still a path dependence on the institutions in the process of change, and the system gradually tends to reach a new Equilibrium. This paper focuses on the role of four variables, namely, institutional environment, institutional structure, institutional concept and political actors, in the evolution of the supply and marketing cooperative system, and elaborates on the path dependence in the process of institutional change, so as to provide a theoretical framework of "equilibrium-fracture-re-equilibrium" for the logic of supply and marketing cooperatives' system change.

3. The logic of change in supply and marketing cooperatives

3.1. Patterns of change: causal factors and endogenous dynamics

(1) Causal factors

Different modes of change dominated the evolution of the supply and marketing cooperative system in different periods. Based on the above analysis, the tortuous development stage of the supply and marketing cooperative system was basically in the planned economy era in terms of time sequence, during which the focus of our party was on consolidating the people's democratic regime and defending the fruits of the revolution, therefore, the continuous strengthening of the power of the political party and the party-government indistinguishability of governmental decision-making became the main features of the governmental operation process in this period. The State (Political) Council, as a concrete executive body, can be seen as the policy level materialization of the Party's will^[15]. Correspondingly, the changes in the

system of supply and marketing cooperatives can also be seen as a change in the Party's will in the rural collective economy and the circulation of commodities.

(2) Endogenous dynamics

Since the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee, the pace of reform and opening up has been accelerating, and the popularization of the household contract responsibility system, which grants peasants to peasants partial property rights to their land, has to a great extent contributed to the transformation of social relations of production in the countryside. The community enterprises that had been abolished in the 1960s and 1970s gradually developed into a strong growth point for the rural economy, with their total output value increasing from 49.307 billion yuan in 1978 to 101.683 billion yuan in 1983; at the same time, township and village enterprises rapidly developed and matured, and throughout the 1990s the output value of township and village enterprises plummeted from 250.4 billion yuan to 2.5 trillion yuan. During the transformation and exploration stage, on the one hand, the pattern of collective ownership in rural areas was broken by the operation mode of household and joint household, and the role of supply and marketing cooperatives in integrating and supplying the means of production and living was gradually dismantled by a wide range of self-employment; on the other hand, the accelerated mobility of the rural labor force and the growth of material wealth made the cooperative's "unified marketing" mode no longer meet the needs of an increasingly diversified market. On the other hand, the accelerated mobility of the rural labor force and the growth of material wealth have made the cooperative's "general marketing" model no longer able to meet the increasingly diversified demand for commodity distribution. In the face of a series of changes, farmers' groups around the world from their own development needs, the innovation of supply and marketing cooperatives institutional mechanism has carried out a useful exploration, for example, Suzhou City, Anhui Province, "Vegetable Industry Consortium" and Yongji City, Shanxi Province, the village comprehensive agricultural association, these explorations are not only conducive to the integration of the factors of production in the market-oriented operation, to open up new ways of production and marketing cooperation, but also can provide new opportunities for the production and marketing cooperatives, and can also provide new ways of cooperation. These explorations are not only conducive to the integration of production factors in market-oriented operations and the development of new ways of production and marketing cooperation, but also provide an important reference for relieving the pressure of the transformation of the supply and marketing system through political means. 2006, the Law of the People's Republic of China on Farmers' Specialized Cooperatives was released, which legally recognizes the specialized cooperatives as an important part of the modern rural operation and service system of the supply and marketing cooperatives, and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs emphasized the importance of further leading the development of the socialized agricultural service in its Guiding Opinions on Accelerating the Development of Agricultural Socialization Services, emphasized the importance of further leading small-scale business farmers into the orbit of modern agricultural development. Based on the above analysis, it can be argued that the changes in the system of supply and marketing cooperatives since the founding of New China are essentially the result of the interaction between the Party and the government as the strong-causal subjects and the ownership economy as an endogenous factor.

3.2. Dynamics of change in the system of supply and marketing societies

As a highly integrated theoretical paradigm, historical institutionalism incorporates the concepts of structuralism, behaviorism, and rational choice institutionalism, and in its analytical framework, the system is both the independent variable and the dependent variable, and exploring the source of the dynamics of institutional change under a relatively stable institutional arrangement is an important research content of historical institutionalism. In this

paper, we start from the four dimensions of institutional environment, institutional structure, institutional concepts and actors to construct the power mechanism of institutional change in supply and marketing cooperatives.

(1) Institutional environment: time-series analysis of institutional change

In the view of historical institutionalism, political outcomes are influenced by their distinctive epochal context, and institutional change and epochal environment are two important links in the same causal chain. Since change over time is a long process, the logic of change in the system of supply and marketing cooperatives needs to be constructed by exploring the institutional environment in the context of a time series.

In the 1950s, although the newborn People's Republic, under the leadership of the Communist Party of China (CPC), had overthrown the "Three Mountains" and established a socialist system in which the people were the masters of their own affairs, it was still faced with the severe situation of a shortage of domestic supplies, a low level of national economic development and a blockade by foreign powers, and the industrial sector was in a state of crisis, with the supply and marketing cooperatives having a monopoly in the agricultural sector and rural commercial sector. The successful completion of the "First Five-Year Plan" proved the superiority of the planned economy under the prevailing circumstances. As the executors of the national economic plan in the fields of agriculture and rural commerce, the supply and marketing cooperatives monopolistically assumed the responsibilities of supplying the means of production and living as well as the centralized purchasing and marketing of agricultural and sideline products. Through the supply and marketing system, the widespread individual producers in the era of small peasant economy were gradually integrated into the collective, and all kinds of materials gradually entered the unified distribution and circulation channels; as an important hand of the Party in consolidating people's power, the supply and marketing cooperatives made important contributions to supporting the industrial construction and reinforcing the alliance between the workers and peasants. From the 1960s to the 1970s, in the solidification of the urban-rural dichotomy and the relative stagnation of industrialization, the development of national economy still relied heavily on the support of the national economy from the government. In the 1960s and 1970s, under the solidification of the urban-rural dichotomy and the relative stagnation of industrialization, the development of the national economy still relied to a large extent on the "capital accumulation" from the rural areas, and the organization system of the supply and marketing cooperatives underwent many changes in line with the development of the domestic political campaigns and the transformation of the government's organizational system, but its policy tasks remained unchanged, with the retail sales volume of goods in the rural areas accounting for more than 70 percent of the total volume of retail sales of goods. Since the reform and opening up, in the wave of ownership change and market competition, the economic vitality of rural society has been released, and the comprehensive reform of supply and marketing cooperatives has been put on the agenda, and their positioning of "purchasing and marketing" in the planned economy has gradually changed to the comprehensive service center and joint economic organization of storage, logistics and technology under the socialist market economy. The compulsory and fixed nature of the supply and marketing system continues to weaken, and the cooperative business nature can be restored and developed. Entering the new era, in order to better serve the "three rural areas", the central government has successively put forward the development strategies of "Strong Agriculture" and "Rural Revitalization", etc., and deepened the comprehensive reform of supply and marketing cooperatives as an important issue for the implementation of the strategy. Deepening the comprehensive reform of supply and marketing cooperatives is an important issue in the implementation of the strategy, and effectively safeguarding the interests of farmers and perfecting the agricultural socialized service system have become the direction of the reform of supply and marketing cooperatives, and significant milestones have been

achieved. According to statistics, in 2021, the supply and marketing cooperative system realized total sales of 6.26 trillion yuan for the whole year, an increase of 18.9% year-on-year; the whole system realized sales of 2759.1 billion yuan of agricultural products and 14925 billion yuan of daily necessities, an increase of 24.3% and 17.1% year-on-year, respectively^[16]. Institutional change is not only the result of the role of the institutional environment, but also a reflection of the evolution and change of the institutional environment. By sorting out the chronology of the supply and marketing cooperative system, it is not difficult to find that the institutional environment is an important source of motivation for its development and change, and regulates the direction and path of institutional change.

(2) Institutional structure: a dynamic systems analysis of institutional change

One of the distinctive features of historical institutionalism is the adoption of a meso-structural analytical approach, emphasizing the important influence of institutional structure in institutional change. From the perspective of system theory, historical institutionalism believes that "the system itself is a process of system transformation"^[17], which emphasizes the asymmetry of power in the operation of the system, and also includes the game of supply and demand in the system structure.

The asymmetry of power in the evolution of the supply and marketing cooperative system is mainly reflected in the sinking of the center of gravity of power. During the socialist construction period, under the national power operation system in which the party and the government were not separated, the Party Central Committee, as the institution in charge of all public affairs, absolutely dominated the implementation of various systems in the political system, and the highly centralized planned economy system made the circulation of commodities and distribution of goods within the country to a large extent subject to the planning instructions of the central government, while at the same time, the urban-rural dichotomous structure divided the vast rural society into relatively closed enclosures, and the cultivation and exchange of talents and technologies were restricted. At the same time, the dual structure of urban and rural areas has divided the rural society into relatively closed enclaves, and the cultivation and exchange of talents and technologies have been restricted. Since the reform and opening up, the gradual establishment and improvement of the socialist market economy has continuously stimulated the vitality of the countryside, although the relationship between the state and society has only been changed to a limited extent, and the implementation and change of the system is still dominated by the government, the series of reforms of "simplification and decentralization" has made the mass, democracy and flexibility of the rural cooperative economic organizations greatly improved, and the supply and marketing cooperatives have gradually been transferred from the state to the central government. However, the "decentralization" series of reforms has greatly enhanced the popularity, democracy and flexibility of rural cooperative economic organizations, and the supply and marketing cooperatives have gradually transformed themselves from executing agencies of national policies and tasks to comprehensive service organizations of farmers' collectively-owned cooperative businesses. Entering the new era, in the face of the contradiction between the people's aspirations for a better life and unbalanced and inadequate development, the center of gravity of governance has been further moved downward, and the bottom-up, villagers' autonomy, and farmers' participation in the implementation of the rural construction mechanism has empowered grass-roots supply and marketing cooperatives and other types of main bodies to have autonomy over multiple links and the whole process in the fields of production and operation. Autonomy, supply and marketing cooperatives have also become a new hand to promote grass-roots governance, by combining their own business service advantages with the political advantages of the township party organizations and village "two committees"^[18], supply and marketing cooperatives and grass-roots organizations have gradually and deeply integrated to form a "party building to lead the community building",

"village and community building", "party building to lead the community building", "village and community building", "party building to lead the community building". By combining their business and service advantages with the political advantages of the township party organizations and the village "two committees", the supply and marketing cooperatives have gradually integrated deeply with the grassroots organizations, forming a new situation of "party building leading social building" and "village and society building" governance, and consolidating the organizational foundation for the "last kilometer" of the modernization of the national governance system and the governance capacity.

The game between supply and demand in the institutional structure directly affects the equilibrium of the structure. The increase of material wealth, the entry of market mechanism and the improvement of villagers' self-governing organizations have given rise to the demand for collectivization of the supply and marketing system, market-oriented operation and diversification of services, while the existing system of supply and marketing cooperatives not only fails to adapt to the changes of the macro-environment through self-renewal, but also finds it more difficult to satisfy the needs of the farmers who are free from the bondage of the social team to expand their business and dredge up the channels. In this state of imbalance, the change of the political system to the original system has become particularly urgent, and has become another important impetus for institutional change.

(3) Institutional concepts: a kernel analysis of institutional change

Concepts are systematized collections of subjective and objective perceptions of things by subjects and concrete expressions of ideologies. In the view of historical institutionalists, ideas are not a kind of justification or "noise" as other social science analytical frameworks suggest, but rather the core of analysis. "Concepts are the roots of political behavior"^[19], and institutional change is essentially the product of political behavior guided by concepts. The important impact of conceptual change on the institutional change of supply and marketing cooperatives can be examined from two dimensions: the state and the farmers' community.

At the end of the 1970s, the successful experience of some rural areas in independently implementing the household contract responsibility system led the Party and the State to reflect on the limitations of the system of unified purchasing and marketing in agriculture under a comprehensively planned economy. The communiqué of the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee proposed to focus the work of the whole Party and the attention of the whole nation on the construction of socialist modernization, and the concept of "class struggle, once you grasp it, it will work" was gradually transformed to the center of economic construction, and economic development became the top priority of the governments of all levels. The burst of rural economic vitality to promote the supply and marketing cooperatives seller's market end, although still as the main channel of rural commodities, materials circulation, but the monopoly of the supply and marketing cooperatives rapidly weakened, the planned economy accumulated under the rigidity of the organizational system, price limitations and other diseases that make the system of supply and marketing cooperatives into the trough of development. In order to adapt to the change in ideology, the State began to make adjustments to the supply and marketing system, emphasizing the collective and service nature of supply and marketing cooperatives.

Changes in the attitudes of peasant groups have also been an important factor in the changes in the system of supply and marketing cooperatives. With the establishment and development of the socialist market economic system, the dual structure of urban and rural areas has gradually been broken, and the expansion of population mobility between urban and rural areas has contributed to a change in the production and management concepts of the farmers' groups, and the awakening of a sense of rights and a sense of subjectivity has led to a modernized cooperative economy and greater autonomy of management as their new demands. At the same

time, the gradual maturation of villagers' self-governance has led to a further weakening of the absolute dominance of the Party and the Government in rural public affairs and agricultural production and management, and a change in the farmers' perception of public power has led to a more diversified and institutionalized way of expressing their interests, which in turn has pushed forward the adjustment and improvement of the State's system of supply and marketing cooperatives.

(4) Actors: subject analysis of institutional change

Historical institutionalism argues that institutions and political actors have a two-way interactive and constraining relationship, with institutions both being the product of actors' activities and providing them with a framework of rules that interact and influence each other. At the cognitive level of the role of political actors, historical institutionalists integrate the perspectives of rational choice institutionalism and sociological institutionalism, arguing that human beings are both self-interested rational actors and followers of rules in cooperative and competitive relationships. Political actors have always played a dominant role in the process of institutional change, and there have been three main actors in the evolution of the supply and marketing cooperative system: the ruling party as the institutional policy maker, the governments at all levels as the policy implementers, and the farmers as the institutional bearers.

China's political form is manifested in a party-government system in which political parties and state power are deeply integrated and the organizational system is highly complete; this all-controlling system of party-state is, on the one hand, the inevitable choice of China's modern state-building under specific historical conditions and, on the other hand, a product of the solution to the problem of mega-problems of national governance. Under the party-government system, the ruling party, as the substantive owner of state power, controls the input and output of the national institutional system and plays a decisive role in the inclusion of institutional issues in the government's agenda and the direction of its change, thus becoming the key subject of institutional change in supply and marketing cooperatives. The party-government system, as a pressure-based system, provides the impetus for institutional innovation at the central and local government levels. The implementation of the system by the government can be regarded as the materialization of the will of the party. Since the new century, especially since the release of the Decision on Deepening the Comprehensive Reform of Supply and Marketing Cooperatives, many governments have carried out spontaneous innovations of the system of supply and marketing cooperatives, and the proliferation of innovations has also provided a new path for the change of the system of supply and marketing cooperatives. During the socialist construction period, due to the constraints of their own level of knowledge and the series of policies to support the country's industrialization, peasant groups were "vulnerable groups" in the state-led changes in the supply and marketing cooperative system, and became passive recipients of the system's consequences. Under the accelerating development trend of the rural market economy, the relatively lagging supply and marketing cooperatives gradually touched the core interests of farmers, and through such channels as self-governance organizations and the collective asset supervision and management service system, the autonomous and institutionalized expression of interests by farmers' groups pushed the political system to respond, accelerating the pace of comprehensive reform of the supply and marketing cooperatives.

From a structural viewpoint, historical institutionalism emphasizes the interrelationships among various political variables behind a given political outcome and its logical chain of cause and effect. It constructs the power mechanism of supply and marketing cooperative system change from four dimensions, each of which has independent effectiveness and is interconnected with the others (Figure 2): the institutional environment influences the balance between the supply of the old system and the demand of the new system in the institutional

structure, and the change of the institutional structure regulates the evolution path of the institutional environment to a certain extent, and the two act on the actors together to change the concepts of the actors and ultimately lead to the institutional change by changing their political behavior, adjustment and diffusion. The two act together on the actors, through changing the actors' concepts, and then promote the game, adjustment and diffusion of their political behavior, which ultimately leads to institutional change.

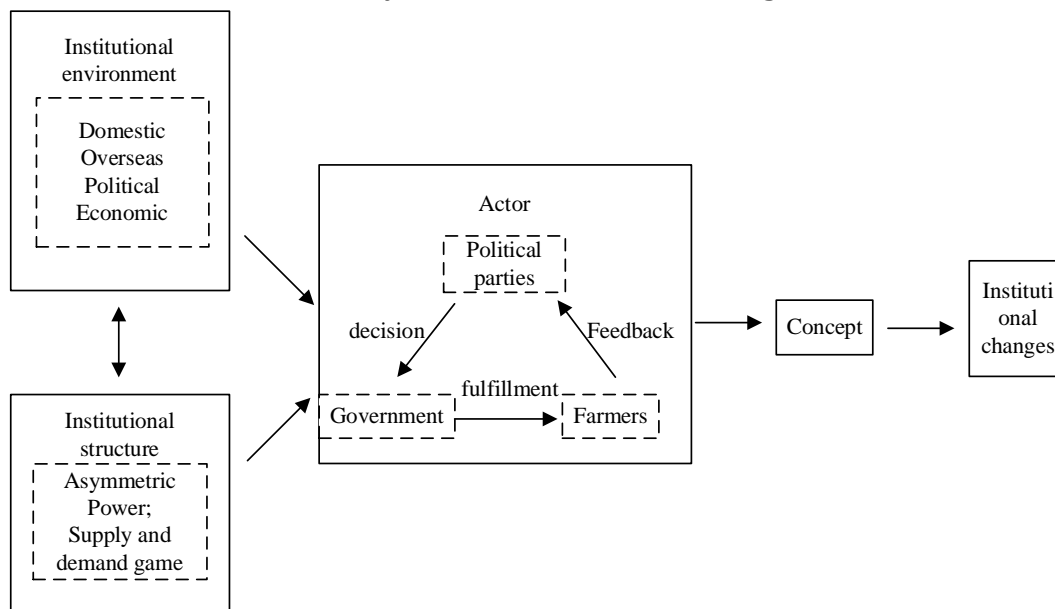


Figure 1 Dynamics of institutional change in supply and marketing cooperatives

3.3. Path dependence of supply and marketing cooperative system change

The concept of "path dependence", which first appeared in economics, emphasizes the role of economies of scale, learning effects, coordination effects and the existence of adaptive expectations in blocking institutional change by explaining the mechanism of increasing rewards and self-reinforcement. Historical institutionalism believes that, compared with economic life, political life has greater differences in the type of authority, behavioral patterns and institutional density, but these differences can still reflect the process of increasing rewards and self-reinforcement of the political system, and the four reasons for the blockage of institutional change in economics are also applicable to the political system, and the path dependence of the change of the political system is stronger than the economic system, with a strong historical inertia. In the time scale and institutional design level, the path dependence of political system change is even stronger than that of economic system, with strong historical inertia and institutional inheritance.

During the period of socialist construction, in order to ensure the effective distribution of products and materials within the State and the smooth implementation of industrialization, a highly planned collective economy was widely practised in rural areas, and the ideas of "agriculture serves industry" and "subordination to national economic construction" were deeply engraved in the system of supply and marketing cooperatives, promoting the self-stabilization, self-perpetuation and self-reinforcement of the system. The ideas of "agriculture serves industry" and "subordination to national economic construction" were deeply engraved in the system of supply and marketing cooperatives, which promoted the self-stabilization, self-perpetuation and self-reinforcement of the supply and marketing cooperative system. Reform and opening up and the restoration of universal ownership of the supply and marketing system, as the "key node" for the supply and marketing cooperative system to move from equilibrium to rupture, brought about a variety of new political and economic forces to play the game, and the ideas of "unified purchasing and marketing" and so on during the era of the planned

economy have not yet been completely detached from the core of the supply and marketing cooperative system, and the supply and marketing cooperative system has not yet been completely detached from its core. The core of the supply and marketing cooperative system, in 1999, the China Supply and Marketing Cooperative General Association "supply and marketing societies do not end losses, losses will end supply and marketing societies" slogan shouted out the historical inertia under the urgent need for systemic change. 21st century, especially since the 18th CPC National Congress, with the successful implementation of the strategy of revitalization of the countryside and the high degree of rural market liberalization, "small and fragmented", "small and fragmented", "small and fragmented", "small and fragmented", "small and fragmented", "small and fragmented". In the 21st century, especially since the 18th Party Congress, with the successful implementation of the rural revitalization strategy and the high degree of rural market liberalization, the "small and scattered" scale of agricultural business has gradually become an important issue to be solved in order to revitalize the rural economy and promote the common prosperity. Against such a background, the supply and marketing cooperatives, by virtue of the deep organizational foundation, extensive service system, and complete experience of assisting the farmers that they have accumulated during their nearly one hundred years' history of development, are able to be re-examined by the political actors and to make changes on their own initiative, entering a new, virtuous cycle along the correct path of "serving the three rural areas" and "connecting production and marketing", and becoming an important starting point for the rebalancing of the system and for a new round of path dependence.

4. Conclusion and discussion

Under the perspective of historical institutionalism, the changes in the system of supply and marketing cooperatives have shown the logic of "equilibrium - rupture - reequilibrium". On this basis, the implications of this logic of change can be further discussed. First, the comprehensive reform of supply and marketing cooperatives should be adapted to the institutional environment and combined with the needs of the times. In the context of "promoting the modernization of the national governance system and governance capacity", rural reform has entered a deep-water zone and a critical period, adapting to the new requirements of the construction of the rural governance community, highlighting the historical mission of serving the "three rural areas", and strengthening the integration of resources of supply and marketing cooperatives, Expanding the basic functions of cooperation, purchasing and marketing, and enhancing the sense of security, happiness and accessibility of the farmers' groups are the proper meaning of the reform of the supply and marketing cooperative system in the new era. Secondly, we should be good at creating and following benign path dependence, and dare to break the habit of the old system at the key point of the system break, and promote the innovation and improvement of the supply and marketing cooperative system. Create benign path dependence, is to system system in the accumulation of quantity in a timely manner into a qualitative leap, to create supply and marketing cooperatives system "property rights collectively owned, business cooperation and conspiracy, the interests of farmers to share the" new situation. At the same time, we should grasp the important opportunities for change brought about by major events, and strive for innovation in the content of the system on the basis of maintaining the stability and continuity of the system. Thirdly, we should pay attention to the interests of different main bodies of action, the rural governance community is a synergistic system in which "everyone has responsibility, everyone does their part, and everyone shares", and under the premise of adhering to the Party's overall leadership, we should accelerate the clarification of the relationship between the central and local governments, the Party and the government, and the social enterprises and other important

interests, so as to respect and give full play to the farmers' group's main body and the spirit of creativity in the process of reforming the system. In the process of system reform, we should respect and give full play to the main position and pioneering spirit of the farmers' groups, so that supply and marketing cooperatives can truly become a comprehensive platform rooted in the countryside and serve the farmers, and contribute to the realization of the beautiful vision of rural revitalization with the "power of supply and marketing".

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