

The Development of Rural Tourism in China: The Impact of Institutions of Village Self-government and Collective Land Ownership on Communities Engaging in Rural Tourism

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The aim of this paper is firstly to indicate how rural tourism in China has become one of the essential components in rural development policy; secondly, to clarify the management patterns in terms of the composition of interested parties engaged in rural tourism; and thirdly, to discuss the influences that collective village ownership of land and self-governing institutions have on rural tourism.

According to the institutional regulations, it would be reasonable to consider that village organization has the following functions: to redistribute the benefits of tourism to villagers and improve the welfare of the entire community; to promote sustainable tourism by controlling the use of resources in the community; and to maintain an exclusive right to develop and operate tourism in their own community.

However, a reexamination of the cases in previous studies from this point of view reveals that these functions are rarely performed; rather, in reality, those institutions of the Chinese village could be causes for loss of control over both members of the community and outsiders like local government or external capital. The problems occurring during the process of rural tourism reflect the limitations of the present institutional arrangements for collective land ownership and self-governance in rural China.