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**Voluntary Resettlement in China  
Policy and Outcomes of Government-organised  
Poverty Reduction Projects**

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**Lin Zhibin**

**VOLUNTARY RESETTLEMENT IN CHINA:**  
Policy and Outcomes of Government-organised Poverty Reduction Projects

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*In memory of my mother, LU Jinhua*

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## Introducing the Issues of Resettlement

This chapter is composed of three sections: research purposes, the state of art of resettlement studies, and a brief review of China's historical population movement. The first section introduces why I chose my topic and the aims of the research. The second reviews some relevant literature on resettlement, which helps to position my own study. The last reviews the present status of China's resettlement experience but also traces this back to China's ancient resettlement history. This provides a profile of resettlement in China, so that one can appreciate resettlement as an historical phenomenon and draw lessons from the past.

### 1.1 Research Purposes

In locations with very unfavourable human living conditions, resettlement has been widely practiced, both in China and elsewhere in the world, as a way of eliminating poverty. In many cases it has indeed provided some positive results for poverty alleviation. But it has also had its negative outcomes, due mainly to a lack of attention given to the complex interconnections between social, economic, technical, cultural and political factors. Despite these mixed results and the lessons to be learnt nationally and internationally, both central and local governments in China still consider resettlement an appropriate and effective strategy for poverty alleviation. This favourable impression mainly results from the lack of systematic information regarding the positive and negative impacts of resettlement, particularly in respect to whom finally benefits from such huge government investment. This lacuna can be attributed to the top-down approach adopted in developing strategies for poverty reduction and also to the failure to undertake systematic assessments of the impact of particular resettlement schemes. Systematic studies of this kind are therefore essential for providing a comprehensive understanding of the processes involved and, if possible, for making recommendations regarding future resettlement plans.

A widely accepted assumption in China is that resettlement will be successful so long as there is a comparative natural resource advantage in the resettlement area matched by financial investment. However, national and international experience shows that resettlement also involves a complicated mixture of issues relating to property rights, power structures and gender differences. Despite the enormous investments made by the Chinese

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government in resettlement schemes aimed at reducing poverty and stimulating local development, there are many cases where the resettled population has moved back to its places of origin, or where the resettled population has been shown to be composed of the better-off rather than the poorer households of the places of origin.

One argument predominating in academic discussions in China concerns who the principal beneficiaries of such government-supported resettlement programmes should be. The range of viewpoints or approaches to this issue is wide and based upon a variety of assumptions. These include the view that the single function of resettlement is poverty reduction (what is called the 'poverty reduction' approach); that the richer households should not be excluded as beneficiaries because they are more financially able to supplement the necessarily limited government investment available (a 'middle line' approach); and that the newly developed area should be a growth point for the regional economy (an 'economic growth' approach). Within such approaches, strategic viewpoints range from prioritising social justice to promoting economic efficiency. The research of this thesis hypothesizes that if social justice and economic efficiency are parallel objectives of one program/project, then economic efficiency will overshadow social justice and become the principal focus.

My research views gender equality as an essential component of both social justice and economic efficiency. It explores how resettlement has affected women and men differently, and thus aims to establish the need to look at gender issues at the outcome level in resettlement projects, and to include gender-specific decision-making at household level as part of the social dynamics. In summary, there is an important need, especially in China, to understand how the social, gender, political and economic aspects of resettlement are interrelated.

In the end, I hope that the results will contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the social complexities involved in resettlement programmes, as well as to the formulation of sound resettlement strategies based on a consultative process of government.

### 1.2 **The state of the art**

#### *Resettlement Categorization*

Different terms are used to describe population movement, such as "resettlement", "migration" and "transmigration". No clear distinction between the terms is found in the literature. Resettlement and migration are sometimes used interchangeably, even within the same article; and "transmigration" is used to refer to government-sponsored resettlement programs in the case of

Indonesia. The term "settlement" is used to emphasize the result of population movement in the case of moving to new land areas. The following quotations provide a glimpse of how these terms are used and defined by different researchers in different research projects:

*'Resettlement is population movement from one place to another, in other words, from places of origin to other locations. It must involve spatial changes of daily and long-term livelihoods'.* (Shi Guoqing, 1995:47)

*'New land settlement is generally defined as the spontaneous and sponsored settlement of areas which are largely uncultivated at the time of their occupation. It includes what is referred to in the literature as "colonization" (especially in Latin America and in pre-independence Indonesia), "resettlement" and "transmigration." All these terms emphasize the settlement of land by people rather than the reclamation or initial preparation of land.'* (Scudder, 1991:152)

*'Colonisation under Dutch rule before the Second World War, and transmigration under the Indonesian Republic's administration after 1950 as programmes to promote and sponsor inter-island population movement do have one element in common, i.e. to transfer people from densely to sparsely populated islands within the Indonesian archipelago.....This population movement was not to send subsistence farmers into a huge labour reservoir in the outer islands, but to promote independent farmers, who would be able to sustain a modern type of farming.'* (Mollett, 1991:29-30)

*'Migration involves the movement of a person (a migrant) between two places for a certain period of time. The problem is defining how far someone needs to move and for how long.'* (Boyle, 1998:34)

*'Provided migration is freely determined and not caused by repression of one kind or another, it is usually prompted by people's desire to improve their lives (especially their incomes) and those of their children.'* (Mollett, 1991:9)

Scudder (1991:154) categorizes settlement/resettlement into four types. He explains:

*'In classifying settlement it is necessary to distinguish both the type of settler and the nature of the involvement of the sponsoring agency or agencies. Four types are distinguished for the purpose of analysis, although several may in fact be represented in a single settlement:*

- *Spontaneous settlement with very little government or other assistance*
- *Spontaneous settlement facilitated by government and other agencies*
- *Voluntary settlement sponsored by government and other agencies*
- *Compulsory resettlement sponsored primarily by government agencies.'*



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The attempt to categorize serves a specific research purpose; but once categories are constructed, reality is to a degree distorted since the reality always turns out to be far more complicated than any categorized version of it. For the convenience of my research, I have categorized population movement into four types:

(1) Government-organized/sponsored voluntary resettlement: Voluntary resettlement takes place under planned intervention, but the resettled population is not forced to move by government decree. Such voluntary resettlement includes both new land settlement programmes and 'fill-in' programs<sup>1</sup> aimed at solving pressures and conflicts over scarce resources, and forms part of China's policy instruments for poverty reduction.

(2) Involuntary resettlement: Government uses its coercive powers to move people from one place to another in the interest of state or powerful groups.

(3) Spontaneous resettlement: People move from one place to another to seek better opportunities. Spontaneous migration exists as a continuous phenomenon in most societies.

(4) Refugee resettlement: People move with or without government support to prevent damage from military conflict, conflicts between different ethnic groups, and/or other deleterious situations such as natural disasters.

Hence, resettlement is used as an umbrella concept for population movement involving permanent settlement or the intention of permanent settlement. Resettlement is a worldwide practice and social phenomenon. Despite some common features shared by resettlement activities, in different places and different countries resettlement always has its unique social, cultural and political complexities. The following three snapshot cases highlight the kinds of differences and complexities involved.

Niels Fold (2000:473) gives a high opinion of Malaysia's oil palm production resettlement scheme:

*'The FELDA [Federal Land Development Authority] resettlement program in Malaysia is internationally recognized as a success story in terms of cultivated area, number of settlers, and scope of vertical integration in the Malaysian palm oil industry. The Malaysian way of organizing poor and landless people in commercial agricultural production has been stressed by many observers as an ideal model to deal with rural poverty.'*

Rebecca Elmhirst (1999:813) interprets Indonesia's transmigration program as a process of spatial politics:

*'Indonesia's recent history has revealed the fragility of a national unity created under a political authoritarianism that was itself underpinned by the country's relative economic success. The government's transmigration resettlement scheme has been one particularly powerful mechanism through which the New Order government (under President Soeharta)*

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<sup>1</sup> 'Fill-in' programs refer to the kind of resettlement programs where receiving areas have residents already.

*has sought to achieve unity amidst the country's disparate ethnic groups. By resettling Javanese people, Indonesia's largest and most politically central cultural group, the state has attempted to achieve a presence of the "centre" in the country's "margins", and in turn, extend a particular imagined geography across the archipelago.'*

Kofi Akwabi-Ameyaw (1997:437) critically appraises producer cooperative resettlement projects in Zimbabwe as a completely failed agricultural development strategy. Under this strategy, the government had projected that it would acquire an estimated nine million hectares of European land for resettlement between 1980-85, and resettle 162,000 farm families under the cooperative production model. Kofi concludes:

*'In fact, while the overall necessity and importance of resettlement to nation-building cannot be emphasized enough, the real plight of ordinary rural Zimbabweans is not likely to be ameliorated by a development strategy that largely focuses on land acquisition for resettlement to the neglect of available supplementary and complementary resource use options including those outside the agricultural sector.....Producer cooperatives are unproductive because of the prevailing organizational culture which enables leading members to seek individual self-interest and private gain, making it hard for the rank and file to cooperate and work for the common good.'*

In a broad sense, the above-mentioned three resettlement schemes fall under voluntary resettlement. However, such a general category becomes less discriminating once one inquires carefully into the different political motivations, institutional settings and different methodologies involved in each resettlement scheme.

### *Voluntary Resettlement*

#### **Push-pull Theory**

A popular theory about the mechanisms underlying voluntary and spontaneous resettlement/settlement in the Chinese literature is 'Push-pull Theory', which provides both an explanation and a method for identifying and studying the internal and external processes that constitute the forces of push and pull. When we talk of 'internal' forces we refer to the conditions that pressure individuals and households to decide to move to resettlement areas. Often dovetailing with these are what we call 'external' forces, namely those conditions or advantages that attract individuals and households to resettle. These two kinds of forces, then, combine to profile the various disparities that exist between the natural and socio-economic environments of the places of origin and the resettlement areas. As Zhang Zhiliang (1997:36-7) puts it, '*push forces are all the negative factors that push people out and pull forces are the positive factors that attract people in.*'

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Economic factors are usually considered the most decisive in resettlement behaviour. Qin Junping writes:

*'T. W. Schulz regarded resettlement as an investment that can generate benefits, so that people estimate all possible costs and benefits, and the decision to move will only be made when the benefits are anticipated to be bigger than the investment. Based on Schulz's theory, L.A. Sjasstad established a Cost-Benefit Model, which assumed that the precondition for someone to move was that the estimated cash benefit would be bigger than the capital cost of resettlement. Later, Todaro, Speare and Cebula developed the famous Cost-Benefit Theory, which assumed that to move and settle down were the results of rational benefit anticipation and the level of achievement of the anticipation.'* (1999:60)

Nevertheless, it is also well recognized that there are other important factors besides the economic. Indeed, there has been much research at a descriptive level on the push and pull forces influencing resettlement (see Zhang Lihong, 2000; Tao Chuanjin, 2001; and Lei Youyi, 2000). These factors may be *social* (such as the level of people's participation, propaganda and mobilization, or religious and ethnic factors), *environmental* (such as the degradation caused by an unbalanced ratio of population to land); *geographical* (such as spatial distance between the places of origin and the resettlement areas), *demographic* (population density), *legal and policy factors* (such as national macro-economic policies, land tenure, resettlement-related regulations and legislation), and so-called *infrastructural factors* (such as accessibility to water, electricity and to roads).

While recognising the usefulness of this push-pull theory, one group of Chinese researchers has identified its main weakness: namely, that it is a theory primarily for qualitative rather than quantitative research. In order to redress this limitation, Zhang Zhiliang (1997) and his colleagues have identified several quantitative indicators. His theory (which he labels 'A Theory of Resettlement Push and Pull Forces and Mechanisms') consists of three parts, one made up of internal mechanisms and two parts that concern external mechanisms. The two external mechanisms focus on deficits in the original natural environment and regional disparity in socio-economic development between the areas of origin and resettlement. He uses four categories of indicators: First, economic indicators (including net income per capita per annum, and employment rate); second, educational levels (two indicators - literacy rate and enrolment rate for school age children); third, health status (including rate of infant mortality, and nutrition), and lastly, a characterisation of the living environment (including aspects such as access to piped drinking water, transportation and electricity). The internal mechanisms include the willingness to move in terms of motivations, expectations, values etc. The quantitative tension of the external push-pull forces can then be calculated according to the indicators identified and by applying a given formula; but Zang Zhiliang developed no quantitative indicators to measure internal forces. And so far as one can tell from a review of

the literature, there has been no published quantitative research to date on these internal forces.

'Pull-push theory' may be good at explaining why resettlers choose to move, but it does not tackle well the issue of why some people choose not to move or are not able to move. Pull-push theory, it seems, is more relevant to spontaneous resettlement and voluntary resettlement than to involuntary resettlement. The effort to quantify pull-push theory shows that belief in positivist research remains strong within the community of Chinese researchers. Furthermore, the theory has little intention of improving policy assessment, even though it includes policy factors as one of the many factors. It has therefore played little role in policy formulation. Nevertheless, the review of this theory has helped me identify some of the critical factors/indicators that have enabled resettlers to move and what has inhibited the population remaining in the places of origin from doing so.

### **Scudder's Sociological Framework**

In the wider international literature, Scudder's sociological framework is the most influential work on voluntary/agricultural resettlement/settlement research and practice. Thayer Scudder (1991:160-168) formulated an analysis of new land settlements in which he defined a four-stage model of the settlement process for voluntary resettlement. These are identified as:

- (1) Planning, initial infrastructural development, and settler recruitment: This first stage covers the initial activities related to feasibility studies, planning, and design – and the subsequent ones related to settler recruitment and the construction of such infrastructure as roads and irrigation facilities;
- (2) Transition: In this stage, settlers continue to move from one habitat to another. This transitional period can last for less than a year for a minority of families but for the majority it usually continues for at least two years and frequently as much as five or more years;
- (3) Economic and social development: Settlers act on a wide range of investment strategies to achieve higher levels of productivity through diversification of the family estate. Settlers begin to pay more attention to organizing themselves, and aggregates of households develop ties that represent 'communities in the process'; and
- (4) Handing over and incorporation: Settlement cannot be considered a success until control of project activities has been handed over to the settlers and their local organizations; a second generation of settlers has started to take over; and the project is incorporated within the encompassing region.

In formulating this model, Scudder draws upon rich evidence from his thirty-year involvement in resettlement processes in many countries of the world. According to Cernea (1991:146), Scudder's resettlement model and his discussion of development issues related to different settlement stages has

made a great contribution to the 'design of better-phased settlement projects'. Underlying the four stages model is his observation that '*new land settlements have histories and that these histories are remarkably similar*' (1991:160), though within particular settlement schemes, one encounters a diverse range of responses, especially in respect to the time span needed to adapt to the new living circumstances.

Other messages that one can distil from Scudder's research include the following:

The aim of resettlement projects should be to support regional development, or as he puts it, their '*success is defined in terms of the ability of a land settlement project to facilitate regional development*' (1991:154). The social analysis of resettlement is important for attaining the economic goals of the project: '*Throughout the tropics and subtropics, sponsored settlers are overwhelmingly recruited from among low-income farmers or landless labourers, but if a new settlement is to initiate a process of regional development, obviously people with both farm and non-farm skills must be recruited*' (1991:170). And, the focus of resettlement projects should primarily be the development of the resettlement area and settlers. Thus, although he believes that an understanding of the social and cultural origins of settlers is important, in his general discussion he does not stress so much the need to look closely at precisely who among the population of the places of origin have transmigrated.<sup>2</sup>

Scudder's contribution raises a number of points directly relevant to the definition of my own research. In the first place, the cases I present in this thesis concern resettlement projects that are principally aimed at poverty reduction rather than regional development, although their location and activities may of course impact on their surrounding regional economies. Second, my research aims not only to analyse the dynamics of life in resettlement areas but also to describe the populations who remain behind in the places of origin of the settlers and the types of relationships they maintain with each other. This is important for characterising the beneficiaries of the settlement schemes funded by government and donor agencies.

### **Comparing Cases**

At this point – and in response to Scudder's call for comparative observations – it is illustrative to explore some similarities and differences between the Indonesian and Chinese programmes of resettlement.

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<sup>2</sup> Of course he did (together with Elizabeth Colson, his co-researcher) document the plight of the population of Gwembe Tonga in what was then Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia), when they were forced to leave their river valley homelands for resettlement in a different ecological zone due to the building of the Kariba dam in the late 1950s.

### **The Transmigration Program in Indonesia**

*'Indonesia's programme of guided and subsidised migration, now over 80 years old (Swasono and Singarimbun, 1985) has always been related to agricultural development. In the days of the Netherlands-East Indies colonial administration a modest programme was begun in 1905 under the heading of colonisation, providing better employment opportunities for the millions of peasants living on densely populated Java, with planned population movement to develop arable land on forest and brushland on the larger islands of the archipelago, such as Sumatra, Sulawesi and Kalimantan.*

*'The new settlements or colonies were for food crop growers on irrigated land which Javanese migrants had been accustomed to in their villages of origin. The three quarter of a hectare allocated to each migrant family was assumed to be adequate for a family life at 'sufficiency level'. The Javanese colonists were however, also resettled to provide a labour force for the privately-owned plantations of Dutch companies, in need of rubber tappers, oil palm estate labourers etc. outside Java. It was intended that this work would provide them with additional income, to take living standards considerably above previous subsistence levels.*

*'After war and revolution, Indonesia was not only badly disorganised but still facing the old problem of a heavily populated Java and Bali, which together had only 7 per cent of the new Republic's (1945) territory but 69 per cent of its population. Little wonder, then, that one of its first actions in 1950s was the adoption of a population policy favouring redistribution of population. This came under the new heading of transmigration. The old term colonisation was evidently jarring to a newly independent country.*

*'In the first Five-Year Plan, termed Pelita I (1969/70 - 1973/74), the first migration target was set at 125,000 families, rising to 250,000 families in Pelita II (1974/75 - 1977/78), to 500,000 families in Pelita III (1978/79 - 1982/83) and to 750,000 families in Pelita IV (1983/84 - 1988/89). During this whole period the World Bank lent the Indonesian Government large sums to help it to implement this huge programme.*

The transmigration programme has led to a significant expansion in arable land, most of it (80 per cent) dry field, while making the population in the outer islands more self sufficient in food supplies. Many factors are involved in any assessment of the programme. Certainly a thin layer of the poor farmers in Java (with very little capital) have been offered farming opportunities on better conditions, particularly with respect to size of holding, than they would ever have had in their village of origin. But given the fact that an average of less than 0.75 hectares of upland could be intensively utilised with the means at their disposal, no family could have gained much extra reward from the produce of that small area. If there had been no off-farm jobs in the new settlement areas it remains questionable now how long the transmigrant would have felt he was being offered a better opportunity.

*'Official efforts are now likely to concentrate on 'fill-in' programmes which make use of existing infrastructure, recruiting settlers from among spontaneous migrants in receiving areas. Future settlements based on food crops are likely to be limited to areas where soils are*

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good and marketing prospects strong. Settlement with cash crops are likely to receive special attention – notably those with tree crops and in Nucleus Estates. All this, with more attention given to management, policy formulation, spontaneous migration, the protection of the environment and, not least, the rights of local people.' (Tjondronegoro, 1991: 132-150)

Alex Schumacher<sup>3</sup> describes the Indonesian transmigration program as an utter disaster. He writes:

*"There are good reasons why Java, Madura and Bali are so highly populated. The most significant being that these islands are situated in the volcanic fringe of the archipelago on which geologically young, very rich and productive soils have formed from volcanic ash. These are constantly being renewed by new volcanic eruptions. Because of their inherent productivity, these soils were capable of supporting the very dense population that developed on them. By contrast, in the outer islands, particularly Kalimantan, Sulawesi and much of Sumatra, which were the target of the program, the soils are mostly geologically old, very poor and highly acid. Over time and under the cover of forest vegetation, the nutrients have been largely washed out of them by the combination of heavy rainfall and the increasingly acid conditions. These soils could support transient, slash and burn agriculture, but were never capable of supporting dense settled populations. The small pockets of good soils are limited to river valleys and flood plains where periodic flooding has resulted in the deposition of better soils. From a purely physical standpoint, therefore, the policy of transmigration was highly flawed."*

Schumacher frequently paid visits to the resettlement site. After his visit to Central Sulawesi, he made the following observations:

*"The settlers' housing was totally substandard, and reflected no consideration of the social or customary habits of the settlers, who were mostly village people. The settlements consisted of small wooden shacks set out at intervals of about 50 m in long parallel rows in which it would be impossible to maintain any sense of community or village life, which would have been found in Java or Bali. To make it worse, if one of the houses in this rigid grid pattern happened to be located swamp, no attempt was made to find an alternative location for it. As a result, there was a proportion of the houses that were totally uninhabitable. Certainly resettlement sites were a complete disaster in which the settlers were committed to a condition of continued and abject poverty, despite that the settlers kept them employed as seasonal labourers." My intention in introducing this Indonesian transmigration program is not to suggest a direct parallel with the Chinese case, whose socio-political context is so markedly different, but to highlight some common features of government-organized voluntary resettlement. Such similarities imply that lessons can be learned across countries. The two examples exhibit the following common features: (1) In both cases, no systematic socio-economic and environmental assessments were conducted before the launching of the program. This implies a common feature of most large planned intervention programs: political gain and the interests of certain powerful groups prevail over social, economic and*

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<sup>3</sup> Alex Schumacher is a senior manager of Agriteam Company of Canada. He has extensive working experiences in Indonesia. The quotation in the text is from his personal comments to my thesis.

environmental feasibility. (2) In both, the resettled populations are small-scale peasant farmers. The implication here is that peasant farmer mobility is relatively low when compared to urban populations, since farmers are bound to land and they generally lack capital. And, for these reasons, government organisation is an essential support for many resettled farmers. Also, agricultural settlement involves much more than the decision of individual households to move to settle on new land, since it entails the acquisition of land through some legal framework established by the State (or some other official body) which also is responsible for the management of financial investments required for resettlement infrastructure. (3) The village plans in both cases cannot meet the economic aspirations and livelihood needs of the resettlers. The land allocated for each farmer household is very small in both the Chinese and Indonesia cases, and can only provide a subsistence living; it cannot make them that much better-off. (4) Off-farm activities are therefore important for transmigrants or resettlers if they are to sustain their livelihoods or improve their levels of income. (5) Government investment is the key to facilitating the transmigration/resettlement process, though, at the same time, both governments face financial difficulties in sufficiently meeting the needs of the programs. In fact government can always excuse the poor provision and services by emphasizing financial difficulties, without questioning the ideology and policy framework of the resettlement program itself.

The major difference between the Indonesian and Chinese cases seems to concern program objectives: while the primary objective of the Indonesian transmigration program is population distribution, that of the Chinese resettlement program focuses on new land development and poverty reduction. This underlines the importance of identifying specific program goals when assessing the effectiveness of particular programs.

### **Voluntary Resettlement for Poverty Reduction in China**

China claims to use voluntary resettlement as an instrument for poverty reduction. The positive economic impact on resettlers and the level of 'development' in resettlement areas are regarded as the most convincing of arguments for supporting such resettlement programmes. Here the major indicators used for measuring economic impact are: (1) increase in resettlers' incomes; (2) increase in grain production in the resettled area; (3) increase of arable land, mostly irrigated land or paddy fields, in the resettlement area; (4) and, more generally, increase in the input and output ratio for the production system.

Bai Nansheng (2000:165) has evaluated the economic returns of a World Bank Irrigation Project in Ningxia in China involving land reclamation and population resettlement. Bai's conclusions are that for every 1 yuan (about 0.12 US\$) invested grain production increased by 0.37 kg and generated a further 1.4 yuan (0.17 US\$) in agricultural production value. He also found that the poverty level of the resettled population was reduced; for example, the net income per capita per year of the resettled population from Jingyuan County in the Ningxia Autonomous Region reached, in 1998, 1,378 yuan (172 US\$).



Though by international standards this would still be considered a low per capita income, it was 1.8 times higher than that of the rural population in Jingyuan, the place of origin of the resettlers (Bai Nansheng, 2000:165). Furthermore, according to Chen Zhongxiang (1999:92), the total investment in resettlement in Ningxia in 1995 was 1,894,500 yuan (about 237,000 US\$), and the total production value (including grain production, forestry, grass and livestock production) was 73,466,100 yuan (9,183,000 US\$). Chen calculated that this reduced the cost factor by 70 percent and produced an input/output ratio of 1:2.79.

Some positive social impacts were also given attention, thereby showing the effectiveness of resettlement for poverty reduction and development. Bai Nansheng (2000:165) found that many changes had taken place for women. As often observed in resettlement areas, males became involved in off-farm activities, so that women had to take more responsibility for farming, which led to their greater involvement in training and learning about technologies. Women in the resettlement areas also became more out-spoken than women in the places of origin. Bai Nansheng also indicates that social contact in the resettlement area had improved. Improvement in transportation, electricity and other amenities made it possible for resettlers to keep frequent contact with relatives and friends, and to have relatively easy communication with the outside world. Chen Zhongxiang<sup>4</sup> (1999) writes that minority groups have also benefited from resettlement for poverty reduction. For example, the majority of the resettled population in Ningxia is from minority ethnic groups. Nearly all were from southern Ningxia where the minority groups of Hui, Man, Dongxiang and others represented 47.76 percent of the total population, with those of Hui origin constituting 47.59 percent of these groups.<sup>5</sup> And among the more than 200,000 resettled people, 62.56 percent were from minority groups with the Hui representing 60.58 percent, by far the majority. Chen Zhongxiang indicates that the birth rate of the resettled population became lower than that in their places of origin in Ningxia. According to a sample study, Chen found that the birth rate of the resettled population was 1.6 percent as against 2.5 percent<sup>6</sup> for the population in the place of origin.

The impact of resettlement on the places of origin has also received attention. Zhang Zhiliang (1997) evaluated the economic returns of irrigation

<sup>4</sup> Chen's article does not mention the time frame of the data and sample size, but it probably marks an important continuing trend.

<sup>5</sup> The total population of Ningxia was 5,615,500 at the end of 2000, among which the Hui, a Muslim ethnic group made up 1,902,300, and other ethnic groups made up 36,700. The remainder are Han, who constitute the majority of Chinese nationals.

<sup>6</sup> Again the time frame and sample size is missing. The reasons for this lower birth rate among the resettled population are not discussed, but it could be that government birth control practices were more strictly adhered to than in the place of origin.

resettlement in Central Gansu on the places of origin. In Zhangshan Village of Caodian Township, Jingyuan County, in 1982, the average net income per capita per annum was only 58 yuan, and average grain possession was only 72 kg. In 1983, 62 households (254 people) were resettled (unfortunately, the total household population of the village is not given in the study) allowing the average land per person for those remaining to double to 0.87 ha.<sup>7</sup> According to Cheng Zhongxiang (in Chen Zhongxiang & Qin Heguo, 1999:92), *'Statistics in 1995 showed that the resettlement of 200,000 people from the eight counties of southern Ningxia induced the reallocation of resources in the places of origin, which enabled 120,000 poor people in the places of origin to be lifted out of poverty.'*<sup>8</sup> Many statements were made indicating that the reduction of population in the places of origin had improved the ecological environment in those places (Chen Zhongxiang, 1999, Bai Nansheng, 2000). However, no data and cases are provided as hard evidence in order to show precisely how the ecological environment had improved.

Existing literature on voluntary resettlement for poverty reduction in China, however, manifests certain fundamental research gaps. There are many completed research projects that show in broad terms how resettlers have benefited from resettlement, but there is no research that details who exactly has benefited. I consider this question central to ask in any such research. Furthermore, there is a lack of research that analyses government policy. Policy analysis is extremely important because investment in resettlement for poverty reduction can be a heavy drain upon government revenue. There is also no detailed analysis of the social dynamics at household and community level, which I believe to be the main forces shaping which actors benefit from resettlement.

Recently, the international community has raised its concern over voluntary resettlement for poverty reduction in China. For example, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) made its position clear in a recent conference in China (ADB: 2000):

*'[C]arefully defined guidelines should be developed for voluntary resettlement. This should be used as a poverty reduction tool only as a last resort. The remaining 20 million rural poor live mostly in very remote, resource poor areas. Voluntary resettlement is used in China as one option to help them escape poverty. But voluntary resettlement often comes with high social and cultural costs. Voluntary resettlement is considered to be quite controversial by many NGOs and international organizations. If the Leading Group [Poverty Alleviation Leading Group of the State Council of China] hopes to get the support of the international community for voluntary resettlement efforts, we must reach broad agreement on appropriate policies, procedures, and mechanisms that would satisfy the concerns of all parties. The risks and challenges must be carefully analysed when considering voluntary resettlement.'*

<sup>7</sup> No mention is made of when the survey was conducted or the sample size.

<sup>8</sup> The article provides no information about the source of information nor does it give the baseline for such calculations.

## 14 Voluntary Resettlement in China

### *Involuntary Resettlement*

There is a rich literature on involuntary resettlement, which suggests that more research has been carried out on involuntary than on voluntary resettlement. I suspect that this is firstly because investment in projects that result in involuntary resettlement has been substantially larger. Secondly, the population involved in involuntary resettlement is much larger: *'During the last two decades of the previous century, the magnitude of forced population displacements caused by development programs was in the order of 10 million people each year, or some 200 million people globally during that period.'* (Cernea, 2000). Although there are no estimates available on populations moving for voluntary resettlement, their numbers must be smaller due to fewer voluntary resettlement projects and generally fewer settlers involved in each case. This is certainly the case in China.<sup>9</sup> However, lower investment and people involved should not lead to one giving less weight to research on voluntary resettlement since there is a significant difference in the project objectives of the two kinds of resettlement. The primary concern of involuntary resettlement is to 'build infrastructure for new industries, irrigation, transportation highways, power generation, or for urban developments such as hospitals, schools, and airports' (ibid, 2000), whereas for planned voluntary resettlement it maybe regional development, improvement of agricultural productivity, and poverty reduction.

The adverse impacts of involuntary resettlement have been widely recognised. This is the reason why, in the mid-1990s, both the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank stated clearly that, wherever possible, involuntary resettlement should be avoided or minimised. The basic principles for involuntary resettlement identified by ADB state that (i) it should be 'avoided where feasible', and (ii) where 'population displacement is unavoidable, it should be minimised by exploring all viable project options' (ADB, 1995:9). In similar vein, the first paragraph of WB resettlement policy states that:

*'Bank experience indicates that involuntary resettlement under development projects, if unmitigated, often gives rise to severe economic, social, and environmental risks: production systems are dismantled; people face impoverishment when their productive assets or income sources are lost; people are relocated to environments where their productive skills may be less applicable and the competition for resources greater; community institutions and social networks are weakened; kin groups are dispersed; and cultural identity, traditional authority, and the potential for mutual help are diminished or lost.'* (WB, 2001:1).

During the 1990s Michael Cernea, who worked for many years within the World Bank as the senior rural sociologist, developed his 'Risks, safeguards,

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<sup>9</sup>For the estimated number of the population involved in involuntary resettlement see 3.1 Review of Involuntary Resettlement of this thesis. For the estimated number participating in voluntary resettlement, see 2.2 Resettlement Project Implementation across China.

and reconstruction' model. In this he shows how population displacement associated with resettlement schemes generates a wide spectrum of risks: landlessness, joblessness, homelessness, marginalization, food insecurity, increased morbidity and mortality, loss of access to common property and services, and often a considerable amount of social disarticulation (Cernea 2000 and 1990). Even though practically all of these vulnerabilities are unintended, this nevertheless represents a considerable indictment of international policy and investment. Yet, to his credit, Cernea's ongoing critical appraisal of various types of resettlement scheme has in fact played a key role in the rethinking of the approach and practice in the World Bank and other international development organisations – at least at the level of policy discourse, if not always so clearly in terms of implementation. Cernea (2000:20) argues: 'Most important is the internal logic of the model. It suggests that preventing or overcoming the pattern of impoverishment would require risk reversal:

- a. From landlessness to land-based resettlement
- b. From joblessness to reemployment
- c. From homelessness to house reconstruction
- d. From marginalization to social inclusion
- e. From increased morbidity to improved health care
- f. From food insecurity to adequate nutrition
- g. From loss of access to restoration of community assets and services
- h. From social disarticulation to networks and community rebuilding'

In 1995, Cernea (1996) was awarded the Malinowski Award for his outstanding contribution to social science. He had accomplished an extraordinary level of influence within the bank – more than any other applied social scientist had achieved. Working for several decades in the World Bank, he demonstrated that social science can make a difference and shape policy. But he also criticized his own colleagues: 'social scientists all too often speak to themselves: historically they have been much better at recording development's tragedies than preventing them.' (1991:188) Cernea believes that *'sociological knowledge can improve the formulation of development policies and operational approaches, so as to substantially enhance the benefits of induced development.'* (1991:189). In his lecture in acceptance of the Malinowski Award, he addressed how social science had shaped resettlement policy worldwide: *'social science's contribution has resulted in major changes in the practice of involuntary resettlement throughout the world – changes in resettlers' entitlements, in planning, in financing, in turning around insensitive bureaucracies. The overarching meaning of all these changes is that the lives and fates of many people worldwide are improved through better protection and added opportunities'* (Cernea 1996:29).

Systematic research on involuntary resettlement has led to the formulation of sounder project and policy frameworks<sup>10</sup>. This is supported by over one hundred thematic review papers commissioned by the World Commission on Dams (DAMS, 1998-2001); and by Cernea's strong influence within the circles of the World Bank and various other international organisations and bilateral donors, and thus more indirectly on national governments. In addition, a broad range of social issues has been tackled. Political dimensions were explicitly exposed by Scudder (1973) when he suggested that big construction projects have a special appeal to planners and politicians, representing a country's or a political party's accomplishments. And indigenous issues too have been at the centre of debate. Reviewing the literature on Central and South America, Montoya Diaz (1996) concludes that most inquiries to date have given insufficient attention to the rights of indigenous groups, though, for example, cases from Mexico and Brazil highlight the longstanding struggles that indigenous peoples have been involved in vis-à-vis land developers and the State. Psychological issues are pinpointed by Scudder (1976) who describes the kinds of physiological, psychological and socio-cultural stress suffered by resettlers; and health matters are discussed by Sutapa Chattopadhyay (2002) who conducted a case study of health and living conditions among the displaced in India.

### *Breaking the Boundaries*

To some extent, these experiences of involuntary resettlement are also found in cases of voluntary resettlement where some of the same problems, though perhaps on a lesser scale, arise. Though situations may differ considerably, some of findings and approaches from involuntary resettlement may also provide useful lessons and experiences for the study of processes of voluntary resettlement, and vice versa. After all, despite differences in objectives and intervention measures, both types of resettlement concern population movement from one place to another. The central concerns of current involuntary resettlement policies are equity, justice and people's participation, or as William Adames (2000:9) argues, '*Equity and distribution are the key issues that emerge in any discussion of the social impacts of large dams, .....Defining equity from the point of view of the communities affected by large dams requires an understanding of both positive and negative impacts that goes beyond an economic framework.*' Number five of the principles of the Asian Development Bank's (ADB, 1995:8) resettlement policy

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<sup>10</sup> Yet, despite the many studies conducted on involuntary resettlement, William Adames stresses that '[the] data on which the analysis is based are poor. Many of the critical categories of data have never been collected, even for major dams funded by multilateral donors. Few figures are available other than power and irrigation benefits' (Adames, 2000:11).

also refers to people's participation: *'The affected people should be fully informed and closely consulted on resettlement and compensation options.'* And clearly similar concerns pertain to those resettled on a voluntary basis.

At this point it is pertinent to raise Dana Clark's (1999) worries about the message carried with the term of 'involuntary':

*"involuntary" means without the displaced person's informed consent or power of choice, or where that consent or choice is being exercised in the absence of reasonable alternative options.....Who determines whether "consent" has been given, who determines whether there was truly a "voluntary" decision, whether there is choice from a range of options?*

The displaced persons' rights of living in their home place are to be deprived if involuntary resettlement is to take place. The possible choices left are where to go and how to go. The argument then stresses that one should not deprive displaced persons' available choices and options under the 'protection' of a resettlement process which is fundamentally involuntary in nature but which claims to allow some space for settlers. Actually, no matter how intensively one conducts a social assessment, or is concerned about equity, justice and people's participation, they necessarily remain a secondary thought in involuntary resettlement. Many project documents and research papers indicate that decisions to move are a kind of 'Hobson's choice', that is when authorities in charge of involuntary resettlement finally reach consent, association or agreement with displaced persons, then they label such results as 'voluntary'. In fact, displaced persons may simply give up resisting because they face no other option. Such 'non-existent' choices then should not be named 'voluntary'. This tendency to apply the term 'voluntary' in these circumstances is, I assume, a strategy that arises because of the desire to make the involuntary nature of projects less explicit and therefore more politically acceptable. Such language use can easily mislead observers with little experience of the dynamics involved in resettlement.

The extent of voluntariness also differs according to the type of resettlement scheme. In 'dam resettlement' programmes, displaced persons must move otherwise they will be flooded; in 'reservation resettlement', populations living in or near natural reserve or conservation areas must be convinced to move in search of other livelihood opportunities and the specialised training that may be required; and refugees choose to move away from conflict zones because their lives are at risk but often have to be persuaded to enter the world of the 'refugee settlement'. Despite the different levels of 'voluntariness' implied in these examples, in many ways the primary nature of resettlement remains 'involuntary' in the sense that the resettlement process is fundamentally planned and facilitated or executed by outside authoritative bodies.

The line between voluntary and involuntary resettlement may therefore seem clear when considering broad parameters and yet ambiguous when examining the details of social process. For the case of involuntary resettlement, an entire population will be displaced without much consultation to make way for the construction of a particular infrastructure; whereas for voluntary resettlement, the population in the place of origin can choose to move or stay. However, as I have suggested above, the line between voluntary and involuntary is in practice often ambivalent, and requires careful observation and probing to establish the degree of consent, coercion, and negotiated agreement involved in particular cases. That is, we should observe and examine the complexities involved. Indeed, some populations affected by involuntary resettlement may actually in the end benefit from and welcome such arrangements; while, on the other hand, much resettlement that is considered voluntary may end up being regarded as being involuntary. For example, involuntariness arises when resettlers can only move to certain assigned resettlement areas, and when residents already living in a resettlement area are forced to receive a resettled population, at which point they may themselves become displaced. This is graphically illustrated by the resettlement site in Yunnan, which I examine later in the thesis, where there were sixteen local population groupings already living in the area before resettlement. In order to accommodate the resettled population and in accordance with the resettlement village plan of having houses in tidy lines and rows, local residents were requested to move to the newly-designed resettlement village. Hence, local residents had to destroy their previous houses and build new houses according to new house construction standards. One local resident commented: "I do not want to build an expensive new house because I do not have money, but I was told that I could not live in this place anymore if I did not follow the instructions. Now, I have a new house, but it is empty inside, because I had to sell all my valuable stuff, especially my new colour TV, for meeting the construction standards."

Boundaries emerge and submerge when the level of understanding and angle of perception changes; and this is as true for the field of settlement policy as it is for other social arenas. Here, it is useful to introduce the concept of 'policy community' (see Arce 2001:11), which helps us to understand how different notions and alternative views over an issue can co-exist – in this case 'resettlement'. A policy community is a knowledge pool that comprises conflicting and shared policy opinions. Applying this to resettlement, Alberto Arce writes:

*'[R]ecently an alternative view has started to emerge within the policy community, which starts to generate a different notion of what constitutes good resettlement (see Fisher, et al., 2000). The United Nations agencies addressing issues of forced eviction or internal displacement from a tradition of human rights (the United Nations Commission for Human*

*Rights),.....[while] the World Bank identifies as a main problem the issue of governability and government ownership of projects. Instead the UNCHR stresses the issue of breakdown of law and order, protection of minorities, and the importance of cultural rights.....While the World Bank orientation is to work with governments to improve their capacity to manage and implement policy, [t]he UN agencies mainly work with NGOs, because their skills on advocacy and grassroots contacts made them the best institutions to organise local claims on active citizenship rights.'*

The concept of policy community, then, is both a conceptual device as well as an 'action' concept for promoting collective and alternative policy options and strategies. As I show later, the field of resettlement provides a good illustration of the importance of policy communities for analysing processes of development intervention. But first we need to sketch in the historical background to China's contemporary resettlement program.

### 1.3 A Brief Review of China's Historical Population Movement<sup>11</sup>

China's current demographic characteristics and paths of development are closely linked to population resettlement, which can literally be traced back to the Qin dynasty, some 2000 years ago. Since then some 1000 cases of large-scale resettlement have been recorded. The historical profile of China's resettlement can be divided into five periods:

- The first when multi-directional resettlement took place to the middle and down-stream areas of the Yellow River. This spanned the Shang and Zhou dynasties and the Chunqiu period.
- The second when resettlement occurred from the middle and down-stream of the Yellow River to middle and down-stream areas of the Yazi River during the Qin and Song dynasties.
- The third when resettlement took place from the east to west within the Yazi watershed during Yuan, Ming and Qing dynasties.
- The fourth when resettlement from in-land to out-reach areas and to the overseas took place during the early and middle part of the 20th century.
- The fifth is marked by the multi-dimensional resettlement of contemporary China

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<sup>11</sup> All the data for this section derive from Cao Shuji (1997), *China's Resettlement History*, Peoples Press of Fujian.



*Review of China's Resettlement (21<sup>st</sup> century B.C to 1840)*

Over a very long historical trajectory, China gradually moved from being composed of a multitude of separate political units to becoming more centralised and integrated politically, although it remained divided on an ethnic basis. An old Chinese saying represents China's deeply rooted belief in the existence and safety of homeland territories: "It is safe to stay, but be cautious when moving around". Like the peoples of many other 'premodern' societies, the Chinese have not liked to settle in new areas, and so all large-scale resettlement during this period was instigated by major socio-political events, such as war and social disorder, or by natural disasters. These can be grouped into four types:

(1) Resettlement caused by wars: China's history is a history of wars and most resettlement was the result of wars between competing landlords, rebellions by groups of farmers, the invasion of the mainland by 'foreign' ethnic groups (nowadays termed 'minority nationalities'), and wars waged by the central government against neighbouring countries. People were resettled in different ways: soldiers stayed on in conquered territories; people were forced to move to the homelands of conquering armies, while the conquerors themselves often took possession of land and resources and moved in large numbers of their own people to manage them; and many families fled the wars to settle in other places.

(2) Resettlement caused by political decisions: This type can be further categorized into four forms: (a) that concerned with political control (e.g. when one regime is defeated and its ex-governors and their families, together with other officials and supporters are forced to resettle in controlled areas); (b) that enforced as a punishment, when criminals were forced to move to remote and inhospitable places, and their descendants not allowed to return; (c) that connected with the search for a sense of belonging or identity and new opportunities (e.g. after the Han peoples succeeded in uniting China, many other nationalities (ethnic groups) living on the periphery were attracted by the prosperity of the new polity and some were given permission by the Han government to settle there); and (d) that due to the construction of large-scale infrastructural works, such as the Great Wall which was built by millions of forced labourers.

(3) Resettlement caused by natural disasters: China is geographically located in a zone frequently afflicted by natural disasters, such as floods, drought, and plagues of locusts. With limited means to defend themselves from such disasters, populations regularly suffered from famine and damage to their properties, which led many to flee the affected area.

(4) Resettlement encouraged by government for reasons of 'development'. An example of this would be the policy declared by the emperor of the Tang

dynasty in 728. He announced that "People who volunteer to resettle in border areas will be given good land, and will be exempt from forced labor forever." Here - and in many similar cases - government encouraged rather than enforced resettlement. In return, resettlers were often given land titles and tax rebates or exemption.

*Resettlement in More Recent Times (from 1840 to 1949)*

According to Chinese historians, the modern history of China begins with the Opium War of 1840 and leads to the foundation of People's Republic of China in 1949. During this period, China saw the end of the Qing dynasty and the development of the modern Chinese state. During this 100 year period, we can identify five types of resettlement:

(1) Resettlement of land claimed first by the Qing dynasty government and then later by the Republic of China: One of such resettlement took place in northeast of China. Northeast China includes three provinces: those of Liaoning, Jilin and Heilongjiang. Originally, the population was concentrated in Liaoning Province, primarily because of the "closure policy" (i.e. people were not allowed to live in a certain 'closed area') implemented by Qing government. As a result, there were less than 10 thousand people living in an area of several hundred thousand square kilometres in northern Heilongjiang. This made it easy for Russia to occupy Chinese territory. In the circumstances, many Chinese pressed for government action in opening up the area for settlement which, it was argued, was necessary in order to consolidate control over China's borderland territory. Hence, in 1860, the Qing government opened the Hulan River Grasslands of northern Haerbin, Heilongjiang Province; and in the following year, grasslands in the northwest of Jilin Province were also declared open for settlement.

These decisions provoked large-scale voluntary resettlement. By 1911, the total resettled population in Jilin reached 4.22 million and that in Heilongjiang, 3.22 million. In addition to the resettlement induced by abolishing the policy of closure, the opening up of the original royal hunting areas for land occupation provoked further massive resettlement. The royal hunting area - "Mu Lan Hunting Area" - had been established as early as 1681, but in 1821 it was put aside as useless, until 1863 when the Qing government allowed farming inside the area. By 1917, the total resettled population amounted to some 890 thousand with a total land area of 1 million mu.

Continuing the efforts of the Qing government, the government of the Republic established special agencies responsible for the formulation and implementation of policies to attract settlers to the areas. For example, in 1914, Heilongjiang Province formulated a "Policy of Calling for Land Claims".

However, in the first place, not many people responded because the land available was located in very harsh natural conditions and there were no specific incentives offered. Thus, in 1921, certain privileges were introduced in the form of tax reductions, safety protection and other similar rewards. As a result, a total of 706 thousand persons were resettled between 1918 and 1921, giving an average 141 thousand per year. This was followed by a population of 1875 thousand between 1923 and 1930, an average of 270 thousand per year. As a consequence, many other provinces, such as Jilin, Liaoning, Ningxia, Neimeng, Gansu, Qinghai and Xinjiang, learning from the experience of Heilongjiang, set about formulating and implementing their own policies of resettlement for development.

(2) Resettlement caused by the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom war (1851-1864): This war constituted the biggest farmers' rebellion in China's recent history. The battlefield was concentrated in the middle and down-stream areas of the the Yazi River and northern Zhejiang Province, at that time the most populated area of China. Heavy casualties resulting from the ten-year war, pestilence and famine brought a tremendous loss of population. It is estimated that the total loss of population in the provinces of Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Anhui was 48.55 million, some 4.3% of the total population of these provinces before the war. After the war, many people migrated into the area. By 1889, there was a total 5.6 million people living in the three provinces. Although the number of new settlers was not enough to replace the loss of population, resettlement played a very important role in the post-war development of these provinces.

(3) Resettlement caused by unequal treaties with other countries: It has been said that China's recent history is a history of humiliation. This comment refers to the more than one hundred unequal treaties between the Qing government and mainly western countries that reduced China to a semi-colonized country under foreign dominance. Under these treaties some of its territory was controlled by foreign powers for specified periods. One response to this was that some Chinese migrated from these foreign enclaves to settle in areas still under Chinese sovereignty. For example, in 1858, the Aihui Treaty between China and Russia was signed, under which China lost a vast land area to the north of Heilongjiang; and two years later, a similar Beijing Treaty between China and Russia was signed, ceding to Russia an enormous area of land to the north of Wusuli River. As a consequence, many Chinese unwilling to live under Russian rule left their homes to find work and accommodation in Chinese areas. A further consequence of these foreign treaties was the legalization of a flow of labour from Chinese areas to work in foreign enterprise. For example, agreements were signed in 1863 and 1868 with the Americans and British that legalized the trafficking of Chinese labourers to the US and Britain.

(4) Resettlement to urban areas with industrial development: The development of industry and trade always go side-by-side with processes of urbanization. Hence, with increasing urbanization, large numbers of provincially based-individuals (sometimes with their families) moved to settle in urban areas in order to provide the much needed inputs of labour for the development of industry and trade. A unique feature of this type of resettlement was that it primarily involved the transfer of members of an agricultural population to that of a growing urban/industry population.

(5) Overseas resettlement of Chinese laborers: Various 'push and pull' factors stimulated the overseas resettlement of Chinese workers. Most of them came from the coastal area of south-east China, especially Guangdong and Fujian Provinces where population pressure was becoming a major problem. According to a sample survey among Chinese overseas workers, conducted in 1935 by China's Pacific Academic Association, 69.95% of those interviewed indicated that they had chosen to migrate overseas in order to seek better income-earning opportunities – the strongest motivation for leaving China. China's nineteenth and early twentieth century history corresponds to a major period of colonization by European powers.

The development of the colonies required the recruitment of labor to work in various agricultural, mining and industrial enterprises but local labor supplies were insufficient and so they set searching out labor around the world. So after 1840, Chinese labor became a key source: China had huge population and could easily supply whatever cheap labor was needed. The destinations of overseas Chinese laborers ranged widely across the countries of Southeast Asia, North America and Latin America, and Australia and New Zealand. About half of the laborers went to Asia and one-third to America. At that time, many centres for labor recruitment were established in Xiameng, Shantou, Macou and Jinmen. According to historical records, there were around this time some 147,729 laborers bonded through Macou.

Later when this officially recognized trade in labor came to an end, Chinese workers explored alternative routes for work. According to statistics – though incomplete – some 70,000 laborers were traded to North Africa for mining between 1904 and 1919. A further 10,000 were traded to Germany and 550,000 thousand to Russia. Large-scale contracting of labor only ended after the establishment of the Republic of China in 1912, though many Chinese still actively sought work opportunities overseas due to the instability of Chinese society during that time. Social instability, political disorder, economic degradation and crisis, and natural disasters all played a part in 'pushing' people to migrate overseas. In addition, the longstanding network of overseas relationships, especially stemming from the coastal areas, facilitated this movement overseas. It is estimated that some three million people migrated overseas between 1801 and 1925.

*Review of China's Contemporary Resettlement Experience (1949 up to now)*

As discussed at the beginning of the last section, China's contemporary resettlement can be categorised into four types: (1) Government-organized/sponsored voluntary resettlement; (2) Involuntary resettlement; (3) Spontaneous resettlement; and (4) Refugee resettlement. In the previous two sections, dealing with the longer term history of resettlement in China, I concentrated on events rather than categories, though many similar elements and differences were highlighted. In the present section, I focus on the above types, although no information is given on refugee resettlement, and spontaneous resettlement is only very briefly dealt with.

**Involuntary resettlement**

There are three main kinds of forced resettlement in China's current history: the first one is resettlement for industrialization, the second one is resettlement for food security, and the third is reservoir resettlement. The first two types of resettlement took place mainly in the 1950s and 1960s, but reservoir resettlement has continued up to the present. Resettlement programs under different economic orders have different natures and features. Before the 1980s, China's economy can be categorized as a state planned economy. During that period, large-scale resettlement programs were launched to meet government interests. There were principally two movements of people, one to the industrial zones or cities to support China's industrial development, the other to agricultural zones to meet China's food security needs.

China began to concentrate its resources on so-called "socialist economic construction" from 1953 onwards, when the Chinese government initiated its huge plan to industrialize by establishing many new industrial cities and industrial zones: For example, steel at Baotou City in Inner-Mongolia, Taiyuan City in Shanxi, and at Wuhan City in Hubei; automobile production at Changchun in Jilin (or "The First Automobile Factory of Changchun"); and other industrial bases in Northeast China, Sichuan, Guizhou and other provinces. In order to provide sufficient human resources, several 100,000 scientists, technicians and technical workers were required to resettle. The principal method used to move people at that time was subtle political coercion, which in the end led people to believe that they actually made their own choices. The directions of movement were from rural to urban areas, and from small towns and cities to bigger industrial cities and complexes, which led to a decline in the development of many small towns and cities in some areas. So that, although these resettlement programs generated many new industrial cities and bases and thus contributed to the economic development of the

country as a whole, this was at the cost of the decline or stagnation of rural areas and some less important areas under the central planning program. In order to meet China's food security needs, the new government launched (in 1949) its programme of agricultural resettlement. Agricultural bases were built in remote areas in the northwest and northeast where there were vast areas of agricultural and waste land. Many small and large-scale state-owned farms were established; and many hundreds of thousands of people participated in this opening up the wastelands. They included people from the eastern cities, other rural areas, as well as many war veterans.

From the foundation of the People's Republic, the Chinese government made large-scale investments in water conservation, and in water and hydroelectric projects, including large, medium and small schemes, and two very enormous projects known as the Three Gorges and Xiaolangdi projects on the Yellow River. China built a total of 84,000 reservoirs from 1949 to 1999. This led to the resettlement of around 12.5 million people, ranking China as first in the world in terms of the number of people resettled due to the construction of reservoirs. According to estimates from the ADB (1995:5), since 1980, development projects (especially infrastructural schemes) in the People's Republic of China (PRO) have led to the displacement of perhaps the largest number of people in the world (about 30 million).

Constructing hydropower dams or irrigation shares the largest population displacement as compared with other types of programs, such as highway construction, and the organising of forest reserves or national parks. Hence, this section focuses on information concerning reservoir resettlement. In the past 50 years, China's reservoir resettlement has passed through three stages, which are defined by changes in China's political environment. Mechanisms of resource allocation and the movement of people in China are mainly determined by political priorities.

#### Stage I: Pre-cultural revolution stage (1950-1957)

The following features can be identified for this stage: (1) the Chinese government took more cautious consideration of people's coping capacity because China had just been founded, after years of war; (2) land reform had been implemented so there were large areas of state-owned land, which could be distributed to resettlers; (3) farmers possessed arable land, which could be re-adjusted for resettlers; (4) China was a very poor country, and the rural economy was especially underdeveloped so that it was much easier for resettlers to catch up if they received subsidies. During this period, more than 20 reservoirs were constructed, and more than 300,000 thousand people were resettled.

Stage II: Cultural Revolution stage (1958-1979)

Socio-economic and political features of this stage were: (1) all resettlement projects were imposed using various political and administrative means; (2) political consideration took precedence over social and economic feasibilities; (3) no proper design and planning was conducted; (4) there was no consideration given to environmental carrying capacities; (5) very low subsidies were provided to re-settlers; and (6) there were no principal policies or regulations to guide actions and no legal framework to protect the rights of re-settlers. During this stage, more than 280 water conservation and water and electricity projects, with more than 12 thousand kilowatt capacity, were constructed. And more than 2.53 million people were resettled.

Stage III: Reform and Opening up stage (1979-1999)

Changes in policies and political dynamics always take time, though this does not exclude quick and dramatic change when things are ripe for something new. In the Chinese case, the country experienced - over a span of two decades (from 1979 until 1999) - huge social, economic and political changes, but much of this came gradually, as a step-by-step process. Thus many of the features of current reservoir resettlement are an outcome of the past two decades of progressive change. We can identify the following important dimensions.

In the first place, resettlement for development became the key planning principle. This was aimed at combining resettlement with considerations of economic development. Linked to this was the shift away from the notion of passive compensation (i.e. subsidies to new settlers) to more active support for the development of new viable livelihood pursuits. That is, the emphasis changed from the delivery of relief aid to assistance for productive activities. Second, an effort was made to establish and perfect regulations and laws relating to water conservation and the utilization of electric power. Central to this was the issuing of "Regulations for Land Requisition for Large and Medium Size Water Conservation and Electricity Projects and Resettlement", thus underlining that China's resettlement projects were now to be founded upon a solid legal framework. At the same time, program and project planning were given much attention and supported by the injection of external expertise into national programs through the setting up of so-called international projects such as the World Bank resettlement projects in China.

At this stage, more than 70 large and medium size water conservation and electricity projects were constructed, and two enormous and long-term projects, namely the Xiao Lang Di Project of the Yellow River, and Three Gorges Project of the Yazi River were initiated. The latter was to be the biggest water conservation and electricity project in Chinese history. According to the

Ministry of Water Conservation, the construction of the Three Gorges Project would submerge many cities, much land and other properties. These included 2 cities, 10 county towns, 116 market places, 1599 factories and mining sites, 655 docks, houses totally 34,731,500 square meters, arable land of 252,600 mu (168,400 ha), orchards of 108,300 mu (72,200 ha), and roads consisting of 815,500 meters. Total population living in the entire area to be submerged numbered some 847,500 people, among whom 426,400 were urban residents and 348,700 rural. The estimated total investment required for the Three Gorges Project was 40 billion yuan at 1993 price value. According to the plan, the construction of the project would last for 17 years. Considering natural population growth and other related factors, the total resettlement population was calculated at about 1.2 million, so the project was named the "1 million population resettlement project". In fact, the parties involved in the project had all more or less realized that the achievement of the project would not only rely on the success of the engineering and construction work, but principally on the level of satisfaction of the resettled population. In order to make a success of the whole project, many types of surveys and investigations were conducted dealing with the assessment of environmental carrying capacity, baseline living standards, and people's willingness and feelings about resettlement, etc. At the same time, it was said by government agencies that a series of monitoring and evaluation systems would be established and utilized to monitor people's life circumstances throughout the process of resettlement.

At the time of writing, the Three Gorges Project is now in its final phase of construction and a fierce debate has raged throughout its implementation as to the balance of costs and benefits it will bring to the nation and environment as a whole, but particularly in regard to all those displaced and resettled populations directly affected.

### **A Note on Spontaneous Resettlement**

As a socio-economic phenomenon, spontaneous population movement has always been an ongoing aspect of life in China. It mainly includes three categories: the first is the movement of agricultural people to less populated areas; the second is that of wage labor to cities and the more developed areas; and the third is overseas out-migration. In many cases, spontaneous resettlement has taken place before, alongside of, or after government-organised voluntary resettlement.

### **Review of Government-Organised Voluntary Resettlement**

Large-scale government-organised voluntary resettlement started in 1983. That year, the Chinese government made a special budget available to support poverty alleviation activities in the so-called 'Three Xi Areas' (all have 'xi', meaning west, in their names). These included Xiji County, Haiyuan and



Guyuan County of Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, and Dingxi and Hexi Prefecture of Gansu Province. The 'Three Xi Areas' are internationally recognised as poor areas, characterised by harsh natural conditions and very poor populations. The basic strategy for the Three Xi Area Development was: 'water roads' for places where river irrigation systems could be built, 'dry roads' for places where water conservation projects could be constructed, and 'alternative roads', for resettlement from places where there was neither water nor dry road possibilities.

'Three Xi Development' has always received positive remarks from local and central government, which has acted to further legitimise the resettlement for poverty reduction and development programs implemented central government in its '8-7 Poverty Alleviation Program' of 1994, and by the newly issued 'General Guideline for Rural Poverty Alleviation and Development' of 2001. From the mid-1990s, and supported by central government, these provinces and regions started their resettlement projects. The total population to be resettled under the overall plan drawn up jointly by central and provincial government and aimed principally at poverty reduction was five million persons throughout China. By 1999, some 2.58 million had been resettled.

### **Concluding Comments**

Having traced the history of Chinese resettlement, we may conclude that resettlement has always been linked to strategies of political consolidation and enforcement, to economic interests and motivation, and to attempts to reduce population pressure on resources or to resolve refugee problems in the aftermath of natural disasters or civil disorder. The emphasis on political consolidation and enforcement has often led to the imposition of involuntary/forced forms of resettlement, while concerns for the improvement of economic livelihoods and human welfare have generated forms of government-organized voluntary as well as more spontaneous resettlement. Examining this history, one cannot but be impressed by how changes in the political and socio-economic environment have influenced the emergence and transformation of specific types of resettlement and associated changes in social policy.

Reviewing China's contemporary population movements helps to position the present research in relation to notions of resettlement. Both involuntary and voluntary resettlement are government-organised, but they are different in terms of their main project or program goals as well as in respect to the willingness of resettlers to move. With increasing recognition of the importance of giving people and families more choice about their livelihoods and priorities, the Chinese government begun to give greater emphasis to the economic

benefits that would accrue to those participating in the involuntary resettlement programs. However, whatever changes within the framework of involuntary resettlement took place, the fact remained that the central nature of such resettlement was that people were to be forcibly moved in the sense that they had no choice but to do so, although various incentives were provided to smooth their way. In contrast, in government-organised voluntary resettlement, the central concern has been whether this more open choice strategy would in fact bring better results in terms of poverty alleviation and economic improvement. It is in respect to this latter problematic that the two cases of resettlement analysed in this thesis pertain.

Yet, having opted to focus on government-assisted voluntary resettlement, it is important to underline, as I have tried to do so throughout this chapter, that despite the difference made between involuntary and voluntary resettlement, many of the same predicaments and livelihood problems in fact arise. That is to say, resettlers of whatever type will encounter and have to face up to the same sorts of difficulties. They may also opt for similar coping strategies and achieve similar standards of living.

### **Organization of the Thesis**

This first chapter has aimed to introduce issues of resettlement by outlining my interest in the topic, the contribution of previous research to this theme, and the relevance and significance of such studies for China – both historical and contemporary.

Chapter two that follows aims to develop an analytical perspective on planned intervention. In it, I offer critiques of the economic growth model and the modernization approach, and build an analytical framework based upon new approaches to looking at state-society relationships, drawing on actor-oriented analysis, the participatory approach, and state-society synergy thinking.

Chapter three introduces the research areas. It emphasises community-level information and farmers' reflections on their own living places. Chapter four analyses the structural outcomes of the resettlement projects, and provides data on how resettlers have benefited from resettlement.

Chapter five offers information about achievements in the resettlement areas and explores various policy dimensions with a view to pinpointing the roles played by specific policies in generating resettlement outcomes. A critique is made of the rationale and consequences of these policies.

Chapter six of the thesis examines the social dynamics at community and household levels and their impact on the outcomes of resettlement.

Finally, in Chapter seven, I pull together the findings and arguments made in the thesis and draw conclusions about how to understand why the goal of poverty reduction is seldom effectively achieved.

## **Developing an Analytical Perspective on Planned Intervention**

The purpose of this chapter is to develop an analytical framework, together with appropriate research methods, for understanding planned intervention. Despite the recent attention given to the promotion of civil society in China, government continues to play a major part in resource management, including public finance and public property at both central and local levels. This is clearly evident in the government-organised voluntary resettlement schemes. Hence, it is useful to provide a critical overview of planned state intervention, and to define the kinds of theoretical approaches required for its understanding. Here I identify three relevant perspectives: actor-oriented analysis, 'participatory' approaches, and state-society synergy thinking.

### **2.1 Research Argument and Research Questions**

In China and elsewhere, many resettlement areas have become increasingly prosperous as a result of the huge investments made by government and international donors, as well as by the resettlers themselves. Despite this there are also cases where resettlers did not in the end settle successfully at the new locations and adapt to the new surroundings and to the rigors of building new viable livelihoods. Both central and local governments in China are convinced that resettlement is a very effective instrument for poverty reduction and development, so they continue to invest in resettlement projects despite the fact that they also recognize the many problems. The primary concern of this research is to explore whether or not planned intervention through resettlement schemes in China is effective in achieving the primary goal of poverty reduction as claimed by government. My central argument is that government-organised resettlement projects have mobilized many resources and some of them brought potential prosperity to the resettled farmers. However, they have not sufficiently benefited the government-defined target groups, namely the poorer populations of the places of origin. In fact many beneficiaries cannot be considered to be the poorer members of the population but belong instead to the more affluent of those places.

My research questions in response to this research argument are:

- What are the policies employed for resettlement for poverty reduction and development at central government and local levels? How far have these policies achieved what they claim to achieve?
- What has been the impact on local populations and situations of resettlement projects? Who has benefited from these resettlement projects?
- What are the social dynamics at community level that are attributable to the outcome of the resettlement projects?

## 2.2 Development of Theoretical Debate

### *Tradition of Planned Intervention*

Voluntary and involuntary resettlement projects are typical of planned intervention, and in the process of research and its analysis the critique of planned intervention becomes the line of argument throughout the thesis. Initially the belief in economic growth and modernisation formed the basis of theoretical thinking and practical application of planned intervention. Hence this section starts with a brief review of economic growth theories and the modernisation approach.

### **Pursuit of Economic Growth**

Preston writes that *'in the early work on Third World development, intervention was legitimated by being based upon economic growth theory'* (Preston, 1996:154). He argues that there are four elements in the background to growth theory: *'(a) the intellectual influence of the economist John Maynard Keynes; (b) the political agenda of the USA as it moves to a position of dominance in the short twentieth century; (c) the Marshall Aid program and the reconstruction of Western Europe; and (d) the demands of nationalist developmentalism which was the ideology of the emergent new nations.'* Keynes' work provided an intellectual basis for planned intervention and the further development of economic growth models. *'Overall, the Keynesian analysis makes clear that state planning to secure full employment is compatible with the political concerns of liberalism for the freedom of the individual'* (ibid. 156)

Lewis further developed economic growth theory, especially in his book *The Theory of Economic Growth* (1955). He identifies three proximate causes of growth and development. These are, first, the *'effort to economize'*, which Lewis uses to characterize the developed countries. Included within it or as illustrations of it we find listed: experimentation; risk-taking; mobility; and specialization. The second proximate cause is increase of knowledge and its

application and, finally, we are reminded that growth depends upon increasing the amount of capital. These are qualities that underdeveloped economies were presumed to lack.

The pursuit of economic growth has promoted the development of various economic growth models based on the underlining assumption that economic growth is predictable and linear, and its law is universal. However, sufficient evidence and research have shown that such an assumption is wrong. Kenny (2001:1) indicates that *'no [economic] model has proven robust to trial by repeated regression.'* He argued: *'Attempts to divine that cause or causes of long-term economic growth, testing a wide range of possible determinants using statistical techniques, have produced results that are frequently contradictory to results reported elsewhere.'* He used two of Sachs (Sachs, 1996, 1997) articles to show such contradictions:

*'In June 1996, The Economist magazine published a piece based on results from a global statistical study concluding that had African countries followed better policies, such as those followed in eight fast-growing economies over the last few decades, the region would have grown 4.6% per annum faster than its historical growth rate...A year later, The Economist published another piece based on results from a global statistical study that concluded 'for much of the world, bad climates, poor soils and physical isolation are likely to hinder growth whatever happens to policy.'*

This study concluded that, even had Africa followed better policies, it would have grown 2.3% slower per year than the countries of South and South East Asia. These two articles, with their markedly different conclusions, provide an illustration of the problems facing even the best development economists.

Kenny further argues: *'The evidence appears to suggest that country growth experiences have been extremely heterogeneous, and heterogeneous in a way that is difficult to explain using any one model of economic growth.'* Kenny's argument raises a call not only to economists but also to all development practitioners to shift from developing models to working on actual complex realities. Such a call drawn from an economist corresponds the thinking of many scholars with an anthropological or sociological bent. This will be discussed later in this chapter. However, the level of recognition and acceptance of the limitations of economic models is very low, especially among economists. This is because, firstly, most economists would not challenge the fundamental methodology of economics; secondly, they are mostly occupied with modifying economic models (Klenow, 1997:597:1) rather than questioning whether there are universal models.

Questioning economic growth models does not, however, mean the denial of contributions of certain economic growth theories. The classical example is the contribution of Keynes' intellectual revolution to the economic recovery of industrial countries after the Second World War.

*'It is now universally recognised by governments, at least throughout the industrialised free-enterprise world, that it is one of their primary duties to control the level of total effective demand for goods and services. If demand is insufficient to provide full employment, it is the*

*government's duty to raise it by stimulating the injections (investment, government expenditure, and/or exports) and/or by discouraging the leakages (by reducing the proportions of income saved, paid in taxes, or spent on imports). If demand is excessive, then it is the government's duty to restrain the injections and to encourage the leakages.'* (Keynes, Milo 1975:87-88)

Shifting of emphasis from political movement to economic development, China is now experiencing an overwhelming belief in economic growth. Industrialisation, urbanisation and public infrastructure investment are regarded as the routes towards economic development. The evidence shows how these approaches plus other elements contribute to China's rapid economic development. The construction of infrastructure and induced involuntary resettlement are typically driven by the pursuit of economic growth. However, many researchers now elucidate the other side of the story showing how China's economic growth has witnessed a big income divide between regions (Cai, 2002; Gustafsson 2002; Ka, 2001; Jian, 1996), between urban and rural areas and also among farmers. The other consequence that I demonstrate in this research is how other development objectives, such as poverty reduction, are replaced by the pursuit of economic growth.

Industrialisation of agriculture and the modernisation of the Chinese countryside have been the goals of the Chinese central government for several decades. However, how much agricultural machinery can be used on the tiny farming plots and hillside areas that many Chinese farmers currently cultivate? Also how far can resettlement advance the industrialisation of agricultural production? In the resettlement areas of Ningxia (one of the sites for the present research) agricultural industrialisation is set as an important development objective, but it is hard to see how this can be achieved when each resettlement household possesses only 0.53 hectares of farming land. The ironic fact is that, development objectives without the slogan of industrialisation do not 'sound good' even though local officials already know that in fact this is hardly achievable. Yet they still work with an ideal model that associates industrialisation with economic growth and development.

Hence, my first concern with economic growth theory is to reveal its underlying assumption of positive and authoritative intervention. A second critical concern is its theoretical defect of ignoring micro-level social processes. The latter in fact constitute the fundamental forces generating the particular intervention outcomes and day-to-day livelihoods. Under economic growth theory, formulas or models are often developed which assume what should have happened rather than being based on sound evidence of what actually happened. In this way failures are often attributed to the lack of specific conditioning elements rather than to the design of the intervention itself.

### Modernisation Theory

From the mid-1950s, economic growth theory was gradually absorbed into modernisation theory. Preston (1996:172) summarises the background of modernisation theory as:

*'(a) the process whereby the less developed countries would shift from traditional patterns of life to become developed; (b) industrial society was the goal, where society was driven by the demanding logic of industrialism; (c) the logic of industrialism would lead to the convergence of political economic systems (in particular those of East and West); and (d) the achievement of prosperity as in the USA of the 1960s would mean that ideological debate occasioned by conflict in respect of scarce resources would wither away.'*

The ideological foundation of modernisation theory can be traced to the notion of modernity. Arce and Long (2000:2) distinguish between 'modernity' and 'modernisation':

*'[W]e try, wherever possible, to differentiate clearly between 'modernity' as a metaphor for new or emerging 'here-and-now' materialities, meanings and cultural styles seen in relation to the notion of some past state of things (cf. Comaroff & Comaroff 1993:xiii) and 'modernisation' as a comprehensive package of technical and institutional measures aimed at widespread societal transformation and underpinned by neo-evolutionary theoretical narratives.'*

The 'modernisation approach' emerged in 1940s and 1950s 'when Western experts became concerned with the modernisation of the colonial territories and newly emerging independent countries.' (ibid.:5).

*'Of the various attempts at formulating a model to depict this [modernization] process, Neil Smelser's (1963) based on the idea of structural differentiation is perhaps the most elegant.' For him, "[e]conomic development takes place through (a) the modernization of technology, leading to a change from simple traditionalised techniques to the application of scientific knowledge; (b) the commercialisation of agriculture, which is characterized by the move from subsistence to commercial farming, leading to a specialization in cash-crop production and the development of wage labor; (c) the industrialization process, which depicts the transition from the use of human and animal power to machine power; and lastly, (d) urbanization, which consists of changes in the ecological dimension and is the movement from farm and village towards the growth of large urban centres.'* (Long, 1977:10)

*'The central claim of Modernization theory is that industrialisation is linked with specific processes of sociopolitical change that apply widely: though preindustrial societies vary immensely, one can meaningfully speak of a model of "modern" or "industrial" society toward which all societies tend to move if they commit themselves to industrialisation.'* (Inglehart, 1997:8)

Indeed a large proportion of the Chinese population, like other contemporary societies continue to believe in such a claim. Hence, Inglehart (1997:7) for example argues: '[T]his claim is largely correct: though we cannot predict exactly what will happen in a given society at a given time, some major trends



are predictable in broad outline. When given processes of change are set in motion, certain characteristics are likely to emerge in the long run.' Furthermore, the institutionalisation of the modernisation approach through the educational system, academic disciplines, research institutions, research agendas, government organisations and their styles of work has consolidated such belief, and left little room for alternative ways of thinking.

A critical assessment of the modernisation approach is, then, essential for understanding the outcomes of development processes and planned intervention. Long criticises modernisation theory (along with other structural theories) for being externalist. He (2001:10-11) writes:

*'Despite obvious differences in ideology and theoretical trappings, two structural models have until relatively recently occupied centre stage in the sociology of development – modernization theory and political economy. And both evince certain paradigmatic similarities and common analytical weaknesses. Modernization theory visualizes development in terms of a progressive movement towards technologically and institutionally more complex and integrated forms of "modern" society. ... On the other hand, Marxist and neo-Marxist theories of political economy stress the exploitative nature of these processes, attributing them to the inherent expansionist tendency of world capitalism and to its constant need to open up new markets, increase the level of surplus extraction and accumulate capital. ... the two models are similar in that both see development and social change emanating primarily from external centres of power via interventions by the state or international bodies, and following some broadly determined developmental path, sign posted by "stages of development" or the succession of different regimes of capitalism. ... Both models therefore are tainted by determinist, linear and externalist views of social change'.*

There is nothing wrong in pursuing the advancement and progress of society. The critique lies in what we mean by "advancement" and "progress" and how to attain them. Societies with differing social, economic and political histories and institutions may have their unique means for the pursuit of advancement. However, today, the majority of societies around the world have, since World War II, been following the modernisation approach. That is, in one way or another, their development paths display common characteristics: large-scale capital investment for infrastructure construction, capital loan schemes of various kinds, transfers of technology aimed at increasing agricultural productivity, promoting industrialisation, urbanisation and centralised, top-down management structures. These modernisation characteristics are typical of many resettlement programmes.

In pioneer research on agricultural settlement schemes, Robert Chambers (1969) reviews the settlement schemes in anglophone Africa from the colonial period to the stage of independence in the 1960s:

*'Agricultural schemes started in British colonies before independence, and since independence in nations formerly under British rule, have included a wide range of approaches: land consolidation, farm planning, crop rotation, credit schemes, marketing co-operatives, cash crop introduction, mechanization and state farming, among others. Some of*

*the most conspicuous of these projects have been what are described as settlement or resettlement schemes.....The resources devoted to these projects have been large. They have, of course, included land, labour, and technical and administrative expertise; but an indication of the magnitude of investment is most readily given in terms of capital.' (1969:3) 'In social and economic terms, however, the record of past schemes has been discouraging. Not only have they given rise to many problems, but outright failures and collapse have been common. .... Indeed in almost all countries settlement schemes have been criticized by sociologists, agriculturalists and economists for failure to achieve their social, agricultural and economic objectives, and for their absorption of scarce resources which might have been put to better use.' (1969:7)*

Despite the failure of many resettlement schemes in the past and present, many such schemes still exist. Resettlement is often a consequence of other development projects such as dam construction, and reflects the development vision and desires informed by the economic growth and modernisation models. Such a vision of development expresses belief in a linear transformation of society and people. It also seems that many resettlement programs reflect the desires of decision-makers to have some object to work on, that is to have an idea to present and resources to control.

The major problem with the modernisation approach is its determinist view of the macro-level and of outside intervention. Underpinning such a view are ideologies of "centre-periphery" and "superior-inferior" power structures, coupled with a belief in the transfer of knowledge and institutions. Thus modernisation views knowledge as an objective product that has clear boundaries, and can be identified and transferred. The power structure underpinning modernisation notions classifies knowledge in such a way that it denies the knowledge of the perceived "lower"<sup>1</sup> status groups.

### **Planned Intervention**

The economic growth model, and later, modernization theories have dominated worldwide academic discussion for more than four decades since the 1940s. This represents the dominance of structural analyses in theoretical debate and policy analysis. They are still the fundamental rationale of government policies in many countries, even though strong criticisms have been made of them since the 1970s, and especially after the 1980s, in academic circles. Planned intervention has been regarded as a basic instrument for promoting the development of developing countries by international societies and by national governments. As Preston (1996:159) comments:

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<sup>1</sup> I draw the term 'lower' or 'lowers' from Chambers (1993). In general it refers to those who are poor, especially poor farmers, or those who have less or no formal education. It combines both social and economic status

*'Intervention in a social system might be understood as deliberate action whose objective is to bring about a particular change in some set of circumstance and thereby achieve a preferred state of affairs. There are three basic aspects of this approach: (a) the supposition that there is something to be acted upon, an object; (b) the expectation that it will respond and do so in a predictable fashion; and (c) the idea that the intervention is accomplished by an actor in a precise manner according to a clear set of expectations, that is, authoritatively and not randomly or accidentally.'*

Planned development basically refers to two broad categories: intervention by national government, in the form of national planning or specific programs/projects, and intervention by bilateral and multilateral organizations, in the form of development aid programs/projects or policy dialogue. Different terms are used to elucidate the planned development approach with different emphases, such as 'planned intervention', 'planned development', 'state intervention', 'directive change' and so forth. One way or other, the following three concepts are referred to: development, planning and the central role of the State. Intended development<sup>2</sup> represents how positive development or change is interpreted, which is further translated into development objectives through the planning process. Planning is an instrument for reaching development objectives. The State is assumed to play an essential role in development, and the dynamics between State-society relations are the core for development.

*'In the 1940s and 1950s the idea of national planning became firmly established in most countries in the world. Planning and development committees, councils and ministries were set up all around the world.'* (Frerks, 1991:10) Robertson (1984:86) lay out what is planning: *'[P]lanning is an attempt to reach forward and gain some kind of control over a future which must always remain inherently uncertain..... secondly, planning is concerned with the translation of ideas and ideals into reality. As such it is both a normative and a technical process, a search for the means by which desired future goals may actively be pursued. Thirdly, it is also a political process, a pattern of relationships between (most significantly) states and subject populations.'* Conyers (1984:3) defined planning as a *'continuous process which involves decisions, or choices, about alternative ways of using available resources, which aim of achieving particular goals at some time in the future'*.

The state's role in the planning process concerns policy definition, resource and staff allocation, infrastructure investment etc. A conception of the State is essential for understanding the ideological underpinning of interventionist thinking. Long (2001:41-43) distinguishes two models of agrarian development and the state:

*'The first is what is called the 'logic of capital' model based upon Marxist theories of development that interpret the actions of the capitalist state in terms of the imperatives and intrinsic 'logic' of capitalist development (de Janvry 1981). The state may also institute*

<sup>2</sup> The understanding of development is briefly discussed in the Part II of Chapter Five.

policies that have negative consequences for certain segments of the dominant class or class alliance, and that offer concessions to subordinate groups such as peasant producers or workers.....A second analytical approach focuses on the process of institutional incorporation whereby farmers/peasants or other local groups become integrated into the wider technico-administrative environment consisting of various state and non-state organisations (Benvenuti 1975; Benvenuti & Mommaas 1985)'. Long (2001:43) offers critical comments on these two models: 'since both these theoretical interpretations assign little importance to the role of local forms of organisation and knowledge in development, they tend to reinforce the image and efficacy of conventional top-down planning and intervention policies.'

*'The scale and uniformity of planning is intimately related to the expansion of state bureaucracies during the course of this century. Its association with the exercise of state power has given the organisation of planning strong centripetal tendencies: in terms of the allocation of responsibilities, the deployment and promotion of qualified staff, and even the siting and equipping of offices, planning is strongest at the centre and usually very much weaker in substantive ministries, regions and districts (IBRD 1975:391-2). The gap between centre and periphery is only one of many contradictions which afflict planning everywhere. At the heart of the matter is the persistent discrepancy between intention and achievement, the repeated failure of costly efforts to bear fruit. There is also the dilemma of pursuing economic growth and maintaining state control. In policy there is the persistent tension between efficiency and equity, between gradual and more urgent approaches. These dialectics are not peculiar to a particular state or regime, they are, it seems, characteristic of national planning everywhere, whether it is advised by socialist or by liberal ideals.'* (Robertson, 1984:62) *'[T]he world of planned development is full of painful contradictions: the virtues and vices of state intervention, the costs and benefits of primitive ways of life, the moral and political dilemmas of active commitment or passive disengagement'* (Robertson, 1984:293).

Despite the dilemmas of planning, most countries have adopted national planning mechanisms. This represents, firstly, the belief in 'governing' and the planning approach towards governing; secondly, it reflects the fact of having limited alternatives. Interestingly, it is the case of the USA that provides a strong contrast to the planning tradition. *'[I]t is an historical oddity that the USA – by any account a strong state with centralised political capacity, and the wealth to invest in planning – is one of the very small number of countries which have never had a national plan'* (Robertson, 1984:63)

Belief in the efficacy of planned intervention has changed since the first phase, when in the 1960s and 1970s the state, backed by international funding, believed that it could effectively intervene through projects and programmes, and thus control and guide development to the goals initially set. This persisted into the 1980s and is still a feature of certain types of intervention programs, though they differ somewhat from country to country, from political system to political system. But, by the mid 1980s, states throughout the world were really facing major problems of not being able to steer change effectively and simply

did not have the necessary financial and other resources to support all these types of intervention projects. And of course there was also the growing indebtedness of the poorer countries, and an increasing lack of funds (in the richer countries as well) to staff government agencies and the bureaucracy.

Preston (1996:296) summarises the critiques of structural analysis that gradually emerged and came to the fore in the early 1980s within development theory. He makes three broad points that reflect the general critique of planned intervention in development studies:

*'(a) that development theory must pay attention to the micro-scale detail of the social processes of the construction of patterns of life; (b) that development theory must deconstruct notions of intervention and shift away from untenable rational models of plan making followed by plan execution, and grant that intervention itself is a drawn-out and complex social process involving many agents; and (c) that the further theoretical elucidation of these matters requires the suppression of the distinction between structure and agency.'*

Some researchers propose adopting the improvement approach in order to make best of planned intervention. Thus Van Dusseldorp (1990:350) argues:

*'Planning will never be a perfect instrument, making it possible for mankind to control completely its destination, because the essential prerequisites, at least when it comes to people-oriented projects, can never be fully realized. Society should therefore lower its expectations of what can be expected from planned development and politicians, planners and implementers should realize their limitations when it comes to the making of society. Projectized planned development will remain forever an imperfect instrument... We can only make the best of it.'*

Other researchers question the fundamental relevance and nature of planned intervention towards development. Long (2001:31) has argued: *'the concept of intervention needs deconstructing so that we recognize it for what it fundamentally is, namely, an ongoing, socially constructed and negotiated process, not simply the execution of an already-specified plan of action with expected outcomes.'*

In the international arena, structural adjustment policies appeared and cleared the way for the emergence of a thoroughly neo-liberal era where the market was seen as the major solution to all this. It was posited as the way to create dynamic entrepreneurship in different sectors of the economy, including vibrant small-scale enterprise (backed by funds for micro-credit projects etc). The outcome of all this has been somewhat different for different countries but, generally speaking, it is the state that is dictated to by outside multilateral organisations. The latter require the state to demonstrate its capacity to achieve good economic and institutional governance, and of course the ability pay back at least a proportion of its debts. It must also show its commitment to a crude market model where the latter (through competition and comparative advantage) becomes the driving force and salvation of both the richer and poorer countries. The global system, then, provides the backdrop of macro

institutional and economic frameworks that can create an enabling environment within which the role of the state and its relationship to the private and civil sectors can be defined and function. It is often therefore claimed that it is macro-policy and macro-institutional frames that shape outcomes, not a series of locally targeted development projects.

After the ending of Mao's rule, China has been transformed from a totalitarian to an authoritarian county (Shambaugh, 2002). The Communist Revolution in 1949 put Mao Zedong in power. He created a strong central government, ended China's foreign domination, and began a process of determined Soviet-style industrialization. The success of the Communist Party in 1949 was due to the support of the massive poor population, especially peasant-farmers, who saw the hope of improving their individual social rights, especially in respect to land ownership. However, very quickly, such aspirations became incorporated into the commune system in which collective rather than individual rights prevailed. Thus China became a country with a centralised economic system and tight state control of ideology. Much later in 1978, after the death of Mao, when Deng Xiaoping came to power, the push for the reform of Mao's socialist economy took shape. Deng created an Open Door Policy, and China began to open itself to the outside world.

*'Tourism was allowed, students began to go overseas, special economic zones were established, and joint ventures with foreign firms were encouraged to bring in foreign technology, investment, managerial know-how, and market access. Deng encouraged the elimination of rural communes, and land was turned over to the rural household (for production and income, but not for real ownership). Agricultural productivity jumped dramatically, and free markets were created to sell food.'* (Parker, 2001)

Jiang Zemin continued with this Open Door Policy after becoming president in 1992. Later China's entry into WTO in 2002 marked a milestone in China's economy, and undoubtedly will have a significant impact on China's social and political system in the future.

The focus of China's reform has been both economic and administrative. The central aim of China's reform is to free the country's economy by reducing government control over economy. Such efforts have sustained China's high economic growth over the past two decades. Thus government policy has been geared primarily to reducing state intervention in economic life. Now, entrepreneurs and also farmers enjoy economic freedom to a large, if not full, extent. However, central government control over public resources and goods remains strong. Public monetary resources, such as revenue and its allocation and usage, foreign government and United Nations development aid, and funds from other international organizations, all remain firmly under government jurisdiction.

For government administrative reform, *'the state finance, planning, credit, and investment reforms of the 1980s'* turned out that *'[c]adres working in town and county*

*governments, and those in small, medium, and large city offices, have gained even more in discretionary authority and independent freedom to manoeuvre than have bureaucrats higher up in district and provincial departments. Whereas before the reforms county, city, and regional officials did administrative work primarily of the 'transmission belt' variety, they have recently been acquiring new roles as key gate-keepers and rulemakers, and as underwriters and power brokers in command of considerable resources.'* (Shue, 1994:74)

The Poverty Alleviation Office of the State Council of China and its line agency are in charge of the poverty alleviation fund allocated by the Ministry of Finance and special poverty alleviation funds from central government. Poverty programs and projects in China must follow the centralised planning tradition in terms of the allocation of resources to the different regions and further down to the local level.

Hence, Chinese society presents a mixed picture. That is, one that is relatively free in terms of economic life but centralised in terms of the control of public resources, while at the same time shifting its balance towards increased decentralised administration at regional and local levels.

The resettlement projects aimed at poverty reduction and economic development – the main focus of the present study – are rather typical of government-planned interventions. As I argued above, the ideological and theoretical origins of planned intervention can be traced to the economic growth model of development and modernization theory. But now we observe a new trend: namely that the state and international development agencies frame their actions in terms of the need to get macro-policies right in order to create enabling environments; rather than concentrating on promoting change through large-scale development projects and programmes geared to motivating but also controlling the processes of development in a detailed way. At the same time, there is a discovery or rather rediscovery of 'participatory' approaches and the strengthening of community/civil society organisation. These trends anticipate significant changes in state-society relationships.

### *New Approaches to the Study of State and Society*

This raises the question of alternatives to development now that the tradition of planned intervention is challenged. New concepts and approaches always emerge along with alternative thinking. In the following discussion, then, I identify three distinctive analytical orientations that I believe provide useful and complementary insights.

### **Actor-oriented Approach**

My research adopts key concepts from the actor-oriented approach, which offers new ways of interpreting and examining planned intervention. The

central argument of the actor-oriented approach is that *'Although it is undoubtedly true that much important structural change has resulted from the impact of outside forces ... [A] all forms of external intervention necessarily enter the existing life-worlds of the individuals and groups affected. In this way, external factors are both mediated and transformed by internal structures.'* (Long, 1992:20) Such an approach provides a new perspective by shifting the focus from structural and macro-level analysis to agent-centred analysis. This change of focus makes it possible to unpack and understand planned intervention at ground level, and especially helps us to understand the dichotomy and deviation of planned objectives and actual outcomes. As Long argues (2001:31):

*'A tendency in many studies (which still lingers on in certain policy discourses) was to conceptualise the process as essentially linear in nature, implying some kind of step-by-step progression from policy formulation to implementation to outcomes, after which one could make an ex post facto evaluation to establish how far the original objectives had been achieved. Yet, as any experienced planner or development worker will readily appreciate, this separation of 'policy', 'implementation' and 'outcome' is a gross over-simplification of a much more complicated set of processes which involves the reinterpretation or transformation of policy during the implementation process itself, such that there is in fact no straight line from policy to outcomes'*

Long (1992:37) further explains why planned intervention is transformed in the process of implementation.

*'As a typical external force, the planned intervention embraced both formally organised state agency intervention as well as that of the companies and enterprises that attempted to organise and control production and commercialization of the key products. ... Intervention is an ongoing transformational process that is constantly reshaped by its own internal organizational and political dynamic and by the specific conditions it encounters or itself creates, including the responses and strategies of local and regional groups who may struggle to define and defend their own social spaces, cultural boundaries and positions within the wider power field'.*

To understand these processes, he develops an actor-oriented analysis. He maintains that *'such an approach will take more serious account of the dynamic processes by which ordinary people - peasants, workers, entrepreneurs, bureaucrats, and others - actively engage in shaping the outcomes of processes of development'* (1984:2). He concludes by stressing that *'the concept of intervention needs deconstructing so that we recognize it for what it fundamentally is, namely, an ongoing, socially constructed and negotiated process, not simply the execution of an already-specified plan of action with expected outcomes'* (2001:31).

In a parallel argument, Arce (1994:169) argues that we have to challenge the notion of the state itself if we are to understand rural development outcomes. He underlines that we should question *'the notion that the state is the main or only institution contributing significantly to rural development outcomes, emphasizing the importance of contradictions and negotiations between state*



agencies and between state representatives and rural producers. A critical overview of recent work on rural development administration indicates the need for a revised conceptual and empirical agenda. The basis for such an agenda is to be found in two main directions that explore issues of interface and room-for maneuver. Both raise important questions about discourses, practices and power.'

Actor-oriented interface analysis provides an analytical perspective, which *'can make a useful contribution to an understanding of how processes of planned intervention enter the lifeworlds of the individuals and groups affected and come to form part of the resources and constraints of the social strategies they develop. Interface analysis, which concentrates upon analyzing critical junctures or arenas involving differences of normative value and social interest, entails not only understanding the struggles and power differentials taking place between the parties involved, but also an attempt to reveal the dynamics of cultural accommodation that make it possible for the various worldviews to interact. This is a difficult research topic but one which is central to understanding the intended and unintended results of planned intervention carried out by public authorities or development agencies, or initiated from below by diverse local interests.'* (Long, 2001:72)

The adoption of an actor-oriented approach thus allows researchers to interpret the state in society by illustrating, for example, how development policies work out quite differently in different regional or local settings, or how policy objectives are renegotiated at local or regional levels. Using a case from Winder (1979), Long (1988:122) illustrates how policy objectives are renegotiated at local and regional level:

*'The Mexican government had originally planned to establish a collective ejido system for cultivation but, under pressure from farmers, allowed them to subdivide into sectors and small working groups. Government officials also turned a blind eye to internal arrangements for distribution of profits on the basis of plot yields instead of labour input, which had been the original intention. They likewise abandoned having professional managers heading each production co-operative when this was opposed, and instead permitted the establishment of a system of locally-elected peasant representatives. Yet despite these major modifications, when central government or party officials visited the scheme, the farmers would turn out in numbers to demonstrate the wonders of collective production!'*

Some critiques (see: e.g. Röling and Leeuwis, 2001, and) of the actor-oriented approach have been made from within Wageningen University, where the approach was first elaborated by Long and his colleagues. One criticism made is that it focuses on micro-level analysis and so loses ground in providing practical advice to macro-level policy formulation. A second critique is that the approach gives principal emphasis to the individual actor and misses out important group-oriented social organisation.

As a rejoinder to these points, we should stress that, in fact, the actor-oriented approach has always paid central attention to policies and policy processes. However, the departure point is actor-defined issues or critical

events, not abstracted policy statements or planning models (see: Hebinck, 2001, who underlines this). Moreover, policies that neglect micro-level complexities often fail to reach their goals. A related methodological point is that, from an actor perspective, policy analysis requires the detailed study of multiple actor and institutional interfaces where struggles over resources and meanings take place. Thus the approach necessarily pays close attention to the forming and reconfiguring of social networks of various kinds. Understanding these processes is, of course, the key to the dynamics of group-oriented social organization. Furthermore, Long has always argued that the concept of social actor embraces not just individuals but also networks, groups and organisations. Also recognising individuals from an actor perspective requires acknowledging that their personhood is socially and culturally constructed (Long, 2001).

The adoption of an actor-oriented approach does not mean, therefore, the denial or neglect of structural phenomena and factors, but a rethinking of structural modes of analysis. For an actor-oriented analysis, central notions such as 'the market', 'commodity exchange', 'the state' and so forth have to be treated in a more open way than structuralists usually do. Actor-oriented analysis does not recognise fixed normative frameworks, assumed to be homogenous and consistent, that impose themselves on situations and people; but rather an emergent set of relationships and situationally defined sets of agreements or negotiated positions. Hence, it promotes a change of epistemological view. That is, it is designed to bring the researcher closer to the realities of everyday life. The reduced reality that structural analysis offers often turns out to be a distorted or contrived one.

Later in the thesis I adopt some key concepts (i.e. agency, social network, knowledge and power configuration) from the actor-oriented approach in my analysis of the processes of resettlement and outcomes. Of course, these sociological terms are not new, but they are given a new interpretation in the language of actor analysis, thus adding valuable insights to current development debates and theory. Language is inherently political because language use comprises meanings and standpoints. For example, one hardly finds such terms as 'agency', 'networks' and 'knowledge/power configurations' in the debates surrounding economic growth theory and modernisation. The adoption of these actor concepts for looking at resettlement processes provides an alternative angle for looking at the everyday social dynamics of resettlement that cuts across micro and macro levels. It offers an epistemological view of government policies and their implementation, as well as an appreciation of the social policy process, which focuses squarely on '*organising and ordering processes (rather than 'order' per se) that are relevant to the different arenas and institutional domains*' (Long, 2001:240). This contrasts with the dominant positivism and linear

analysis of planned intervention, and thus contributes to a better and more comprehensive understanding of resettlement programs.

### Participatory approach

In order to counter traditional top-down approaches and to take more account of local knowledge and organisation, participatory approaches have been used in many international projects as a practical tool for bringing about local participation. The development of such approaches is based on recognising the importance of power relations in development discourse and practice and on critiques of professionalism and top-down expert-designed strategies. Such thinking provides useful insights into how to perceive the relation between professional and local knowledge. Chambers argues that *'In development, the reductionist scientific method has been powerful with simple, uniform interventions'*, but he (Chambers, 1997:42) goes on to say that,

*'[I]n diverse, dynamic and uncontrollable conditions with continuous variance and multiple linkages, reductionist methods can be both costly and misleading. ... As professionals have become more aware of errors and myths, and of the misfit between the reality they construct and the reality others experience, some have sought and developed new approaches and methods in their work. ... PRA<sup>3</sup> is a growing family of approaches and methods to enable local people to share, enhance and analyse their knowledge of life and conditions, and to plan, act, monitor and evaluate.'*

The fact is that it is the professionals who generate data and information and who provide analysis to be referenced in policy formulations. It is then the role of government officials and politicians to make decisions on policy orientation and to determine the guidelines for the use of resources. Hence, Chambers (1997:56) argues that *'the uppers experience and construct their realities and seek to transfer these to the lowers. ... In normal bureaucracy, central authorities simplify, control and standardize. In normal top-down, centre-outwards development, new technology is developed in central places by uppers and transferred to peripheral lowers.'*

However, the value of the participatory approach is not simply confined to the stage of recognising these problems of professionalism and 'reductionism'. It has created a methodology and a set of practical tools designed to challenge professionalism, seek for better utilization of available local and external resources, and to give proper credit to the value of 'local participation'. Yet, although this concept of 'local participation' carries with it positive meanings linked to an appreciation of local skills and knowledge, it is often assumed that local people need to be mobilized by enlightened professionals to participate in projects designed and manipulated by outsiders.

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<sup>3</sup> PRA is Participatory Rural Appraisal. For more detailed information, please look at chapter two.

The concepts of 'uppers' and 'lowers' drawn from Chambers are used to acknowledge existing power structures embedded in the social system. Chambers calls for effort to change such structures: '*What can and should we, as uppers, do to make our realities count less, and the realities of lowers - the poor, weak and vulnerable - count more?*' (1997:101). The positive element in adopting these categories, then, is that they explicitly acknowledge the hierarchy of different actors involved. Such a hierarchy of status creates a 'knowledge hierarchy', whereby farmers' knowledge is downgraded in relation to so-called 'expert' knowledge. But, on the other hand, the problematic side of this conceptualisation concerns how exactly we propose to define who are the 'uppers' and 'lowers', and who does the defining. That is, the use of these concepts is in itself confirming of such structures. It is difficult in Chamber's work to find any precise conception of what these categories precisely mean. But I understand the uppers in general to refer to officials and researchers, who are often from outside and have a formal education background; while the lowers refers to farmers or poor populations in general.

Exploring issues of participation more fully, Pretty (1995:1251) points out that, '*[t]wo overlapping schools of thought and practice have evolved. One views participation as a means to increase efficiency, the central notion being that if people are involved, then they are more likely to agree with and support the new development or service. The other sees participation as a fundamental right, in which the main aim is to initiate mobilization for collective action, empowerment and institution building.*' In similar fashion, Uphoff (1985, 1991:504) emphasises the need to reverse top-down thinking, which often results in nothing more than 'fitting people to projects'. He identifies the multiple objectives of participatory development as '*efficiency, equity, and empowerment.*'

Thus, when the participatory approach is regarded as a remedy for the lack of fit of planned intervention projects with the social dynamics of everyday life, it can only serve as '*functional participation*'<sup>4</sup> (Pretty, 1995:1252). Empowerment can hardly take root, since it can only grow from within supportive social institutions. Development projects with their basic belief in the effectiveness of

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<sup>4</sup> Pretty defines 'functional participation' as: 'Participation seen by external agencies as a means to achieve project goals, especially reduced costs. People may participate by forming groups to meet predetermined objectives related to the project. Such involvement may be interactive and involve shared decision making, but tends to arise only after major decisions have already been made by external agents. At worst, local people may still only be coopted to serve external goals.' (Pretty, 1995:1252). Pretty defined the concept of 'functional participation' in contrast to other 6 types of participation: manipulative participation, passive participation, participation by consultation, participation for material incentives, interactive participation, self-mobilization. Pretty's typology of participation shows the different degree of participation and even fundamental difference in the interpretation of participation.

external intervention can hardly serve much to develop local empowerment, even if many of them passionately claim to do so.

The following points need further consideration when discussing the adoption of a participatory approach in planned intervention: (1) Who can ensure that farmers' realities are seriously taken into account? (2) It is rare for anyone, including professionals who are committed to self-examination and self-correcting, to be able to go beyond their boundaries as a social group located within a specific power structure. The question is then: can the uppers draw back to allow farmers' realities to be taken fully into account? (3) Under the circumstances of a planned intervention or research project, it would appear that the application of participatory approaches is often only feasible with the presence of enlightened experts. These experts have the advantage of possibly being able to break through temporarily the existing power structure, thus generating a bit more space for local participation, though it remains doubtful as to what extent temporary and superficial local participation can empower the lowers. Of course we should not use this type of argument to deny local people their own ways of organising and communicating in their day-to-day life.

Many international organizations have adopted the participatory approach as a key method for their programs and projects. Some national governments have also made the approach central to their activities. For example, in 2001, the Poverty Alleviation Office of the State Council of China initiated a series of participatory training exercises for its different levels of staff. Such move shows how alternative thinking about development can alter traditional methods of intervention. However, it appears that this has not yet shaken up the deeply rooted and institutionalized top-down approach. Its adoption has remained at the level of an additional total for research or project implementation. Nevertheless, as I hope to demonstrate in later chapters, my use of some participatory methods has greatly enriched my understanding of farmers' perceptions of and involvement in the resettlement process.

### **State-Society Synergy**

Over the past decade, an important trend in development research has been the search for a more adequate understanding of state-society relations, especially in the context of the kinds of neoliberal global changes we have been witnessing. As Perry points out: *'Questions of state-building, civil society, and the relationship between market development and democratisation now assumed centre state. The causes, character and consequences of political change were interpreted as a product of interactions between the state apparatus and society at large'* (Perry, 1994:704-705)

Evans (1996:1119) has proposed the 'state-society synergy' approach. He argues that instead of assuming a zero-sum relationship between government involvement and private cooperative efforts, we must explore the possibilities of 'state-society synergy' by which active government and mobilized

communities can enhance each others' developmental efforts. He goes on to suggest that synergy usually combines complementarity with embeddedness and is most easily fostered in societies characterized by egalitarian social structures and robust, coherent state bureaucracies. Synergy, however, is constructable, even in the more adverse circumstances typical of Third World countries. By complementarity, Evans (1996:1120) means 'the conventional way of conceptualising mutually supportive relations between public and private actors' This is built upon a clear division of labour based on the contrasting properties of public and private institutions. That is, governments are suited to delivering certain kinds of collective goods that complement inputs more efficiently delivered by private actors. 'Putting the two kinds of inputs together results in greater output than either public or private sectors could deliver on their own. The idea that synergy may be based on 'embeddedness,' that is, on ties that connect citizens and public officials across the public-private divide, is more novel' (Evans 1996:1120)<sup>7</sup>. Such approach offers a positive view of development that attempts to create a middle ground between state and society relations. Such attempts may only be viable on the assumption that governments are interested in achieving the developmental aims that they claim.

Very often, there are gaps between governments' claimed objectives and their hidden agendas. The reasons for such gaps are many and different with the context or settings. Some are driven by political reasons that cannot be made public, and some are for avoiding taking political responsibility. 'For example, the Peruvian land reform of 1969 modernised the export-oriented estates leading to the consolidation of middle-size commercial farms on the coast and the formation of worker co-operatives, whilst in the highlands the reform destroyed the semi-feudal estates and accelerated the processes of socio-economic differentiation and proletarianisation. The principal rhetoric of this reform was 'cooperativism', 'peasant participation' and 'equity', but its implicit aims.....were to increase central control over the rural population and to dynamise production.' (Long, 1988:112) Many policy researchers are not only busy with policy impact analysis, but also with investigating what is behind the claimed objectives. 'A major difficulty in identifying the precise economic and socio-political objectives of policies is that governments seldom spell out clearly, without ambiguities, what they intend; nor do they indicate the exact priorities for the goals they set. A primary reason for this, of course, is that they need to retain a degree of flexibility so that they may modify or scrap their plans if these appear to be creating more problems than they actually solve.' (Long, 1977: 182)

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<sup>7</sup> Evans' formulation bears some resemblance to the concept of 'interface' as elaborated by Long (1989; 2001).

Evans' formulation bears some resemblance to the concept of 'interface' as elaborated by Long (1989;2001). As an analytical tool the notion of interface is valuable in the analysis of state-society relations but it does not privilege co-operative over conflictive state-society relations. It agrees with state-society synergy in terms of how it 'connects citizens and public officials across the public-private divide' and how it does not respect the artificial boundaries of the state-civil society divide. However, social interface is not only interested in the alliances but also in the conflicts that emerge between actors with apparently conflicting or diverging interests and values (Long, 2001:50, 240).

The state-society synergy approach sends off messages and provides evidence that the state is not the enemy. Arce (1994:170) has argued: *'We believe state intervention has a limited but potentially positive part to play in contemporary rural change. .... [T]he capacity of the state actually to determine the outcome of the changes it helps to initiate may be quite limited. But so far as rural policies can be put in place that permit diversity and maintain the discretion of rural people, rather than forcing 'good intention' down on them, state intervention may provide some of the necessary conditions for rural development to take place.'*

Shue (1994:66) also advocates a possible picture of how state-society 'go together': *'Students of state building sometimes speak as if the consolidation of strong and centralized state power necessarily entails the displacement or at least the weakening of alternative loci of authority and control already existing in society. State power and social power are presented as confronting each other in a generally very protracted yet ultimately zero-sum competition for both the right and the capacity to command obedience. Yet...we might propose that a prima facie case could as well be made for thinking that, under certain conditions at least, strong and robust civil associations can 'go together' with powerful and resilient states.'*

The question is what can be done to promote healthy state-society relations so that state-society synergy can be generated. Decentralization is seen as one of the many steps towards a democratic state, which can generate strong civil society. Decentralization has now become a common phenomenon in many countries with former strong central national governments. *'Decentralisation reforms are administrative dispositions by which central state concedes autonomy to territorial units, up to a level defined by a government act or law taken in parliament'* (Mongbo, 2001: 1). *'Decentralisation reforms bear three main assumptions: Firstly, that the establishment of a local framework for legal order will make local government and administrators more accountable and therefore enable a less arbitrary approach in the field of civilian rights. Secondly, as political representatives get closer to citizens, a better mobilisation and more efficient allocation of resources at local level will be enabled. Thirdly, that since the political careers of the local elite will be dependent on their capacity or success to induce social and economic welfare for their people, these elite will be under scrutiny to install principles of good governance, equity and transparency (CAD, 1997, in Blunda and Mongbo, 1998:3)'* (Mongbo, 2001:4)

The discussion of the reforms taking place in former and persistent communist countries is instrumental in understanding the future of state and society relations. Burawoy (1996:1105) compared the Russian and Chinese cases:

*'Reformers in Russia and China were equally enamored of markets but their attitudes toward the state were diametrically opposed. For the Russian "reformers" the party-state was so morally and politically repugnant and its incumbents so corrupt and venal that the destruction of the state apparatus was worth any price. The Chinese "reformers," on the other hand, were prepared to go to any lengths to preserve the party-state but realized that if it were to be sustained the system of rules and incentives that connected the central state to the regions and thence to localities had to be drastically changed to allow the reconstruction of state-society ties at the local level. The jury is, of course, still out in both cases – but at the present time the Chinese strategists can look back on a period of continuous growth, while Russian's reformers seem to have destroyed the economic capacity of their society in the process of saving it from the state.'*

The conclusion drawn by Burawoy from such a comparison is that: *'In looking at the Russian through a Chinese lens we awarded central importance to the role of the state in the organization of the economy, in establishing budget constraints and property relations. That is, the state mediates between the market and its effects – accumulation in China and involution in Russia.'* (1994:1114) *'The lesson is an old one that Karl Polanyi taught us long ago: there is no market road to a market economy, a "hard" state (Unger and Cui, 1994) is essential player in the transition.'* (1994:1115)

It is difficult to define what healthy state and society relations are, and it is even more difficult to identify how to promote such a condition is, especially for countries in transition. *'In recent years, and especially since the end of the Cold War in 1989, bilateral and multilateral donor agencies have pursued a "New Policy Agenda" which gives renewed prominence to the roles of nongovernment organizations (NGOs) and grassroots organizations (GROs) in poverty alleviation, social welfare, and the development of "civil society"'* (Robinson, 1993) (Edwards, 1996:961) The assumption of such agenda is that NGOs and GROs can perform roles representing different interest groups, especially local populations to counter the dominant and central power of the state. Many NGOs and GROs in developing countries are partly and even largely financed by bilateral and multilateral donor agencies. Edwards (1996: 961) reviewed the impact of official aid on nongovernmental organizations by concluding: *'much of the case for emphasizing the role of NGOs/GROs rests on ideological grounds rather than empirical verification. In addition, though the evidence is inconclusive, there are signs that greater dependence on official funding many compromise NGO/GRO performance in key areas, distort accountability, and weaken legitimacy.'*

It is not easy to predict how state-society relations will evolve in a rapidly changing society such as China. So many variables have to be taken into account. How will the role of government evolve in the economic and political life of Chinese society? How will civil society grow especially in an emerging process of social stratification in China? Are the social and political conditions



there for generating sound state-society synergy? Changes are ongoing and will continue. As Shue (1994:82) states:

*'The bureaucratic and market reforms of the post-Mao era have touched off many complex and intertwined social processes. A renegotiation of both state-state and state-society relations is now well under way in China but is likely to be protracted. The very arenas in which state and society have been accustomed to interact are being redrawn. And most of the rules of competition and accommodation are being rewritten. The ongoing decentralization of state power and the simultaneous demilitarisation of social organization have created some of the conditions required for both the empowerment of newly rising social forces and the enhancement of the state's capacity to govern. Whether both state and society will ultimately emerge in some sense strengthened by the wrenching processes of renegotiation now so precariously under way cannot, however, be predicted.'*

The introduction of state-society synergy thinking provides a perspective on positive social development. Such thinking assumes that *'the state is there for the sake of societal development'* (Kleden, 2003). Such thinking also assumes that the state encourages the development of civil society, which may not be true for every country, for *'[f]rom a merely academic notion civil society has become a political program involving a wide range of social forces'* (Kleden, 2003). There are many open questions to be answered regarding the possibilities for state-society synergy. The autonomy of the state is important to ensure that the state is not manipulated by a few interest groups that have big influence in government decisions. The representation of vulnerable groups in the state decision-making framework is essential to protect the rights of those who have little voice in public power configurations. While high expectations were once attributed to the NGO movement, and both positive<sup>8</sup> critical remarks are given to the role of NGOs (Ho, 2001b:897). Hence, the state-society synergy remains a hope. The construction and generation of such synergy depends on a healthy development of the state and civil society.

In general, all the three above mentioned approaches or thinking challenge the theories and practices of planned intervention tradition by elucidating alternative theories and thoughts. However, each of them provides us a unique angle for tackling development issues. The actor-oriented approach is both epistemological and analytical. It tells us how to get to a near understanding of the complexities of the world. It gives us analytical perspectives rather than any fixed framework. The understanding and appreciation of this approach will

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<sup>8</sup> Peter Ho (2001b: 897) elucidates the development of environmentalist NGOs in China and their contribution to Chinese civil society: 'Over the past few years, the People's Republic has seen the emergence of a broad range of green organizations, varying from hierarchic, top-down public lobbies working from within the bureaucratic system, to participatory, grassroots organizations that employ tactics of mass mobilization. In this sense, the burgeoning environmentalism also implies a significant strengthening of civil society.'

generate disagreement with planned intervention approaches, which simplify to such an extent that they often distort the reality. Leaving aside Chambers 'lower' and 'upper' stereotypic divide between farmers and professional, the participatory approach advocates an appreciation of farmer's knowledge and develops a series of tools for accessing this knowledge. These tools are nowadays often used in project implementation. However, being essentially a set of techniques, it becomes more easily manipulated by dominant interests. That is why many development projects while claiming to be participatory are in fact implemented in a top down manner. The actor-oriented approach is much more epistemological and methodological than a set of methods and techniques. For example, an actor-oriented analysis cannot serve the needs of pure economic analysis nor can it accept orthodox intervention thinking. Social interface studies form part of the analytical framework of an actor approach showing how planned interventions are transformed and unanticipated 'social projects' are constructed. State-society synergy thinking gives a positive perspective of how state and society can work out the best way to develop if the boundaries between state and society can be reconstructed redrawn in a constructive way. It seems at first sight to provide an answer to the problem of state society divide, but actually it only outlines a set of possibilities, because there are as yet too many unanswered questions and uncertainties in achieving viable synergy.

#### *The Analytical Framing of the Thesis*

This research then adopts an actor-oriented approach as the central framework. The perspective demythologising planned intervention provides the basic thread of debate, and interface analysis a useful research methodology. The key concepts relevant to the thesis and used in analysing the outcomes of resettlement are those of agency, kinship, social network, and knowledge and power configurations. This helped me to understand the social dynamics involved in the outcome of resettlement projects rather than seeing this as simply the execution of given government policies. The research uses a participatory approach in collecting the field data and for grounding my theoretical argument. The adoption of the participatory approach gave me a set of practical methods and tools for viewing resettlement projects from the viewpoints of the farmers themselves.

The central argument of my thesis focuses on three dimensions:

- (1) The *socio-economic dimension* (the focus of chapter four). Socio-economic factors will be evaluated to illustrate the outcome of resettlement projects. The socio-economic analysis will provide evidence about who has

- benefited and in what ways. The data used for the socio-economic analysis are drawn from both the questionnaire survey and participatory research.
- (2) The *policy dimension* (the focus of chapter five). Government policy is seen as an important pre-condition for large-scale resettlement. The argument concerning the policy dimension is that when modernization theory and the economic growth model dominate the rationale of policy formulation and implementation, a poverty reduction policy will not serve its aims. This chapter firstly presents in detail the official version of the resettlement policy. Then, later in the discussion, the research will indicate the gaps between the defined policy intentions and the actual outcomes of the resettlement process. At this point policy analysis shows the importance of 'demythologising planned intervention'.
  - (3) The *development sociological dimension* (the focus of chapter six). Sociological debates about development will be explored to interpret the processes that have brought about the outcomes. My argument in regard to development sociology is that given the dynamics of resettlement, better-off farmers will take economic advantage, utilize their knowledge and their well-established social networks to benefit directly from the resettlement, and that the poorer farmers, who are supposed to be the primary beneficiaries, get left out. Using an interface perspective and drawing on the key concepts of the actor-oriented approach enabled me to interpret what has precisely happened in the resettlement process and why a development project is not simply about executing government policy.

### 2.3 Identification of Research Sites

With regard to the site selection, the first step was which province to choose for the conduct of the research. Up to 1999, there were 16 provincial/regional governments in China that had launched government-organised resettlement projects for poverty reduction and development (see Table 5-1 in chapter five). One indicator for selecting a province was the date of launching their resettlement projects. In this way, these 16 provinces/regions could be categorized into two groups: the pioneer province/regions and the follow-up province/regions. There are two pioneers - Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, and Gansu Province. They started resettlement projects in 1983 supported by the central government's 'Three Xi Development Fund'<sup>9</sup>. The other provinces/regions started their resettlement projects in the 1990s, especially after 1994, when central government's '8-7 Poverty Alleviation Program' was

<sup>9</sup> The detailed information about the "Three Xi Development Fund" can be found in chapter six.

issued. The 8-7 Program recommended resettlement as an option for effective poverty reduction. Although several provinces/regions started their resettlement project respectively in 1986, in 1991 and in 1993, they can be generally categorized into the follow-up group.

The second indicator used in selecting a province was whether or not there was local population in the resettlement areas before the resettlement projects. One category is where there were no people living in the resettlement areas – in which case the resettlement areas were originally wasteland without irrigation. With investment in building irrigation systems, the wasteland was turned into irrigated land, so that people could be resettled on the newly developed irrigated farming land. The other category is where there was already a local population resident in the resettlement areas. In such cases, the resettlement areas either had better access to water resources by nature or had enjoyed previous water conservation projects, or on which investment had been made in turning original dryland into irrigated land.

Two provinces/regions were chosen as research areas, and each of the two represents a combination of two indicators. Ningxia Hui Autonomous region was one of the research areas. It is a pioneer region in terms of starting resettlement projects with central government support. The resettlement area was previously wasteland, which implies that there was no local population in the area. Yunnan Province is a follow-up Province, which started its resettlement projects in 1997 and the resettlement area had already had a resident local population before resettlement.

After having identified Ningxia as one of the research areas, a precise research site needed to be identified. To do this, an effort was made to understand how local officials in Ningxia categorized different types of resettlement. It was found that they used two indicators, one was when the resettlement had taken place and the second was the development models of the resettlement sites. Officials from Ningxia categorize development models of resettlement sites into three: the first is the 'suburb/industrial development model', the second, the 'east-west assistance development model'<sup>10</sup> and the third, the 'agricultural development model'. I made the site selection together with local officials. In the end, a resettlement site called Moon Village of Minning Resettlement Area was chosen. This was for the following reasons: (1) Resettlers moved to Moon Village in the 1990s. Many households interviewed moved around 1996. In this case, it would be easier for resettlers to compare life

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<sup>10</sup> East-west assistance is identified as a way of helping the less developed regions by Chinese government. In China, the eastern part is more developed than the western part. Central government requests and encourages provinces in the eastern part to invest and support those in the western part.

between the place of origin and resettlement area, because their memories about what took place five years ago would still be fresh. Also five years living in the resettlement area is long enough to evaluate what has changed; (2) Resettlers in Moon Village are all originally from Xiapu Township of Xiji County, so that it would be easier to identify the corresponding place of origin in order to research the population that remained; (3) In terms of development models of resettlement, Moon Village fits in the 'agricultural development model', which is more representative than the other two models because the production structure in most resettlement areas in Ningxia and in other provinces/regions is still farming-based.

We had similar discussions with officials in Yunnan about the categorization of their resettlement projects. Local officials had never categorized their resettlement projects, but they pointed out a very important strategy shift in the recent government policy. In the No.67 Provincial Document, issued in March 1999, it was stated that the focus of resettlement should be shifted from across prefecture resettlement to intra-county resettlement, which indicates that administrative boundaries crossed in resettlement is an important issue and one that is highlighted in the chapter on policy. Using the administrative boundaries crossed during resettlement as an indicator, we can categorize the resettlement projects in Yunnan into 4 types. (1) Across prefecture resettlement: people moved from one prefecture to another. (2) Intra-county resettlement: people moved from one location to another within the same county, but across township boundaries. (3) Intra-township resettlement: people moved from one village to another within the same township. (4) Intra-village resettlement, people moved from one place to another within the same administrative village - normally, people moved from mountainous areas to plains areas within the same administrative village.

In discussions with local officials as to what had changed in terms of production structures for resettlers in different resettlement sites, it transpired that there were production structure changes in nearly all resettlements, even though resettlers continued agricultural production as their main income sources. This is because resettlers might now grow different crops or the share of cropping production in their total income might have changed. However, one outstanding difference among farmers was that some got involved in commercially oriented plantations, such as tea, coffee and rubber tree production, while other farmers continued grain production. So the type of production differentiated by commerce-oriented and grain-oriented is another important indicator. In the end, we choose Ma Ka Ba Resettlement Site as our research site in Yunnan. This was because firstly it is an intra-township resettlement, which fits the future focus of provincial government resettlement investment, and secondly, resettlers continued their grain production-oriented

agriculture, which is the main production type for resettlers in Cangyuan County.

In the process of site selection, much attention was paid to how local officials' categorized types of resettlement, since they are the decision-makers and their categorizations can indicate their policy orientations. Local officials have command of more macro-level information than farmers and outsider researchers. One may notice in my previous text that categorization of resettlement in Yunnan was drawn up during the discussions between researchers and local officials. This was because local officials had never systematically reviewed their resettlement projects. Hence, the process of categorization and site selection resulted in reality from an interactive process between researchers and local officials.

## **2.4 Research Design and Research Methods**

The proposed subject matter necessitates the use of two kinds of research: descriptive and interpretative research. Descriptive research aims to provide detailed information and description of the various indicators around certain issues. Interpretative research aims to provide some understanding of the causal explanation of the selected research issues. In this research, a detailed description of the resettlement outcome is acquired through a questionnaire survey. Logical inference is acquired through case studies of social and policy dimensions, which allow for more interpretative research. The descriptive research serves also for the interpretative research.

This research is basically qualitative research, though it uses a quantitative method, a questionnaire, to conduct the sample survey. I understand that case study<sup>11</sup> is a general summary of all qualitative research methods. In this sense, my research is a case study. Case studies have always faced the criticism that their findings are invalid because they are based on only one or a few cases. I understand that quantitative research relies on representative samples and identifiable indicators. My doubt about quantitative research is, firstly, to what extent the sample is representative of the parent population; secondly, to what extent the identifiable indicators are essential. I will not go in-depth here into the battle between qualitative and quantitative research, even though it seems as if the one always tends to justify its validity by arguing against the other. I justify the use of the case study by Mitchell's argument. He states that:

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<sup>11</sup> A case study is 'a detailed examination of an event (or series of related events) which the analyst believes exhibits the operation of some identified general theoretical principle.' (Mitchell, 1983: 192)

*'the process of inference from case studies is only logical or causal and cannot be statistical and that extrapolability from any one case study to like situations in general is based only on logical inference. We infer that the features present in the case study will be related in a wider population not because the case is representative but because our analysis is unassailable.'* (Mitchell, 1983:200)

Some data are collected by using a questionnaire survey. The results basically serve the purpose of fact finding.

The research uses different units of analysis in the different research dimensions. In the *policy* dimension, the object studied is government policy. In the *socio-economic* dimension, the unit of analysis is the different groups of farmers, who are categorized in relation to resettlement. There are three categories of farmers in the analysis: (1) resettlers, i.e. those who moved from their places of origin to the resettlement area; (2) those who did not move but remain in the places of origin; (3) the local population already resident in the resettlement area before the resettlement projects. A detailed comparison is made of the different socio-economic factors among these three groups of farmers. In the *development* dimension, the individual farmer is used as the primary unit of analysis.

The research does not aim for a controlled comparative study between the two sites. Comparison will be made of general trends rather than in relation to each of the variables. Hence, the research findings derived from specifically selected research sites may not be representative of many other resettlement projects across China, no matter how carefully and scientifically the research sites have been selected so as to meet sample requirements. The reason for this is that there are too many social, economic, political, and physical variables that can influence the resettlement process. Hence the primary aim is not to be representative in a statistical sense but to provide an analytical framework of the processes and outcomes. It is believed that a general comparison of the overall outcome of resettlement of the two research areas is variable because the two research areas are both under government resettlement projects for poverty reduction.

The main methods applied in this research are a questionnaire survey and selected techniques drawn from participatory rural appraisal (PRA). An interface perspective and gender concerns run through the analysis and discussion of field data. An interface analysis has methodological implications in that it guides researchers as to where and how to draw insights from social events and social processes. Long (2001:69-72) illustrates the key elements of an interface perspective:

- *'Interface as an organised entity of interlocking relationships and intentionalities. Continued interaction encourages the development of boundaries and shared expectations that shape the interaction of the participants so that over time the interface itself becomes an organised entity of interlocking relationships and intentionalities.'* Certain modes of

relationship between officials and farmers will always be developed in the process of their interaction. The relationships between officials and farmers tend to be recognised through rules, sanctions, and procedures. In reality, boundaries are always broken and new boundaries and informal "rules" are formed, and such boundaries and "rules" are site-specific.

- *'Interface as a site for conflict, incompatibility and negotiation. Although interface interactions presuppose some degree of common interest, they also have a propensity to generate conflict due to contradictory interests and objectives or to unequal power relations.'* The apparent superior-inferior relationships between officials and farmers do not mean that superiors always give the orders and inferiors always follow them. I suspect that the more hierarchical a relationship is, the more tension it involves. Researchers informed by interface analysis are sensitive to interface interactions. Those without this knowledge and sensitivity may be blind to an ongoing scene of conflict, incompatibility and negotiation.
- *'An interface approach depicts knowledge as arising from 'an encounter of horizons'. 'The incorporation of new information and new discursive or cultural frames can only take place on the basis of already-existing knowledge frames and evaluative modes, which are themselves re-shaped through the communicative process. Hence knowledge emerges as a product of interaction, dialogue, reflexivity and contests of meaning, and involves aspects of control, authority and power.'*
- *'Power as the outcome of struggles over meanings and strategic relationships. Like knowledge, power is not simply possessed, accumulated and unproblematically exercised (Foucault, in Gordon, 1980:78-108). 'Power implies much more than how hierarchies and hegemonic control demarcate social positions and opportunities, and restrict access to resources. It is the outcome of complex struggles and negotiations over authority, status, reputation and resources, and necessitates the enrolment of networks of actors and constituencies' (Long, 2001) 'Creating room for manoeuvre implies a degree of consent, a degree of negotiation and thus a degree of power, as manifested in the possibility of exerting some control, prerogative, authority and capacity for action, be it frontstage or backstage, for flickering moments or for more sustained periods' (Villarreal, 1992:256).*

The questionnaire is the classical method for quantitative research. Justified research sampling and right sample size is important for obtaining qualified questionnaire survey data. The questionnaire is designed on the basis of the researchers' research assumptions, and its framework leaves little space for interviewees to reflect their life in a flexible manner. In the process of filling out questionnaires, interviewees just passively answer the questions. Considering the limits that the questionnaire has in its nature, it has only been used for finding out some basic descriptive socio-economic facts rather than for seeking



in-depth interpretation of causes of the outcome of resettlement process. SPSS<sup>12</sup> was used as the data analysis tool.

The design and implementation of questionnaire survey and case studies are organized as follows: firstly, a preliminary questionnaire was designed based on literature review, and key issues are made notes as reference for future case studies; secondly, a test field research was conducted to test the design of the questionnaire and for the selection of research site; thirdly, a field research was conducted to obtain a certain number of household survey, at the same time case studies were conducted. In each research sites, farmers meeting were organized. Individual household interview and individual farmer interview were selected in the process of questionnaire survey and farmers meeting. The researcher did not approach individual interview as a separate activity, it was always a continuation of questionnaire survey and farmer meeting. The final section of the indicators used in chapter four is based on the questionnaire and the quality of the survey results.

**Table 2-1: Sample Size for Questionnaire Survey**

	Ningxia		Yunnan		Total	
	Total No. of Households Interviewed	No. of Households Interviewed With Female Interviewees	Total No. of Households Interviewed	No. of Households Interviewed With Female Interviewees	Total No. of Households Interviewed	Number of Households Interviewed with Female Interviewees
Resettlers	38	16	30	7	68	23
Farmers remaining in the places of origin	47	19	31	10	78	29
Local population in the Resettle-ment Areas	0	0	14	1	14	1
Total	85	35	75	18	170	53

*Note: I designed to interview half women and half men, but I failed to do so, because some women withdrew by telling us that they were not involved in the process of resettlement decision-making and they were not as clear as their husband for the many questions we asked.*

<sup>12</sup> SPSS is computer software. It can be used to do quantitative analysis of sample data, such as: mean, summary, linear/mixed model, ratio statistics, hierarchical Cluster Analysis, etc.

*In fact, the current number of women interviewee were reached by special effort made by the researcher and the local officers who were in the field with the researcher.*

It cannot be said that a feminist critique has been used as a basic methodology in the research. However, gender issues are taken into consideration in the study, such as in the design of research methods and the household questionnaire. The following gender-sensitive considerations were used in the research methods: (1) to have both male and female interviewees fill out the questionnaires, though a separate analysis of the answers by males and females was not done. This might have added insights gained from the case material. (2) Information about gender division of labor is investigated in the questionnaire. (3) In the application of PRA tools, discussions with women and women's groups were conducted.

Some PRA tools were applied in the field survey. The following text briefly introduces the tools used and the outputs obtained from their use. It should be kept in mind that the ideologies of ethnographic methodology can be often traced in PRA tools and in the practical application of PRA tools in the field. In fact ethnography has contributed to the development of participatory approaches. I argue that the use of PRA tools is a pragmatic way of applying ethnographic methods, even though they can never contribute the same richness as a full ethnographic study.

#### *Semi-structured interviewing (SSI)*

Introduction to the method: SSI is one of the main tools used in PRA. It is a form of guided interviewing where only some of the questions are predetermined. PRA interviews do not use a formal survey questionnaire. Many questions are formulated during the interview. If it becomes apparent during the interview that some questions are irrelevant, they can be skipped. Questions usually emerge from the interviewee's responses, the use of ranking methods, observation of things around and the PRA team's own background and experience. There are three types of SSI: individual interview, key informant interview, the group interview and the focus group interview.

Individual interviews can be used to obtain representative information. They are more personal than group interviews and are more likely to reveal conflicts within the community since respondents may feel they can speak more freely without their neighbors present.

Key informant interviews can be used to obtain special knowledge. A key informant is anyone who has special knowledge on a particular topic (e.g. a merchant on transportation and credit, a midwife on birth control practices, a farmer on cropping practices). Key informants are expected to be able to answer questions about the knowledge and behavior of others and especially about the

operations of the broader systems. While there are well-known risks of being misled by key informants' answers and cross-checking is necessary, key informants are a major source of information for PRA. The key informants are expected to have a more objective or at least different perspective on affairs in the community than the community members themselves.

Group interviews obtain community-level information. Group interviews have several advantages. They provide access to a larger body of knowledge and an immediate cross-check on information as it is received from others in the group. Group interviews are not useful for discussion of sensitive information. They can also be seriously misleading when the questioner is believed to have the power to control benefits or sanctions. Group interviews may reveal people's ideals rather than what actually exists, but triangulation of methods and cross-checking of information can reveal more of the whole picture. The interviewers should encourage alternative views and opinions and probe to avoid group pressure. Informal conversations after the meeting can be useful to get information from those who were not able to express their opinions during the group interview. Group interviews require more advance planning and preparation than individual interviews.

Focus-group discussion is to discuss specific topics in detail. A small group of people (six to twelve) who are knowledgeable or who are interested in the topic(s) are invited to participate in the focus group discussion. A facilitator is chosen to ensure that the discussion does not diverge too far from the original topic and that no participant dominates the discussion.

Application of SSI in the research: the semi-structured interview is the most frequently used method in this research and many other methods and tools used are very often linked with the SSI. For example, the use of household sorting is often applied in a group discussion. More than 30 individual interviews were conducted. The interviewees were either selected by certain criteria or at random. In each community visited better-off and poor farmers were chosen for interviews and often after the interviewees had finished the formal questionnaire forms. A better selection of who to interview in detail could be made after receiving the information from the questionnaire. Sometimes, a talk was simply had with someone who passed by. Most stories told in chapter six were from individual interviews. Most interviewees were males, because they were the decision-makers in the resettlement process at household levels. Several individual interviews with women were also conducted. For two of the stories, presented in detail in chapter six, twelve key informant interviews were conducted. These are listed in the following table:

**Table 2-2: Key Informant Interviews Conducted**

Output of the Interviews	Number of Interviews Conducted	Interviewees
Policy guidelines at various levels	4	Provincial and county officials
Implementation process of the resettlement projects	4	Villages cadres
Village profile and project implementation process	4	Township and village cadres

Several group interviews and focus group interviews were conducted in each community. Topics discussed covered: household sorting, community problem analysis and problem ranking, discussion on household decision-making, SWOT (Strength-Weakness-Opportunity-Stress) analysis, for example about the 'returning land to forestry and grass' policy and about life in the resettlement area, etc. Not all the group discussion results are presented in the thesis. Selection was made based on the relevance and the quality of product.

### *Seasonal Calendar*

Introduction to the method: This is a calendar showing the main activities, problems, and opportunities throughout the annual cycle in diagrammatic form (it really is a series of different diagrams shown on a single sheet). It helps identify the months of greatest difficulty and vulnerability, or other significant variances that which have an impact on people's lives. A seasonal calendar can be used to summarize, among other things:

- Indigenous seasons
- Climate (rainfall and temperatures)
- Crop sequences (from planting to harvesting )
- Crop pests and diseases
- Collection of wild fruits and herbs
- Livestock ( births, weaning, sales, migration, fodder)
- Livestock diseases
- Income generating activities
- Labor demand for men, women, children
- Prices
- Marketing
- Human diseases
- Social events
- Types and quantity of cooking/heating fuel
- Migration

- Income and expenditures
- Debt
- Quantity or type of food consumed (diet)
- Annual holidays

Application of seasonal calendar in the research: The use of seasonal calendar is a very good way to get to know the background of a community, so was often used as the first topic to discuss with a group of farmers. The outputs of this tool are tables dealing with seasonal crop calendar and gender division of labor (see table 4-36 and 4-37). Beside the concrete output of the application of the tool, we should also acknowledge how the use of this tool helped the researchers to explore further research questions in the process.

#### *Time Trends*

Introduction to the method: Time trends show quantitative changes over time and can be used for many variables, including: yields, area under cultivation, livestock population, prices, interest rates, migration, time and distance to collect fuel wood and fodder, population size and number of households, birth and death rates, malnutrition rates, project expenses, rainfall etc.

Application of the method: Time trends were often used in group interviews, individual interviews and key informant interviews. Information gathered from time trends is mainly presented in chapter three when introducing the research areas.

#### *Household Sorting*

Introduction to the method: There are inequalities and differences in wealth in every community. These differences influence or determine people's behaviors, coping strategies, and views. Household sorting or ranking allows the team to *'investigate perceptions of wealth differences and inequalities in a community; discover local indicators and criteria of wealth and well-being; and establish the relative position of households in a community.'* (Theis, 1991)

Steps for using household sorting:

- Selection of sorting categories, can be wealth, type of land, major activities involved or any relevant categories
- Write down names of all households in a selected communities
- Organise a small group meeting inviting 5-6 local farmers (Pay attention to their socio-economic backgrounds. Farmers with different background should be invited and women should be invited)
- Identification of indicators to use for the household sorting
- Pick up name cards one by one for discussion of categorizing them into different categories

- Discussion of the socio-economic characteristics of each category of households

Application of the method in the research: Household sorting has played an essential role in this project. The research has used the outputs from sorting to show who has benefited from resettlement. The outputs from sorting support the central argument of the thesis. The outputs of the tool deal with households sorting of sub-villages in the places of origin in both Ningxia and Yunnan (see Table 4-1, 4-2, 4-3 and 4-4, chapter four).

### *Story Telling*

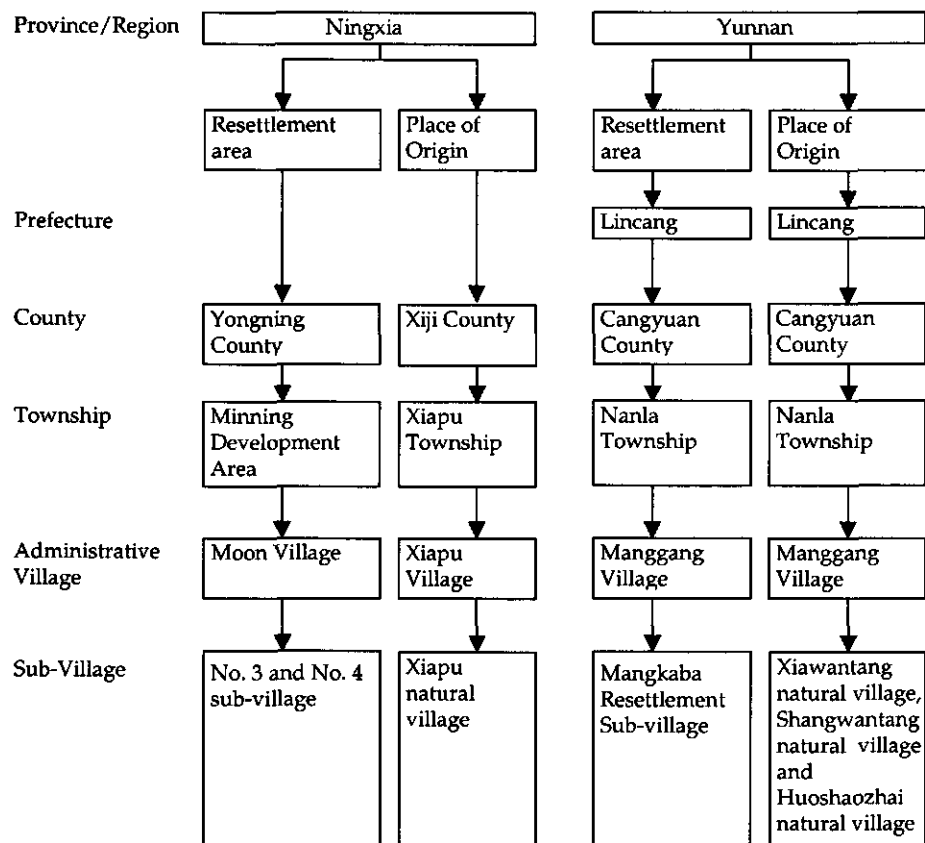
Introduction to the method: Story telling is a method to give interviewees full space to tell what happened about something. Things to be told can be a process (for example the resettlement process), an event (for example a local wedding ceremony), an activity (return of steep land to forest), a personal story, a family story, etc. Different people see the same thing differently due to their experiences, background, viewpoints, knowledge etc. Researchers and farmers see the same things differently. Researchers who conduct their research only with their structured questionnaires begin with an ignorance of farmers' perceptions. Interaction will cause both parties to change their views. We understand other people largely by what they tell us since we have different experiences by which to judge their views.

Steps in the story telling are for researchers to first have some background knowledge about the community, and have rough ideas about the research interests. Researchers will then identify the interviewees, or they may simply stop and talk with anyone passing by in the community. They will then give full space to the interviewee; letting them talk without interruption unless they stop. The researcher then makes full notes of what the interviewees said without changing any terms used.

### *Ranking*

Introduction to the method: Ranking or scoring means placing something in order. Analytical tools, such as ranking, complement semi-structured interviewing by generating basic information that leads to more direct questioning. They may be used either as part of an interview or separately. (Theis, 1991)

Application of the method in the research: Rankings were used several times in the field research, such as in the ranking of community problems and ranking of what matters to who between husband and wife during household decision-making. The outputs utilized in the thesis can be found in community problem ranking results in chapter three and the Tables dealing with household decision-making (see Tables 6-5, 6-6 and 6-7, of chapter six).

**Diagram 3-1: The Research Areas in Ningxia and Yunnan**

Hence, the precise research sites of the research were: No.3 and No.4 sub-villages (in the resettlement area) in Moon Village, Minning Development Area, Yongning County of Ningxia; Xiapu Natural Village (in the place of origin) in Xiapu Village, Xiapu Township, Xiji County of Ningxia; Mangkaba Resettlement Sub-village (in the resettlement area) in Manggang Village, Nanla Township, Cangyuan County, Lincang Prefecture of Yunnan; Xiawantang natural village, Shangwantang natural village and Huoshaozhai natural village (in the place of origin) in Manggang Village, Nanla Township, Cangyuan County, Lincang Prefecture of Yunnan.

### 3.1 Introduction to the Research Areas in Ningxia

The resettlement project of my research in Ningxia is a case of inter-county resettlement. This means that the resettlers have moved from one village in their place of origin located in a specific county to another village in the resettlement area that belongs to a different county, thus crossing county borders, though still within the administrative borders of Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region.

#### *Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region*

The key characteristic of Ningxia in relation to resettlement is its north-south division in terms of accessibility to Yellow River landscape and irrigation. The other key characteristic is its large percentage of people belonging to the Hui ethnic group, which implies a complex social and political structure. Although in the thesis I make reference to the religious implications of membership of this ethnic group, I do not intend to concentrate discussion on, what is called the 'minority issue'.<sup>2</sup>

Ningxia is located in the northwest of China, in the up-stream area of the Yellow River. Its total area is 66.4 thousand square km. The total area of arable land is 19,320 thousand mu (i.e.1,288 thousand ha), of which irrigated land accounts for 5000 thousand mu (333 thousand ha). The area of wasteland that has agricultural potential consists of more than 10,000 thousand mu (666.7 thousand ha). The population of the region totals 5,615.5 thousand, of which 3,676.5 thousand or 65.47% are of Han ethnicity. Hui ethnicity accounts for 1,902.3 thousand people or 33.88%. Of the total population, 1,821.3 thousand (32.43%) live in urban areas, while the rural population is 3,794.2 thousand (67.57%). All villages in Ningxia have had access to electricity since 1997.

The regional development of Ningxia is uneven. The northern part is made up of an irrigated plain, where both urban and rural populations have relatively higher living standards and better living conditions. However, the southern part is a dry mountainous area, where the level of economic development is very low. Poverty alleviation is one of the most important tasks of the regional government, and resettlement is considered a key instrument for poverty reduction.

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<sup>2</sup> Power configurations that link with religious issues, are discussed in chapter six.



*The Place of Origin in Ningxia*

**Xiji County**

Xiji County is located in Southern Ningxia. Altitude ranges from 1,688 to 2,633 meters above sea level. The total area is 3,144 square km. It covers 26 townships and 305 administrative villages. The total population reaches 445.8 thousand, of which 52 percent are Hui. Annual average temperature is 5.3 degree centigrade. Annual rainfall is about 400 mm, 60 percent of which is concentrated in July, August and September. Farmers' average net income per capita per year is 1,103 yuan. (1 yuan=8US\$)

Xiji County is one of the poorest counties in China. It suffers from drought, soil erosion and natural resource degradation. Resettlement has been identified as an important approach to alleviate poverty in Xiji County. The following table shows the population/households moved under central/provincial government support from 1985 until 2000.

**Table 3-1: Overview of Government-Organized Voluntary Resettlement projects in Xiji County of Ningxia**

Period	Type of Projects	Number of Resettlers	Number of Resettled Households	Places of Origin	Resettlement Areas
1985-1987	'Three Xi' Projects <sup>3</sup>	6000	1200	Hongyao Township, Tianping Township, Majian Township	Nanshantaizi Resettlement Area in Zhongwei County of Ningxia
1991-1999	Various projects under central/ Provincial government support	18500	3400	Baiya Township, Shagou Township, Huoshizhai Township, Xiapu Township	Yuquanying Resettlement Area in Yongning County of Ningxia
1998-2000	'1236' project <sup>4</sup>	12900	1345	All townships from the county	Hongsipu Resettlement Area of Ningxia
Total		37400	5945		

Source: Poverty Alleviation Office of Xiji County Government

### Xiapu Township

There are 26 townships in Xiji County, and Xiapu Township is one of the poorest. The average farmers' net annual income per capita in Xiapu Township was about 850 yuan (about 106 US\$) in 2000, while in the better-off townships the average farmers' net annual income per capita was above 1000 yuan (125 US\$).

Xiapu Township is located in the eastern part of Xiji County with an annual rainfall of 440–460mm concentrated in July, August and September. The highest temperature in a year is 30 degrees Celsius and the lowest minus 20 degrees. Average altitude is 2,600 meters above sea level. It is windy in spring and in

<sup>3</sup> For detailed information about "Three Xi" projects, please look at chapter five.

<sup>4</sup> "1236" is an abbreviation of a "Yellow River Irrigation Project for Poverty Reduction of Ningxia". "1" represents that the project aims at alleviating poverty population of 1 million, of which 800 thousand are supposed to be resettlers. "2" represents that 2 million mu (133 thousand ha) can be irrigated after project completion. "3" represents that the whole project needs 3 billion yuan (375 million US\$) input. "6" represents that the project aims to finish within 6 years since 1998.

winter sandstorms often occur in February and March. Total arable land is 2,679 ha, which is all rain fed land with very low productivity. Major crops are wheat, flax (planted for cooking oil), potatoes, *mizi* (a drought resistant local variety of grain), peas, barley, oats etc. The crop yields are extremely low due to poor natural conditions, for example, the average yield of wheat is 675 kg/ha, and of potatoes 1,950 kg/ha.

The total population of the township is 11,171, of which 5,620 are women and 5,551 men. The population is almost exclusively agricultural (11,047 people or 98.9% of the total population). The Hui ethnic group or 'nationality' (Muslim) predominates, 10,854 persons or 97.2% of the total population. The major income source for local farmers is livestock production. The number of large animals, including cattle, horses, donkeys, sheep/goats and etc. is 2,232. There were only 36 pigs, not for eating since the population is Muslim, but for religious purposes. The number of poultry is 9,400.

The land household contract system was implemented in the township, as elsewhere in China, in the early 1980s, and no big land adjustment has been carried out since, so many farmers started reclaiming mountain land for arable land when their available land did not yield enough to feed their family. This reclaiming of mountain land has caused big environmental problems, such as soil erosion.

### **Xiapu Village**

*The research team traveled from Yinchuan City to Xiji County by jeep for doing the field trip in the place of origin. We started in the early morning and arrived in the late afternoon and stayed the night in a hotel in Xiji County before continuing early the next day to go to Xiapu Village. It only took us about 40 minutes to reach the village. The road condition is relatively good and is an asphalt road. The village is on the road. I was expecting a very poor village with little access to transportation, but it turned to be a village with good access. The other striking was that many households had tractors parked in front of their houses. The Village Party Secretary, Mr. Ma Zhengxuan, was expecting us at his home when we arrived and we had discussions about what we wanted to do. The next day I asked Mr. Ma to show me around the village. After we climbed to the top of the village, I saw a small reservoir, which had no water. Grass was growing inside, and two horses were eating the grass growing there. Mr. Ma told me that the reservoir had been constructed in the 1960s, and had been used from the 1960s to the early-1980s. It had not been used for more than 20 years since there had been no water source to fill it. We passed by maize fields where the maize was too short and weak to become ripe before the winter, since it was already mid-August. Mr. Ma told me that they would have no maize harvest again this year. When we went down to the lower part of the village, I saw a deep ditch passing through the village. It is about two meters wide and three to five meters deep. The ditch was made by floods and rushed deeper and wider each year when floods occurred. When we approached a half broken*

*small simple wooden bridge crossing the ditch (it could hardly be seen as a bridge, it was just a thing for crossing, with supports of a mixture of wood and mud), a couple reached the bridge, trying to push a cart full of mizi across the bridge. The broken bridge had become so narrow that the two wheels could not both stand on the bridge. The couple and their harvest were about to fall into the ditch. Mr. Ma went forward, quickly found a big tree branch, and then placed it on the bridge to make it a bit wider. Finally, they managed to pull and push the cart over the ditch.*

Xiapu village is located in the eastern part of Xiji County. Total arable land of the village is 4,800 mu (320 ha). Total forest is 2,400 mu (160 ha). Total wasteland/ mountain area is 2,600 mu (173 ha). There are 240 households and 1,371 people in the village. The male population numbers 710, the female population is 650. All residents are Muslim.

The village is not far from the township center, so that there is no village clinic or school because the villagers have easy access to the hospitals and schools in the township center.

Off-farm labor is one of the most important sources of cash income. It was estimated that in the year 2000 about 130 people worked as off-farm laborers outside the area, working in activities such as construction, mining and tertiary sector services. About 20 worked nearby as agricultural laborers. The importance of off-farm activities can further be seen in the results of a household ranking exercise done in Shangpu Sub-village of Xiapu Village (Table 4-1, chapter four). This shows that farmers identified the most important characteristic of the better-off households in the community to be that they had enough able labor for off-farm activities.

The natural environment of Xiapu Village is harsh. It is a hilly area. The predominant soil type is loess. The climate belongs to a cold, semi-humid type of weather. Annual rainfall is 400 mm and concentrates in July, August and September. There is a frost-free period of 180 days. The highest temperature is 30 degrees Celsius, and lowest temperature is minus 20. The average altitude is 2,600 meters above sea level. It is windy with of 5-6 degree wind force in winter due to the cold air stream from the Siberian Area and sandstorms are frequent in February and March during spring.

The biggest climatic constraint the villagers face is drought, and looking at the evolution of rainfall over time in the local area it would seem that this situation is getting worse.

**Table 3-2: Timeline of Rainfall of Xiapu Village of Ningxia**

Year	1961-1965	1966-1972	1973-1989	1990-1993	1993 to 2001
Rainfall	Sufficient rainfall	Drought	Sufficient rainfall	Less rainfall	Drought

*Source: Farmers' group discussion in Xiapu Village*

The harsh conditions restrict crop and livestock production. Major crops in the village are wheat, *mizi*, potatoes, bulrush millet, peas, buckwheat, oats etc. Yield of all the crops except potatoes are lower than 100 kg per mu (1,500 kg/ha). In terms of livestock production, spread among the 240 households, there were 240 head of cattle, 300 sheep/goats, 80 donkeys, 30 mules, 1,100 chickens, 800 ducks, and 200 geese.

The lack of water also means that farmers have difficulties in supplying their daily needs for drinking water, water for feeding the animals and for keeping a minimum of hygiene. The following table shows the labor input needed for fetching water.

**Table 3-3: Timeline of Time Spent Fetching Water in Xiapu Village of Ningxia**

Year	Before 1995	1995-1999 <sup>a</sup>	2000 to now
Time spent per household	About 2 hours	About half hour	About 2 hours

*Source: Interview with Village Party Secretary, Ma Zhengxuan*

Even though Xiapu Township is one of the poorest townships in Xiji County, the average income level of Xiapu Village, according to the township government statistics, was at the level of the better-off townships in Xijin County, i.e. above 1000 yuan (125 US\$)<sup>b</sup>. There are seven administrative villages in the township. They are Yaozhuang, Yumugou, Chelugou, Yaozichuan, Beizhuang, Shangma and Xiapu. Xiapu and Chelugou are the two relatively better-off villages in the township, the average farmers' net income per capita per year in 2000 being above 1,000 yuan (125 US\$). Beizhuang and Yumugou ranked at the middle level in township records, with an average farmers' net income per capita per year of about 700 yuan (87.5 US\$). And Yaozhuang, Yaozichuan and Shangmaquan were the poorest, the average farmers' net income per capita per year was below 580 yuan (72.5 US\$). However, according to the Party Secretary of Xiapu Village, the average farmers' net income per capita per year in 2000 was 250 yuan (about 31 US\$). The information provided by the two different sources differed greatly, and it is difficult for an outside researcher to judge which is correct.

<sup>a</sup> A drinking water system was established so that the villagers could have easy access to water. However, the water source dried up after 1999 due to the severe drought. For detailed information about the water project, see Access to Water in chapter four.

<sup>b</sup> The data at township level were provided by the township government. Information on the income level of Xiapu Village from township government and from Village Party Secretary is different. According to the information from township government, the average farmers' net income per capita per year in 2000 was above 1000 yuan (125 US\$) in Xiapu Village. However, according to the information from the Party Secretary of Xiapu Village it was only 250 yuan (about 31 US\$).

The economic position of Xiapu Village in the township is important for the research. We were told that more farmers moved to resettlement areas from Xiapu Village than from other villages. If Xiapu Village is indeed one of the better-off villages in the township, then we may conclude that better-off villages have benefited more than the poorer villages. In view of the unreliability of the secondary data, the researchers conducted short visits to two other administrative villages in the township. Direct observation confirmed that Xiapu Village was clearly one of the better-off villages in the township. The transportation and housing conditions in other villages are much worse than in Xiapu Village. Despite the relatively better off position of Xiapu Village in the township, in absolute terms, farmers in Xiapu Village are still living in hardship. However, such facts only urge us to pay more attention in poverty reduction projects to those who are poorer in poor areas because they are those who are to be first assisted.

The following table shows the population growth in Xiapu Village. Despite the moving out of about 20% of the village population in 1994, the population has still doubled over the past 30 years.

**Table 3-4: Timeline of Village Population of Xiapu Village of Ningxia**

Year	1972	1978	1980	1986	1993	1994*	95-2000	2001
Number of Households	118	140	146	155	204	169	(data gap)	240
Population	580	741	826	984	1112	912	(data gap)	1371

*Source: Interview with Village Party Secretary, Ma Zhengxuan*

*Note: In 1994, 35 households moved out under the resettlement project.*

A strong argument to support resettlement is that the reduction of the population in the place of origin will reduce pressure on the ecological environment, and that the decreased demand for grain due to the reduced population will support the implementation of the "Return Land to Forestry" policy. However, the research findings do not support the above assumption. The following table shows the timeline of forested areas. The increase of forested areas only took place when afforestation projects provided grain subsidies. We can see two peak points in terms of the forest area in the village, one during 1982-1986, the other during 2000-2001. There was a World Food Program of United Nations (WFP) afforestation project from 1982 to 1986. However, immediately after completion of the project, which brought an end also to the grain subsidies, farmers cut down most of the trees planted under project support to have more land to produce grain. In 2000, the government-supported project of "Return Land to Forestry and Grass" started, so that 2,150 mu were planted with trees, and 630 mu with grass. In 2001, the project was still continuing.

**Table 3-5: Timeline of Forested Area in Xiapu Village of Ningxia**

Year	1950s	1960s	1970s	1982-1986*	1995	2000*	2001
Area (mu)	200	300	600	2304	230	2150	3100

*Source: Interview with Village Party Secretary, Ma Zhengxuan*

Grain subsidy is a great incentive for farmers to grow trees, as was proved by both the WFP project in 1982 and the government project in 2000. In Xiapu Village, the change of forested area has nothing to do with resettlement or the reduction of population due to resettlement. Hence one cannot simply assume that resettlement will help improve the ecological environment.

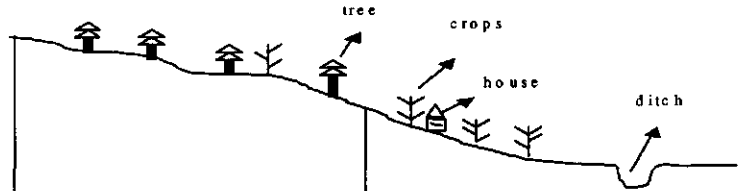
It is often said that farmers need to be educated to know that tree plantation can improve the ecological environment and that the ecological environment is essential to a sustainable livelihood. In fact, according to the field survey conducted in Xiapu Village (see Table 3-6), farmers have a clear view about the impact of forestry on their ecological environment (see 'strengths' in the table). However, planting trees is seen as reducing the area available for grain production (see 'weaknesses' in the table), and this is what prohibits farmers from planting trees. In a discussion with the village secretary about what might happen when later government subsidies stop, he said: "Fruit trees and grassland may have greater opportunities to survive, but ecological trees may be cut down again because they bring no grain and cash to the household livelihood". So far, about two thirds of the trees are 'ecological' trees, only one third are fruit trees.

**Table 3-6: SWOT Analysis of 'Return Land to Forestry and Grass' by Farmers in Xiapu Village**

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Forest can preserve water and soil, adjust weather, prevent floods, provide fuel, and develop livestock production. Government provides grain subsidy.	Reduced grain production	Support for Government's "Three Western Areas Development", especially policy of "Return Land to Forestry"	Drought, wild rabbits eat trees, rats damage trees.

*Source: Farmers' interviews conducted in Xiapu Village in February 2002*

Diagram 3-2: Transect Diagram of Xiapu Village of Ningxia



The diagram shows a cross-section of a landscape. On the left, a hillside is covered with trees and crops. A single tree is labeled 'tree' and a group of crops is labeled 'crops'. On the right, a house is labeled 'house' and a ditch is labeled 'ditch'.

Vegetation/ crops	<i>Ningtiaoh</i> <sup>7</sup> , <i>Populus Tremula</i> , <i>Heici</i> <sup>8</sup> , apricot, willow, flax, maize, sorghum, potato, oats, <i>mizi</i> , alfalfa, etc.	<i>Mizi</i> , maize, sorghum, potato, oats, flax, alfalfa, etc.
Activities	'Return land to forestry and grass', cropping	Residential area, cropping, animal husbandry, terracing
Problems identified by farmers	Most trees planted are ecological trees rather than economic trees, so that they might be cut down again once grain subsidy stops in 10 years time. Very often no crop harvest	Maize grows very slow due to drought, some have no yield at all. Flax very short plant so can only be harvested by pulling up entire plant rather than with hook to cut Potato only grows leaves but gives no harvest Lack of drinking water, and water quality is very poor The ditch becomes deeper and deeper, so that much land has been destroyed The bridge over the ditch is almost broken down
Potentials identified by farmers	The area where grass was planted under 'return land to forest and grass' project may survive as grass after grain subsidy stopped, to support livestock production.	

Source: Village walk with the Village Party Secretary, Mr. Ma Zhengxuan

The following problems were identified by the farmers of Xiapu Village when the research team conducted group discussion in the village:

- Lack of economic income
- Grain productivity too low
- No money to buy seeds and fertilizer
- No money to send children to school
- No money to see a doctor
- Lack of rain water and no water sources for drinking and irrigation
- Lack of access to credit

<sup>7</sup> A kind of shrub, which can grow in poor soil and is drought resistant

<sup>8</sup> Same as above



- Illiteracy rate is very high
- Poor access to transportation

The following chronological list of events mark the brief Village Historical Profile described by the Party Secretary of Xiapu Village. We can see that the pace of development of the village is very slow and the investments made in the village are rather insignificant compared to the investment made in the resettlement area.

- 1972: A blacktop road was constructed from Lanzhou city to Yichuan city, which just come across the village.
- 1980: The village was electrified
- 1982-1986: WFP afforestation project was implemented
- 1990: Nearly all the trees planted in WFP project were cut
- 1995: Village roads to the natural villages were constructed
- 1995: A drinking water project was implemented
- 2000: Government project of "Returning land to forest and grass" was implemented
- 2001: Upgrade of electric transportation system was implemented

#### *The Resettlement Area*

##### **The Mining Resettlement Area**

In 1990, the government of Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region officially zoned some areas for the resettlement of people from Xiji, Haiyuan and Guyuan Counties. This was an outcome of a farmers' self-organized resettlement initiative<sup>9</sup>. Minning Resettlement Area was allocated to Xiji County for resettlement. It is located in the western part of Yongning County<sup>10</sup>, 50 km from Yinchuan City, the capital of Ningxia. The total area is 66,000 mu (4,400 ha), of which 34,000 mu (2,267 ha) and is arable land. 3,300 households and 18,500 people have been resettled.

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<sup>9</sup> The detailed process of the farmers' self-organized resettlement initiative can be found in chapter six

<sup>10</sup> No information is provided about Yongning County, even though the resettlement area is located there. This is basically because administratively the resettlement area had been always under Xiji County. Twenty three resettlement areas had been established in Ningxia after 16 years of effort from 1983 to 1999. Out of the 23 resettlement areas, 11 are intra-county resettlement, and 12 are inter-county resettlement. Inter-county resettlement means that resettlers move from place of origin in one county to the resettlement area in the other county, they resettle across county border. Provincial government set a policy that resettlers and resettlement areas should be under administration of county government of the places of origin, which was for eliminating the fear and insecure feelings of the resettlers. So, even though the resettlement area is within a geographical county boundary outside, and even far away from the place of origin, it is administratively managed by the county that governs the place of origin. This policy was delimited in September 2000 (see 'Policy Movement in Ningxia in September 2000' in chapter five).

The development of crop and livestock production in the new area is promising. In 2001, the land under summer crops reached 10,290 mu, land under autumn crops reached 9,466 mu and land planted with economic trees reached 802 mu. In terms of livestock production, there were 717 head of cattle, 2,267 sheep, and 622 pigs. Mushroom production was promoted in the area with technical and financial support (loans). In the year 2000, 1,000 households grew mushrooms, and the average income per household reached 2,800 yuan from it. The highest income of one single household reached 8,000 yuan from mushroom production. In 2001, 450 more households started growing mushrooms.

The social infrastructure is developing rapidly. Recently, Yu Quan Ying Resettlement Office<sup>11</sup> formally submitted an application to establish a township-level government to manage the overall resettlement area in 2001. When approved, the resettlement area will be formally recognized as Ming Ning Township. There are 9 administrative villages and 50 sub-villages in the resettlement area. 1.1 km of concrete paved road and 15 km of village roads have been constructed. There are 3 primary schools and 1 middle school with a total of 158 teachers. There are 396 students in middle school and 2,074 students in primary school. A gas station has been constructed, a construction company has been established as well as a factory for building materials. Some restaurants, shops and market places have been built. The total built-up area of these service places has reached 13,840 square meters and the number of people employed totals 270.

There are no data to show how the ecological environment has changed in the resettlement areas since resettlement. It is believed that irrigation and grain production have improved the vegetation coverage. However, the indicator system of the ecological environment consists of many elements, so that comprehensive measurement is required to draw any conclusion.

### **Moon Village**

*We traveled by jeep from Yinchuan City (capital of Ningxia) to Moon Village. It took about two hours because the road was still under construction. It may only take half an hour or so to reach the village from Yinchuan after the completion of the road since the distance is only 50 km. The road under construction is wide. As we approached the resettlement area, we started to drive on the very good road that has just been completed. This good road led us to a wide market street with newly built 3-storey shops and apartment buildings on either side. The future township government will be located on this wide street. The road changed to a dirt road on entering the village, so that dust*

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<sup>11</sup> After the provincial resolution of 1990 concerning resettlement to the Yu Quan Ying area, the Yu Quan Ying Resettlement Office of Xiji County was established for implementing the resettlement plan. All the staff of the office are from Xiji County, even though the resettlement area is located within the boundaries of Yongning County.

*poured onto the window of our car. All the farm houses are in rows and lines, they are mostly new and of brick and wood structure.*

The area is still under development, and resettlers are still moving in (see Table 3-7). To date, 315 households and 1,418 people have resettled in Moon village. The male and female population number 777 and 641 respectively. The total labour force is 628. Male laborers account for 388 and female laborers 240. All the villagers are Muslim. The total arable land has reached 2,205 mu (147 ha).

**Table 3-7: Timeline of the Population in Moon Village in the Resettlement area in Ningxia**

Year	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Number of Households	More than 60	90	175	210	240	270	310
Population	More than 100	270	About 900	About 1000	About 1100	(data gap)	1340

*Source: Interview with Village Party Secretary, Ma Shaolin*

The major pull force of the resettlement area is its access to irrigation. Crop production can be profitable as long as there is irrigation water. The major crops are maize and wheat. And with the improvement of the soil with fertilizer and irrigation, the crop yield shows an increase over recent years, which can be seen in the following table.

**Table 3-8: Timeline of Grain Production in Moon Village in the Resettlement Area in Ningxia**

Year	1995	1998	1999	2001
Maize Production (kg/mu)	200	400	100 <sup>12</sup>	400
Wheat Production (kg/mu)	50	250	No data	300

*Source: Interview with Village Party Secretary, Ma Shaolin*

The development of livestock production is also promising, which can be seen in the Table 3-9. Although there is no mountain or grassland, farmers still can raise animals by feeding them straw (fodder). In total, there are 174 head of cattle, and more than 500 sheep. Farmers in Moon Village told us the reasons for the quick development of sheep production were threefold. First, farmers were able to get access to credit. Some farmers, for example, took a loan of 10,000 yuan for sheep production. Second, many farmers had the know-how to raise sheep because they had raised sheep before and third, farmers now have enough straw as feed.

<sup>12</sup> The drop of production was caused by plague of pests and diseases

**Table 3-9: Timeline of Number of Sheep in Moon Village in the Resettlement Area in Ningxia**

Year	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Number of sheep	0	15	35	200	About 400	About 500

*Source: Interview with Village Party Secretary, Ma Shaolin*

Cash income from wage labor is important for villagers for paying the high irrigation fees. Many villagers work as wage laborers in nearby cities or nearby state-owned farms. It was estimated that there were about 400 farmers working as wage laborers in 2001 in construction work. And most villagers in Moon Village often worked as agricultural wage laborers in the nearby state owned farms. According to the official statistics, the average farmers' net income per capita per year was 450 yuan in 1999 and 500 yuan in 2000.

The Yu Quan Ying and the Huang Yang Tan State owned farms are playing a very important role for resettlers, because seasonal agricultural work is a major cash income source. Yuan Quan Ying farm is 7 km away from Moon Village and Huang Yang Tan farm is 9 km distant. The land of the farms has been contracted out to individual farm workers for a contract fee of 15 yuan per mu (about 28 US\$/ha). The major crops that the farms grow are maize, wheat and grapes. In busy seasons, resettlers work 8 hours a day and are paid 15 yuan per day. The resettlers provide human resources to the development of the farms, hence enabling the farmers to further develop the land both in terms of area cultivated and in terms of intensity of cultivation. On the other hand, the easy access to the farms in terms of distance enables the resettlers to benefit from a cash income opportunity that helps them to buy production inputs, pay for their living expenses, and especially to pay irrigation fees.

The development of social infrastructure around Moon Village is relatively good. Villagers have easy access to medical services in the township center because they are only 2 km away. There is one primary school in the village with 12 teachers and 130 students. There are 4 privately owned small shops in the village.

Most of the villagers moved from Xiji County. There were 315 households out of which 298 came from Xiji, accounting for 94.6% of the total households.

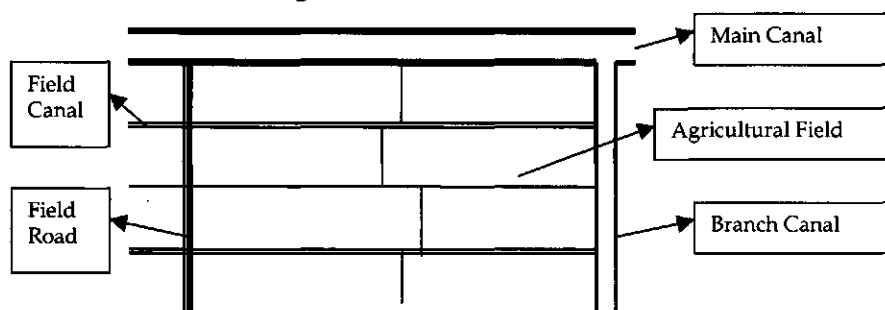
There are 6 sub-villages in Moon Village. Two of these, No. 3 and No. 4 were selected for conducting the questionnaire survey. The reason for this was that most of the resettlers there came from Xiapu Village, where the research on information about place of origin was conducted. Table 3-10 provides some information about these two sub-villages where the research was conducted.

**Table 3-10: Some basic data on Sub-Villages No. 3 and No. 4 in the Resettlement Area in Ningxia**

Name of the sub-village	Number of households	Population	Number of labour force	Area of arable land	Villagers involved in off-farm activities	Villagers involved in long-term off-farm activities
No.3	40	198	101	280	85	4
No.4	32	155	72	264	64	2

The following problems were identified by local farmers in a group discussion:

- Charges for electricity were too high. Farmers had to pay on average 120 yuan per mu (219 US\$/ha) for irrigation each year.
- The field design was so badly laid out that no proper access to the fields was possible.. The canals were also built in an incorrect way (see the following diagram). The consequences were several. (1) field paths were so narrow that tractors could not get through on them so farmers had to carry their harvest out on their shoulders; (2) the paths were constructed in such a way that some farmers could only access their plot of land by passing over other farmers' land, which caused a lot of conflict; (3) four households shared one field canal, which caused some conflict.
- Lack of diversified income sources
- Lack of contact to the outside

**Diagram 3-3: Problem with irrigation field design in Moon Village in the Resettlement Area in Ningxia**

### 3.2 Introduction to the Research Areas in Yunnan

The resettlement project studied in Yunnan is an intra-village resettlement, which means that villagers moved from one sub-village in a mountainous area (the place of origin) and resettled in another sub-village in the valley area (the resettlement area) of the same administrative village. Hence, there is no separate introduction for the place of origin and the resettlement area, except for some specific information about the sub-village in the place of origin and the sub-village in the resettlement area.

#### *Yunnan Province*

Yunnan Province is located in the southwest of China, bordering Vietnam, Laos and Burma. It is a typical high plateau mountainous province, whose average altitude is 2000 meters. There is no real plains area in the province, only relatively flat areas, which account for only 10% of the total land area. Valley areas constitute only 4% of the total land area. The total population in the year 2000 was 41.438 million, of which 14.864 million, or 35.87% of the total population, were of minority ethnic origin.

#### *Cangyuan County*

Cangyuan is located in the southwest of Yun-Gui plateau. It is on the border with Burma. The length of the border is about 150 km, and is a major passage to many Southeast Asian countries. The total area of Cangyuan County is 2,445 square km. Average land holding per person is 1.55 ha, and the population density is 65 persons per square km. Mountainous area constitutes 99.8% of the total area. The total area of arable land is 32,530 ha, of which 6,617 ha are irrigated. There are two rivers that cross the county – the Mengdong and Nangun Rivers. The annual rainfall is 1,752.7 mm.

There are in total 157,600 people in Cangyuan. There are 21 different minorities. The minority population accounts for 146,900 or 93.2% of the total population. The largest minority population is of Wa origin, accounting for 133,600 people (85% of the total population), which represents one third of the Wa ethnic population in China. There are 11 townships and 93 administrative villages. There are 299 middle and primary schools. Primary school education is covered in all 93 administrative villages.

At the end of 2000, the total GNP was 378.18 million yuan, total agricultural production value was 298.19 million, and total production value from township and village enterprises was 85.99 million yuan. The annual financial revenue of the County was 31.22 million yuan with financial expenses of 91.59 million

yuan. Total annual grain production was 57,164 tons. The major food crops are paddy rice, dry rice and maize, and the major economic crops are sugar cane and rapeseed. The major plantations are tea, rubber and coffee.

There are 11 townships in Cangyuan County. Nanla Township ranks in the middle level in terms of farmers' incomes. In 2000, the average farmers' net income per capita per year was 503 yuan (62.9 US\$), that of the best township was 786 yuan (98.3 US\$), and that of the poorest township was 349 yuan (43.6 US\$).

#### *Nanla Township*

Nanla Township is located in the northwest of Cangyuan County. It has a border of 42.33 km with Burma. Its total area is 275.268 square km. The altitude of the township ranges from 2,302 meters to 460 meters. The average temperature is 15.6°C. There is no frost in winter and summer temperatures are also modest. The annual rainfall is 2,200 to 2400 mm.

Nanla Township comprises 9 administrative villages. The total number of households is 2,339, with a total population of 12,810, of whom 11,459 are registered as rural, accounting for 89.5% of the total population. The population of Wa nationality is 9,942, or 77.6% of the total population. The population of Han origin is 1,432, or 11.18%.

The total area of arable land is 37,209 mu (2,480.6 ha), of which for 8,992 mu (599.5 ha) is paddy field, representing 24.2% of the total arable land area. The rest is rain fed land. The township is rich in forestry and water resources. The climate is good for many crops. The major crops are rice, maize, wheat, sesame, soybean, rapeseed, many kinds of vegetables and fruits. The climate is also good for many plantation crops such as tea, chestnut, papaya, rubber, coffee, bananas, sugar cane etc. The average farmers' net income per capita per year in the year 2000 was 427 yuan (53.4 US\$), and average grain possession was 409 kg per person. Rubber, alcohol, and tea production are the major local industries. There are seven rubber-processing factories with 504 employees. The total area of rubber tree plantation is 13,480 mu (898.7 ha).

There are nine administrative villages in Nanla Township. Manggang Administrative Village is the best village in terms of farmers' income level. In 2000, farmers' average net income per capita per year was 521 yuan (65 US\$) in Manggang village, which ranked the first in Nanla Township. Net average income per capita per year of the poorest village was 284 yuan (35.5 US\$).

#### *Manggang Village*

*During the field study carried out in Manggang Administrative Village, we stayed in a small guesthouse in the resettlement area. My previous experiences with small hotels at village and township level were that they were often dirty, with toilet and bathing*

facilities that never worked well. However, the small hotel in the resettlement area of Manggang Village was clean and well facilitated with toilet, bath, telephone, TV etc. We were told that the hotels in the area were always full of guests. Walking in the main street of the resettlement area, we saw many restaurants and shops. We also saw several Burmese walking around.

The Mangka resettlement village of Manggang Administrative Village was only several hundred meters away from our guesthouse. On the way to the resettlement village is a big open market selling all kinds of local stuff. The houses in the resettlement village are in rows and lines and well constructed. The village road has been nicely paved with concrete and has drainage on one side. We first conducted our interviews in the resettlement village. When later we visited the sub villages in the place of origin we needed to go by jeep even though they also belong to Manggang Village and are within easy reach. The distance between resettlement area and place of origin is only 28 km. However, we were warned by the local official who accompanied and helped us during the field study that it is difficult to go to the place of origin when it rains. This is because the road condition is poor and the terrain is steep. It was the rainy season in mid-July when we visited the project, so unluckily, we had to make the trip to the place of origin on a rainy day. In the village of origin, we saw some very poor houses of wooden structure. Moving from one household to another, necessitated stepping into wet mud and animal dung. The biggest difficulty encountered in the village of origin is the language barrier. Most farmers in the village of origin only speak the Wa language. So, all the interviews and the questionnaire survey had to be conducted through local people who could speak both Wa and Mandarin. I recall how very often after I had asked a question the farmers would talk a lot among themselves to answer my question, but the 'interpreter' only summarized the long talk into a few sentences. When questioned about what else the farmers had said, they claimed the farmers were repeating the same things. When we conducted the survey in the resettlement village, most farmers we met could manage to speak Mandarin.

The Manggang Administrative Village is located in the mountainous area of northwestern part of Cangyuan County at an average altitude of 1,200 meters, ranging from 400 meters to 1,800 meters. The annual rainfall is 1,900 mm, and the average temperature is 22 °C, ranging from 37°C to 19°C. The location of the village crosses both mountain and plain areas. The high land area of Manggang Village is characterized by its Karst physiognomy so that there is a lack of drinking water especially in the dry season. The resettlement area belongs to the southern Asian semi-tropical rainforest climate, with a fertile soil and a plains landscape. Its total arable land is 6,676 mu (445 ha), of which 1,068 mu is paddy field in the lowland area. The remaining area is dry upland. The average area of arable land per person is 3.2 mu (0.21 ha). Most arable land is on slope land, some of which is terraced and some not. Some 2,237 mu (149 ha) is forestland, and 32,000 mu (2,133 ha) is barren mountain wasteland.



There are a total of 387 households, 2,063 people. The male population accounts for 1,042 of these and the female for 1,026. The total labor force numbers 687, of which 334 are males and 333 are females. The entire population is of Wa nationality.

The major crops in the upland are maize, dry rice, soybean, and sweet potato and in the lowland they are maize, dry rice, irrigated (paddy) rice, soybean, tea and vegetables. Animal production is the major cash income source of local farmers, especially for upland villages. There are in total 668 head of cattle, 3,849 pigs, 25,490 chickens. Every household has some fruit trees for home consumption.

The sub-villages located in the mountainous area have very poor access to transportation. They are 8 km away from the road, and 28 km away from Mangka resettlement and development area. There is no local clinic or hospital so that farmers have to travel 48 km to a nearby township for medical services. There is one middle school and three primary schools in the villages. The total number of teachers is 40. Most children do not continue with middle school education. The quality of the electricity service is very poor. Power cuts happen very frequently. The following table provides some basic information about the three sub-villages in the place of origin where we conducted our field study.

**Table 3-11: Basic data on the three sub-villages researched in the place of origin in Yunnan**

Name of village visited	Total Pop.	No. of households	Area of arable land	Area of paddy field	No. of cattle /buffalo	No. of pigs
Huo Shao Zhai	131	26	617	38	75	60
Shang Wan Tang	151	27	568	44	65	70
Xia Wan Tang	87	17	447	18	18	80

The resettlement area is named as the Mangkaba Resettlement and Development Area. As mentioned, it is located on the border with Burma, only 4.6 km from the important trade zone of Nandeng Special Zone in Burma. It was designated as a provincial port in 1997. The distance to the local market is only several hundred meters. In the resettlement area, 2 village roads 2.8 km long have been constructed. Three drainage channels have been constructed, 1.5 km long, and 2.1 km of drinking water pipes have been installed. Five water tanks have been constructed with a capacity of 60 cubic meters. A two-kilometer power transportation line of 10 kilowatt has been built, and a 1.1 km power transportation line of 0.4 kilowatt. Five public toilets have been built.

The resettlement project started in August 1998. 141 households comprising 814 people have moved to the area. 246 households remain in the place of origin in the 16 sub-villages in the mountainous area. 250 mu (16.7 ha) of paddy field<sup>13</sup> were newly created, and 1450 mu (96.7 ha) of dryland fields were newly claimed in the resettlement area.

The following overview provides a brief historical profile of Manggang Administrative Village.

- 1982: Land contract system was implemented in the area. The user rights of arable land, firewood and other forest land were all allocated to individual households.
- 1985: A fire destroyed 11 houses
- 1986: A fire destroyed 10 households and another 11 households were damaged.
- 1987: A plague of pests occurred so that grain production was extremely low in that year
- 1991: A serious flood took place and ruined 50 mu of paddy field
- 1992: Education on socialist ideology was implemented and lasted for 3 months.
- 1996: A working team came to the village to strengthen the activities of the Communist Party
- 1999: Resettlement project started
- 2000: Village autonomous management was implemented. Village Office was changed into Village Committee.

The following problems were identified by farmers from Xiawantang Sub-Village in the Place of Origin:

- No paddy fields
- Poor fertility of arable land and very low productivity
- Drought and lack of water
- Poor transportation
- Lack of cash income sources
- Low educational level

The following problems were identified by farmers from Huoshaozhai Sub-Village in the Place of Origin:

- Poor transportation

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<sup>13</sup> The allocation of the newly created paddy field and newly claimed dryland field is not clear. In the field survey, all farmers interviewed claimed that their possession of land stayed the same as before. And we are not able to get answers from local officials.

- Lack of water
- Lack of information
- Difficulty to reach medical services
- Lack of contact to the outside world
- Lack of income sources
- Poor soil fertility
- Plague of pests and damage by wild rats
- Large distance to paddy field and dry land
- Lack of technology
- Usage of old seed varieties

Having visited both resettlement areas and places of origin in both regions, my direct impression was that the differences between the resettlement areas and the places of origin were very big. This is an overall impression on the future development potentials. I cannot deny that resettlers in both regions are facing all sorts of problems, for example, many resettlers are in debt over constructing their houses in the resettlement areas in Yunnan, and the resettlers are struggling for sufficient cash income to pay the irrigation fee in Ningxia. But I can clearly see the hope and prospects in both resettlement areas, because they both have better access to transportation, market places and other social infrastructure, and also very importantly, the food security level in the resettlement areas are much better than in the places of origin. However, no clear perspectives can be seen for future development in the places of origin for both regions. The other observation is that the places of origin are located in very poor areas in general, but the villages selected for resettlement in the places of origin were relatively better-off than other villages in the same townships, which is the case for both research regions.

## **Outcomes of Resettlement – The Better-off Moved to Become Yet Better-off<sup>1</sup>**

### **Introduction**

This chapter evaluates and compares the outcomes of the two resettlement projects chosen for study, giving specific attention to socio-economic factors. My analysis focuses on who has benefited and in what ways. This issue has, by and large, been a missing element in the research on voluntary resettlement in China. Previous discussions on voluntary resettlement for poverty reduction have paid attention to how the resettled population benefited from the resettlement, rather than documenting exactly who have been resettled. This implies an assumption by policy researchers and practitioners alike that those resettled are in fact the defined target group. This, as I show in this chapter, is a false assumption.

Analysing who are beneficiaries helps us to evaluate the justice of using poverty alleviation funds for resettlement, and tests whether or not such government-organised projects reach their claimed target groups. In order to do this, I have analyzed, where possible and when necessary, how resettlers have benefited in relation to three reference groups. The first consists of the population remaining in the places of origin. Comparing resettlers with those who stayed behind can provide information about the livelihood situations of the two groups and provide information on the impact of resettlement. The second group concerns information about the situation of resettlers before they moved from their places of origin. This helps us to understand how resettlers' lives have changed with resettlement. The third group is the local population already living in the resettlement area, though this applies only to the case of Yunnan since there was no local population occupying the resettled area in Ningxia.

These comparisons provide insights into the resettlers' past and present livelihoods as well as future developments. They also help to explore how far people in the resettlement areas have a better life than those in the places of origin and whether resettlers follow similar living patterns to those already

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<sup>1</sup> Income from different years are compared without taking account of the inflation rate because from 1996 to 2000 this was not high enough to make any marked difference. All figures in RMB are converted into US dollars by dividing by eight – the rough conversion rate for the years concerned.

inhabiting the resettlement areas. This multi-comparison thus combines perspectives that are vertical (comparison with the past), horizontal (comparison with the population remaining) and future-oriented (comparison with the population building a new life in the resettlement area).

The following aspects are compared: *demographic features* (including: family size, age structure, labor force numbers and educational level); *economic features* (including: cash income and expenditure, household estate, income sources/production and expenditure structure, input/output analysis of grain production); *accessibility* (including: access to land, food security, drinking water, the market, loans, communication, and education); *labor input and gender division of labor*, and lastly *socio-economic vulnerability*. The socio-economic data provided and analysed in this chapter are at household and community levels. It is believed that household and community levels represent the end results of large-scale government interventions.

The analysis of the demographic features of the different groups aims to provide detailed information about who the resettlers were. This is complementary to the other major information about their social positions as derived from the results of the household ranking exercise<sup>2</sup>. These demographic data also relate to the whole process of resettlement, just as economic variables describe the economic outcomes of resettlement.

The impact of resettlement on accessibility mainly discusses aspects relating to land and food security, drinking water and social infrastructure. Food security is always a factor in the analysis of the situation of poor farmers. Seeking food security is often the essential motivation for poor farmers to move. However, farmers with food insecurity often do not have enough economic capacity to take the opportunities to make a better living elsewhere. Information about social infrastructure is important in this research in two respects. Firstly, the social infrastructure in the resettlement areas is important for the sustainable development of those areas. Secondly the social infrastructure in the places of origin informs us about the differences between the resettlement areas and the places of origin.

The analysis of labor input and the gender division of labor is to draw attention to gender issues in the process of resettlement. Women and men are affected differently in various aspects of the process of resettlement. Change in the gender division of labor and the workload for respective genders are considered as the most important issue to be tackled. Of course, this is not the only gender issue discussed. The thesis also pays attention to gender issues in other dimensions. For example, the issue of gender and decision-making is discussed in the chapter six.

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<sup>2</sup> The results of the 'Household Sorting' exercise is provided in this chapter. The Household Sorting method was introduced in chapter three on developing a research methodology.

#### 4.1 Who Were Resettled?

Resettlement is about people moving from one place to another. In most cases, only some community members in given communities moved. So who then were those resettled? The two sites we visited are both under the government project entitled Resettlement for Poverty Reduction and Development. Were the right groups targeted? There may have been many reasons why some households were able to move and others were not. However, no matter how many other objectives are met, no matter whatever variables are of influence, it is a failure if the poor have not been targeted in a poverty reduction oriented project.

##### *Who were resettled from given local communities?*

Household sorting was carried out with groups of farmers in the villages of origin in order to ascertain who in the communities moved out and who remained. Household Sorting is a Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) tool<sup>3</sup>. Household sorting is to categorize households in a community according to certain indicators for a given purpose. The method allows us to 'investigate perceptions of wealth differences and inequalities in a community; discover local indicators and criteria of wealth and well being; and establish the relative position of households in a community.' (Theis, 1991). The purpose in our research was to establish the relative position of households in a community in terms of well being. Before conducting the household sorting exercise, we first asked farmers to think about how they would like to categorize all the households in the sub-village. Then we asked what indicators to use to categorize the well being of the households in the village. We then asked farmers to list all the names of head of households including both resettled households and those remaining and then sort all households into the different categories identified. The three broad categories were the joint product of the researchers and farmers. For example, after we raised the first question of how to categorize the well being of the households, farmers would usually remain silent for quite some time, and so we might then give as an example three broad categories. In the case of the four sub-villages in which we conducted household sorting, farmer participants all agreed with such categorization. I had experiences in other research projects where farmers made alternatives proposals. In the process of household sorting, the role of the researchers was

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<sup>3</sup> The detailed description of PRA tools is in chapter two.

mainly to facilitate. All the information with regards to the indicators and characteristics in the tables is description given by farmers.

In the following four tables, the names underlined are those who moved to the resettlement areas. Table 4-1 shows that, in this sub-village in Ningxia, 53 percent of the farmers in the good category and 23 percent of farmers in the middle category have moved, whereas only 4 percent of farmers in the poor category moved. Another way of examining the question is to say that of the total number of people from the fourteen households that resettled from this sub-village, 57.2 percentage were better-off farmers, 35.7 percentage were middle level farmers and 7.1 percentage were poor farmers. Hence, we can conclude that the majority of those who moved were not the poorer farmers in the community. More than half were the relatively better-off farmers.

**Table 4-1: Household Sorting in Shangpu sub-village of Xiapu Administrative Village in Ningxia**

Category	No. of Households moved of total in each category	Percentage of moved Households	Name of the household head	Characteristics
Good	8/15	53%	<u>Ma Zhengshan</u> , <u>Ma Yanshan</u> , <u>Ma Shoujie</u> , <u>Ma Pengwan</u> , <u>Ma Tianren</u> , <u>Ma Qiang</u> , <u>Ma Zhenghe</u> , <u>Ma Luping</u> , <u>Yang Rongzhong</u> , <u>Ma Shourong</u> , <u>Ma Zhengxuan</u> , <u>Ma Shaoyu</u> , <u>Li Meiyang</u> , <u>Ma Chunlu</u> , <u>Ma Yanhu</u>	Having higher cash income because the family members may get salary as government employees or earn income from off-farm activities; They raise livestock; Their house structure is brick and wood.
Middle level	5/38	23%	<u>Ma Shouping</u> , <u>Ma Xuewu</u> , <u>Ma Cunhui</u> , <u>Ma Shaolin</u> , <u>Ma Shaoqi</u> , <u>Ma Zhengze</u> , <u>Ma Zhenglian</u> , <u>Ma Cunfu</u> , <u>Ma Cunwen</u> , <u>Ma Cunli</u> , <u>Ma Cunlin</u> , <u>Ma Shengjun</u> , <u>Ma Cunyi</u> , <u>Ma ligang</u> , <u>Ma Chunshi</u> , <u>Ma Xiaoci</u> , <u>Ma Cunji</u> , <u>Ma Tongji</u> , <u>Ma Cunming</u> , <u>Ma Shouzhong</u> etc.	Having higher cash income because the family members earn income from off-farm activities. They raise livestock. They plant potato with more fertilizer so that they get higher potato production. Their house structure is brick, wood and mud.
Poor	1/26	4%	<u>Ma Shouan</u> , <u>Ma Zhengduo</u> , <u>Ma Wenxue</u> , <u>Ma Wancheng</u> , <u>Ma Xuezhen</u> , <u>Ma Xueping</u> , <u>Ma Zhengyuan</u> , <u>Ma Zhengzhi</u> , <u>Ma Yanhu</u> , <u>Ma Yanzhen</u> , <u>Ma Zhiping</u> , <u>Ma Zhubei</u> , <u>Ma Fazhong</u> , <u>Ma Youshen</u> , <u>Ma Mingzhen</u> , <u>Ma Wenxin</u> , <u>Ma Yanlu</u> , <u>Ma Yanbang</u> , <u>Wang Qin</u> , <u>Ma Zhihu</u> , <u>Ma Anrong</u> , <u>Ma Fatong</u> , <u>Ma Shoujun</u> , <u>Ma Shouxian</u> , <u>Ma Shouli</u>	Most of them just live independently from their parents' home. They have less arable land so that they could not grow much potato; They have more small children and fewer labor forces; Their house structure is wood and mud, and some of them even still live in cave.



**Table 4-2: Household Sorting in Shang Wan Tang sub-village of Mang Gang Village of Nan La Township of Cang Yuan County of Yunnan Province**

Category	Indicators	No. of Households moved out Of total in each category	Percentage of moved Households	Name of the household head	Characteristics
Good	Have cash savings	8/8	100%	<u>Yin Xuekun, Ba Guomin, Wang Chaolin, Bai Xiaoye, Peng Xiaoye, He Wenhua, Bai Xiangdong, Yang Laosan</u>	They can acquire market information, they are good in cropping and animal husbandry, people lend them money, they have enough labor and money to build houses.
Middle level	Just have enough to eat and cloth themselves	4/12	33%	<u>Peng Jianzhong, Bai Zifu, Bai Zhigang, Ba Xueguang, Yin Ming, Yang Yutian, Bai Zhixing, Ba Guoxing, Ba Yandao, Peng Jianwen, Bai Zhiguo, Bai Zhiming</u>	They do not know technology, lack money, no one lends them money, they only have dry land <sup>4</sup>
Poor	Have not enough to eat and cloth themselves	2/8	25%	<u>Su Laosi, He Xueguang, Yin Laoda, Ba Xinhua, Yin Shaohua, Yang Qing, Su Baoguang, Ba Guorong,</u>	They are in slow thinking, they are not good in animal husbandry, they do not plan well, they do not know technology, they are not in good health, they only have dry land

Farmers from different communities often identified different indicators to define the household well being. For example, in Shang Wan Tang (Table 4-2) farmers used savings, food and clothing as indicators. In both Huo Shao Zhai and Xia Wan Tang, farmers used paddy field and buffalo as indicators (Tables 4-3 and 4-4). Such phenomena tell us: (1) the key determinants of well being in different communities are seen differently; (2) farmers know their communities and their neighbors in the same community well.

<sup>4</sup> There are two kinds of arable land in this village, one is dry land, and the other one is paddy field. The land was allocated in early 1980s. No change has been made since then.

**Table 4-3: Household Sorting in Huo Shao Zhai sub-village of Mang Gang Village, Nan La Township of Cang Yuan County of Yunnan Province**

Category	Indicators	No. of Households moved of total in each category	Percentage shared by moved households	Name List of Household Head	Characteristics
Good	Having paddy field and buffalo	9/9	100%	<u>He Yufen, He Ping, He Wei, Peng Guoqing, Li Guifen, He Laoda, Peng Zhizhong, Bai Laosi, Cheng Yaoyun.</u>	They are well informed, good in cropping and animal husbandry, good in technology.
Middle level	Having buffalo	7/20	35%	<u>Peng Laoer, Peng Guojun, Bai Shixing, Cheng Laoda, Luo Yinghua, Bai Guangming, He Jiwen.</u> Peng Zhongde, Peng Jun, Bai Laosi, Peng Zhongming, Wang Laosi, He Wenzhong, He Guangming, Cheng Laosi, He Jinguang, Bai Laoer, Bai Laoliu, Bai Laoda, Bai Guanghua,	They are knowledgeable, although they have strong labor force, for example, they do not know how to treat pigs and chickens when they are ill.
Poor	Having no buffalo	4/5	80%	<u>He Guangqiang, Cheng Guohua, Peng Guoming, Peng Linhe, He Laosi</u>	Low qualification, mental retardation

**Table 4-4: Household Sorting in Xia Wan Tang sub-village of Mang Gang Village, Nan La Township of Cang Yuan County of Yunnan Province**

Category	Indicator	No. of Households Moved of total in each category	Percentage shared by moved households	Name List of the Household Head	Characteristics
Good	Having paddy field and buffalo	7/9	78%	<u>Zhao Xiuhua</u> , <u>Peng Zhongming</u> , <u>Ba Laoda</u> , <u>Ba Zhonming</u> , <u>Ba Laosan</u> , <u>Ba Zhongwei</u> , <u>Zhao Jiang</u> , <u>Ba Yinhua</u> , <u>Bai Laoda</u>	Having paddy field, good at pig raising, from richer family, less burden, healthy, involving in off-farm wage labor
Middle Level	Having buffalo	3/9	33%	<u>He Wenxian</u> , <u>Ba Yinming</u> , <u>Peng Laoda</u> , <u>He Guangqing</u> , <u>Yang Laoda</u> , <u>Su Laosan</u> , <u>Yang Guanghua</u> , <u>Ba Laoer</u> , <u>He Guangming</u> ,	Having buffalo, good land, income generated from animal husbandry, being food self-sufficient and even with surplus for sell, having animal manure for arable land
Poor	Having no buffalo	0/5	0%	<u>Peng Zhonghua</u> , <u>Wang Xiaor</u> , <u>Ba Yinzong</u> , <u>He Guanghui</u> , <u>Peng Weimin</u> ,	Having no buffalo, some family members are not healthy, crops are not healthy, often borrowing food to eat, poor arable land

From the tables, we can see that important factors of well being to farmers are the type of land, the quality of land, having or not having buffaloes, health, food subsistence, technology and information. The different categories of farmers have different characteristics in relation to these factors. This is essential to understand the participation of different farmers in the resettlement process. The thesis will try to tackle these issues in this chapter and in the chapter six.

**Table 4-5: Share of different categories of households of the total resettled households in the sub-villages of the place of origin in Yunnan**

Category Name of Sub-village	Good	Middle Level	Poor
	Number of resettled	Number of Resettled	Number of Resettled
Shang Wantang	8	4	2
Huo Shaozhai	9	7	4
Xia Wan Tang	7	3	0
Sub-Totals	24	14	6
Share of Total	54.5%	31.8%	13.6%

Although the situation varied in different sub-villages, we can see clearly in the above table that the poorer the households, the less likely they were to move. The majority of households in the 'good' category moved and about one-third of those in the middle category. Of all the resettlers in these three sub-villages, the proportion of 'good' households was more than half, whereas the poor represented only about 14 percent.

*Those who moved have a better life – Farmers' views on resettlement*

**Table 4-6: Resettlers' views on their life in the resettlement sites in Ningxia and Yunnan**

Region	View	General feelings about resettlement			Comparison with previous life			Level of adaptation to the new place		
		Good	Just so-so	Not good	Better	Just so-so	Not Better	Good	Just so-so	Not good
Ningxia (N=36)	Number of	33	2	1	29	5	2	17	6	13
	Households									
Yunnan (N=31)	Percentage	91.7	5.6	2.8	80.6	13.9	5.6	47.2	16.7	36.1
	Households									
	Number of	25	3	3	20	10	1	No data	No data	No data
	Households									
	Percentage	80.6	9.7	9.7	64.5	32.3	3.2	-	-	-
	Households									

*Note: There are some data gaps for Yunnan in terms of farmers' view on their adaptation to the new place.*

**Table 4-7/Table 6-3: A returnee's comparison of life between the place of origin and the resettlement area in Ningxia**

	In the place of origin (Xia Pu Village)	In the resettlement area (Moon Village)
Workload	Overloaded	Not as heavy as in Xia Pu
Economic situation	Lower income, lower Expenditure	Higher income, Higher expenditure
Water	It takes an hour to get a bucket of water. And it is not convenient because she has to collect water from a well that belongs to other households	Very convenient
Electricity	Not stable	Stable
Cooking oil	From own field	It costs cash money
Expenditure on gifts	More expenditure on giving gifts. (400 yuan - about 50 US\$ a year) <sup>5</sup>	Less expenditure on giving gifts. (100 yuan-about 11 US\$) a year)

*Note: This comparison was made by one of the case study informants, Ma Jianhua, a returnee now living in Xia Pu Village, her village of origin)*

**Table 4-8: Comparison made by resettlers between the place of origin and the resettlement area in Yunnan**

	In the Place of origin (Mangkaba Village)	In the Resettlement area (Manggang Village)
Access	Inconvenient for transportation Lack of water Use animal power Far to the market place Far to schools Inconvenient in medical services Far to the arable land Fetching water from 2-4 km away	Convenient for transportation Easy access to water Use motor vehicle Near to market place, easy to sell products Near to schools Convenient in medical services Nearby the arable land Fetching water from nearby place
Living Condition	Live in thatched cottage Not wearing shoes There are no toilets	Live in brick built house Wearing shoes There are public toilets
Entertainment	Can only receive one TV channel Having nothing to do in the evening	Can receive several TV channels Can play in the street in the evening

*Note: This is the result of a group exercise with farmers in Mangkaba Village*

Table 4-6 shows: (1) Majority of resettlers from both Ningxia and Yunnan had generally good feelings about the resettlement. (2) The majority of resettlers from Ningxia believed they had a better life in the resettlement area and more

<sup>5</sup> Many farmers in Ningxia said to us during the interview that they have to spend more money on gifts exchange in the place of origin than in the resettlement areas even though their average income level is lower. Data on expenditure structure show the same trend (see table 4-24). The main reason is that farmers in the places of origin, where many of their generations have been living, have much more relatives than in the resettlement areas, where a new life has just started.

than half (64.5 percent) of the resettlers from Yunnan felt the same. (3) About half (47.2 percent) of the resettlers from Ningxia had already adapted to the new place. Hence, the general conclusion is that resettlers experienced a better life in the resettlement areas. A detailed descriptive comparison was made by resettlers in Ningxia and in Yunnan to reflect their general feelings (Tables 4-7 and 4-8). Both the group exercise results from Yunnan and the case study result from Ningxia show obvious advantages in the resettlement areas. The resettlers enjoy a better life than those who remained in the places of origin. And this conclusion comes not only from the statistical analysis of the questionnaire survey, the results of which will be illustrated in the following sections of this chapter, but also from farmers' own perspectives, which can be seen clearly from Tables 4-6, 4-7 and 4-8.

In the following demographic features of resettlers in comparison with other groups, detailed information is given on who the resettlers are.

## 4.2 Demographic Features

### *Family size<sup>6</sup>*

The two regions show a similar trend in that no big changes in family size have occurred. One important point to note is that there are fewer larger-size families in the resettlement area than in the place of origin, in Ningxia. In Ningxia, due to the shortage of land resources in the resettlement area, each household was allocated only 8 mu (0.53 ha) of arable land on the assumption that there would be 4 family members in each household, so it is hard for resettled households to feed larger families. While in the case of Yunnan, resettlers moved from a mountainous area to lowland within the same administrative village and so they kept their original land. Physical resources were thus not a bottleneck for the movement of larger families. This is why households with larger family sizes in Ningxia decreased from 51 percent to 36.8 percent and households with larger family sizes in Yunnan slightly increased (see tables 4-9 and 4-10).

The current phenomenon in both China's rural and urban areas is that people choose to live in nuclear families. The field survey and the data highlighted such a common trend. What we found was that the younger generation would set up their own households after marriage, and the parents tended then to live together with the youngest son. The younger generation tended not to have more than 2-3 children. This is confirmed in the following two tables, although there is a percentage of families with more than 2-3 children.

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<sup>6</sup> I have defined households of smaller family size as households with 5 or less family members, and larger family size as households of 6 or more family members.

In the field survey, we were told that in some cases part of the family moved to the resettlement areas and left other members behind. This might explain why there are fewer larger families in the resettlement area than in the place of origin in Ningxia.

**Table 4-9: Number of Household Members in Ningxia**

	Average no. of household members	Households of smaller family size			Households of larger family size
		3 persons or less	4 persons	5 persons	6 or more
Population remaining in place of origin	5.7	2 (4.3%)	9 (19%)	12 (26%)	24 (51%)
Resettlers	5.5	1 (2.6%)	6 (15.8)	17 (44.7%)	14 (36.8%)

**Table 4-10: Number of Household Members in Yunnan**

	Average no. of household members	Households of smaller family size			Households of larger family size
		3 persons or less	4 persons	5 persons	6 or more
Population remaining in place of origin	5.1	4 (13.3%)	6 (20%)	9 (30%)	11 (36.6%)
Resettlers	5.3	4 (12.9%)	5 (16.1%)	9 (29.0%)	13 (42.0%)

### *Age Structure*

From Tables 4-11 and 4-12, we can conclude that more of the younger people resettled in both places. The younger population (in the age range 0-45) shares a higher percentage and the older population (in the age range 46-65) shares a lower percentage of the total population in the resettlement areas than in the places of origin. We might make two assumptions to explain such a trend. (1) Families in the older age group did not want to leave the places they had lived in all their life, or they gave up their chance to move for their children because of the limited land resource in the new area to support a big family. Case

studies confirmed this assumption. For example, in the case of Ma Yongzheng (see next chapter), what his parents said to his proposal to resettle was: "We were born here, and have lived here all our life, you were born here too so that you could also stay. Besides 8 mu of land in the resettlement area is too small to make a better life, and you cannot make big money on wage labor." So in the end, the son moved and his parents stayed, because of their willingness to do so and because of the land constraint; (2) Families with young children tended to move to seek a better life for their children. Decision-making around resettlement can hardly be made by any single factor, but age and consideration for the next generation are certainly influencing factors in decision-making. It is hard to use statistical data to prove to what extent people moved for their children's future, but we can confirm such an assumption by providing how different groups of people anticipated their children's future in Table 4-13. The table shows clearly how resettlers had many more and much higher expectations of their children, which in turn reflects the available opportunities in the different places. When I asked farmers remaining in the places of origin about their expectations for their children, they mostly answered: "What I can say, it is situational, I cannot expect more than what we have in reality." That is why I could not categorize most of the answers into Table 4-13. But when I asked resettlers about the same question, I received more definite answers, categorized in Table 4-13.

Note should be made that the average age of resettlers in Ningxia is younger than that of population in the place of origin, which is in line with the fact that more younger people moved. The average age of resettlers in Yunnan is older than that of the population in the place of origin, unlike in Ningxia because a much higher percentage of older people (above 66) moved. We have to look at both age structure and average age for obtaining a whole picture.

**Table 4-11: Age structure in Ningxia**

		Age structure of population remaining in the place of origin	Age structure of population in resettled areas
Gender ratio (m:f)		113:100	114:100
Age structure (number and percentage)	0~18	105 (43.4%)	97 (48.7%)
	19~45	84 (35.1%)	73 (36.7%)
	46~65	41 (17.2%)	25 (12.6%)
	Above 66	9 (3.8%)	4 (2%)
Average age		25.6	23.5



**Table 4-12: Age Structure in Yunnan**

		Age structure of population remaining in the place of origin	Age structure of population in resettled areas
Gender ratio (m:f)		149:100	112:100
Age structure (number and percentage)	0-18	63 (40.1%)	68 (42.2%)
	19-45	59 (37.6%)	67 (41.6%)
	46-65	31 (19.7%)	13 (8.1%)
	Above 66	4 (2.5%)	13 (8.1%)
Average age		27.4	28.9

**Table 4-13: Parents' expectations of children in Yunnan**

	Helping farming	with	Not to be farmers	Go out and/or find a job	Being higher educated
Population remaining in the place of origin	1		2		2
Resettlers			1	4	6
Local population in the resettlement area			1	3	5

*Note: (1) In the field survey farmers were asked: "What are your expectations for your children?" The narrated answers were then put onto paper. In many cases, interviewees found it difficult to answer this question, they just replied: "Oh, it is situational, what can I say?" This is why so few answers are summarized. (2) Such a survey was not carried out in Ningxia due to time limitations.*

### *Labor Force*

In Ningxia, the labor force available to each household in the resettlement areas is about the same as for those in the place of origin (see table 4-14). In Yunnan, the average labor force in the resettled household is lower, although the family size is similar to that in the places of origin. The average labor force in each household went down from 3.2 to 2.7 and the percentage of labor participants compared with the total number of household members went down from 62.4 percent to 52.1 percent. In Yunnan, the reduction in the labor force is due to two reasons. (1) The higher percentage of population between age 0-18 in the resettlement area and (2) the higher percentage of population above the age of 66 (see table 4-15).

**Table 4-14: Number of persons and percentage of the labor force in households in Ningxia**

	Family size	Average labor force of each household	Percentage of labor force of total household members
Population remaining in place of origin	5.7	2.6	46%
Resettlers	5.5	2.5	45%

**Table 4-15: Number of persons and percentage of labor force in households in Yunnan**

	Family size	Average labor force of each household	Percentage of labor force of total household member
Population remaining in the place of origin	5.1	3.2	62%
Resettlers	5.3	2.7	52%

*Educational Level*

Tables 4-16 and 4-17 show that the average educational level of resettlers in both Ningxia and Yunnan was higher than that of the population remaining in the places of origin. This is especially obvious in Yunnan. There may be several reasons to explain such a trend.

(1) People who are higher educated may be more knowledgeable about the new places so that they can better evaluate the benefits of resettlement, which led them to move. By assuming this, I do not mean we can equalize education with knowledge, but neither can we ignore the benefits of education. For example, in Yunnan, only those who had received a school education could speak Mandarin, which is often the pre-condition for them to communicate with people in other areas and from outside. The statistical evidence in the following tables shows that higher educated people moved, but we cannot deduce statistically, that higher educated people tend to move. However, our case study in the next chapter did show how knowledge and information, which is linked with education, can contribute to decision-making in favor of resettlement;

(2) The previous section (Table 4-11 and Table 4-12) shows that more younger people moved, and if the average educational level of younger people is higher than that of older people, then it is no surprise that the average educational level of the resettler is higher.

**Table 4-16: Educational levels in Ningxia**

			Illiterate	Primary School	Middle School	High School and above	Average no. years
Population remaining in Place of Origin (N=218)	No.	of 103	63	36	16		3.0
	Percentage	47%	29%	17%	7%		
Resettlers (N=166)	No.	of 58	77	18	13		3.3
	Percentage	34.9%	46.4%	10.8	7.8%		

**Table 4-17: Educational level in Yunnan**

			Illiterate	Primary School	Middle School	High School and above	Average no. years
Population remaining in	No of People	41		89	10	1	3.4
Place of origin (N=141)	Percentage	29%		63%	7%	1%	
Resettlers (N=142)	Number of People	37		72	26	7	4.6
	Percentage	26%		51%	18%	5%	
Local population in resettlement area	Number of People	4		37	7	0	4.2
	Percentage	8.4%		76%	15%	0	

### 4.3 Economic Features

#### *Cash income and expenditure*

In the field survey, I chose to use net cash income as the key economic indicator rather than use net income. I found lots of difficulties in using net income. It is hard to obtain complex information from any single household about its gross income if it involves converting value in kind into cash value and when it involves deducting non-cash costs from gross income. I define net cash income as gross cash income minus gross cash costs. To do this is not to deny the importance of non-cash income and non-cash costs. Cash income is an easier way to grasp the apparent economic situation of interviewed households. To complement the missing dynamic inside household livelihoods by my economic simplification, in the following parts of this chapter, I will make use of other analyses, such as household food security and household estate status.

The functions of cash and non-cash flows are different. In my view, cash flow is a necessary determinant for any outgoing activities while non-cash flow is important for livelihood subsistence. The problem with poor households is

that their cash flow is only able to meet their basic needs and not enough to make productive investments, or to accumulate in order to take up opportunities such as resettlement.

Tables 4-18 and 4-19 show that:

(1) The resettlers in both regions are in a better economic situation than the population remaining in the places of origin because they make higher net cash incomes. Household annual net cash income of resettlers in Ningxia was 676 yuan higher than that of population remaining. That of resettlers in Yunnan was 1,500 yuan higher.

(2) Household annual net cash income of resettlers in Ningxia increased on average 128 yuan every year of the 4 years of resettlement. Although in Yunnan, household annual net cash income only showed an increase of 14 yuan, we have to keep in mind that that the resettlers in Yunnan had only been resettled for less a year.

(3) Resettlers borrow much more money in the resettlement area than they did before they moved, and they also borrow much more money than the population remaining in the place of origin. We can draw some assumptions from such phenomena: first resettlers have to take the risk of higher debts if they want to move; second the population remaining have lower risk-taking capacity so that they cannot move; third, resettlers have a higher capacity to mobilize financial support such as formal and informal loans.

(4) The local population already in the resettlement area in Yunnan shows a good economic profile. Table 19 shows that their average household annual net cash income was 3,845 yuan, which is 1,055 yuan higher than that of resettlers. It is anticipated that resettlers in Yunnan may catch up in their economic performance with the local population of the area in the future.

**Table 4-18: Household annual net cash income, expenditure and debt in Ningxia**

	Loan/Debt	Net cash income	Cash expenditure
Population remaining in the place of origin (in 2000)	2387	2947.2	3199.5
Resettlers in the place of origin (around 1996)	1307	3101.3	3050.7
Resettlers in the resettlement area (in 2000)	2834.3	3613.3	4516.3

**Table 4-19/Table 6-2: Household annual net cash income, expenditure and debt in Yunnan**

	Loan/Debt	Net cash income	Cash expenditure
Population remaining in the place of origin (in 2000)	905	1290	1136
Resettlers in place of origin (in 1999)	3514	2772.8	2147
Resettlers in the resettlement area (in 2000)	6287	2790	7666.1
Local population in the Resettlement area (in 2000)	3576	3845	1761

*Household Assets*

I define fixed productive assets by the following items: a truck, tractor, pump, sprayer, seeder, reaper, irrigation equipment, process machinery, farming equipment, and other such items.

By fixed consumption assets, we refer to the living place (house or thatched cottage), TV set, washing machine, radio-recorder, bicycle, refrigerator, motorcycle, sewing machine, fan, furniture, telephone, among others.

Table 4-20 shows that resettlers in the resettlement area in Ningxia now have a higher level of productive fixed assets than the population remaining in the place of origin have. They have also improved their stock of productive fixed assets over the years in the resettlement area. This confirms the conclusion

made in section 3.1 that household assets are even more convincing than household cash income in showing the change of economic status over a period of time. Household cash income and household productive assets represent different household dynamics. Cash income of a particular year represents the economic performance of a household in that year. The timeline of household cash income may give a dynamic view of the household economic performance over the years. Fixed assets reflect an overall outcome of household socio-economic status over a longer period of time. Current fixed assets may be due to any of the following reasons: financial management capability, financial backup from kin, less burdens because of better health situation or/and because of fewer school age children etc.

Taking the value of household assets into consideration, we may conclude that all the surveyed groups of farmers in Yunnan had a much lower economic status than those in Ningxia.

**Table 4-20: Value of household assets in Ningxia:**

	Value of fixed production assets (yuan)	Value of fixed consumption assets (yuan)
Population remaining in the place of origin (in 2000)	1390.2	1053.0
Resettlers in place of origin (around 1996)	864.6	762.9
Resettlers in the resettlement area (in 2000)	1698.7	1129.1

**Table 4-21: Value of household assets in Yunnan**

	Value of fixed production assets (yuan)	Value of fixed consumption assets (yuan)
Population remaining in the place of origin (in 2000)	No data	405.82
Resettlers in place of origin (in 1999)	60.06	885.3
Resettlers in the resettlement area	25.94	471.34
Local population in the resettlement area (in 2000)	28.57	572.13

### *Income structure*

In this section, two concepts are employed in the discussion, income structure, and production structure or pattern. By income structure we mean the composition of the overall income from different income sources, whereas production structure concerns production activities that farmers engage in for income generation, and the labour they put into these different activities.

Income and production structures are not in themselves explanatory but they provide contextually useful baseline information.

Resettlers have a different income structure to the population remaining in Ningxia, (see table 4-22). For example, for resettlers in the resettlement area, income from off-farm labor ranked the largest source of income and represented more than one third (41.8 percent) of their total net cash income. For the remaining population, income from off-farm labor ranked fifth and represented only 11.4 percent of their total net cash income. However, such differences of income sources between resettlers and the remaining population did not occur after resettlement. When comparing income structures of resettlers before resettlement with the population remaining in Ningxia, as Table 4-22 shows, resettlers already had a different income structure before they moved. For example, income from off-farm labor already ranked the largest source and represented more than one third (36.4 percent) of their total net cash income. Thus resettlers had not gone through big structural changes in their overall pattern of income in the resettlement area, unlike the case for production patterns. The cropping pattern in particular fundamentally changed after resettlement in Ningxia, since farming went from rain fed to irrigated agriculture (see section IV).

Comparing the income structure of resettlers and the population remaining in the place of origin in Yunnan, Table 4-23 shows that income structure for both groups was similar. For example, for both groups, net cash income from animal husbandry was overwhelmingly important and the largest share of income, 55 and 50 percent, respectively. Net cash income from off-farm labor was the second largest, 17 and 29 percent respectively. Crop production was the third largest share, representing 15 percent and 11 percent. This is very different from the situation in Ningxia.

Comparing resettlers in the place of origin and in the resettlement area in Yunnan, Table 4-23 shows the following:

- (1) A structural change in resettlers' household income patterns was taking place. Although net cash income from animal husbandry and from off-farm labor still ranked first and second, there was a decrease of 16.1 percent in income from animal husbandry and an increase of 7.7 percent in off-farm labor. Furthermore, net cash income from sideline production showed an increase of 13.7 percent.
- (2) Income from off-farm labor increased by 5.6 percent and still ranked as the largest source of income, representing 42.4 percent of total net cash income
- (3) Net cash income from crop production still plays a very important role, and represents 33.1 percent of the total.
- (4) Net cash income from animal husbandry decreased by 7.9 percent, playing a much less important role than before. But it is too early to make any final conclusion of future trends, because resettlement is still in its early stage.



Table 4-23 shows that the local population in the resettlement area had a different net cash income structure compared with resettlers. They also performed better, economically. It is hard to predict whether the resettlers' economic situation will track towards the same net cash income structure of the local population or not.



**Table 4-23: Household net cash income structure in Yunnan**

	Cropping	Forest and Fruit	Animal husbandry	Off-farm labor	Wage employment	Sideline production	Others	Total
Population remaining in the place of origin (in 2000)	141 Amount 10.9% %	102 7.9% %	653 50.6% %	380 29.5% %	5 0.4% %	7 0.5% %	2 0.2% %	1290 100.0% %
Resettlers in place of origin (in 1999)	429.2 15.5% %	119.8 4.3% %	1518 54.7% %	477 17.2% %	96 3.5% %	132.8 4.8% %	0 0.0% %	2772.8 100.0% %
Resettlers in the resettlement area (in 2000)	344 12.3% %	52 1.9% %	1085 38.9% %	689 24.7% %	100 3.6% %	520 18.6% %	0 0.0% %	2790 100.0% %
Local population in the resettlement area (in 2000)	1351.43 35.2% %	370.72 9.6% %	750 19.5% %	1018.57 26.5% %	0 0.0% %	304 7.9% %	50 1.3% %	3844.72 100.0% %

Resettlement in Ningxia has not much change in terms of income patterns but production patterns have altered considerably with the change from rain fed to irrigated agriculture, and in the time given to different production activities (see section IV). Resettlement in Yunnan has not involved big changes so far in production patterns, only in income structures. The data suggest that some of the general implications that we can draw are: (1) resettlement will certainly involve changes in either production pattern or income structure; (2) to evaluate a resettlement project, finding what has changed is only the first step. One must then examine how resettlers have benefited from the changes. (3) farmers' self-reflection is the key to drawing and orienting general evaluations of a project when faced with a complex realities and changes.

#### *Expenditure Structure*

Most striking for both regions is that the population remaining in the place of origin made fewer production inputs than resettlers, both before and after resettlement. For instance in Ningxia (see table 4-24), production inputs represented only 2.4 percent of total expenditure for those remaining, but represented 21.3 percent of total for resettlers before they moved, and 37.5 percent after. In Yunnan (see table 4-25), let us first compare the data in the place of origin. Production inputs represented 6.1 percent of the total expenditure for those who remained, and 9.8 percent for resettlers before they moved and 13.9 percent after.

**Table 4-24: Household expenditure structure in Ningxia (in yuan)**

		Agri. Prod. input	Electronic appliance s	Daily Consumption	Gifts	Medical care	School fees	Othe rs	Total
Population Remaining In the place of origin (in 2000)	Amount	78.2	136.0	1277.6	451.0	494.	710.3	52.4	3199.5
	%	2.4%	4.3%	39.9%	14.1%	15.4%	22.2%	1.6%	
Resettlers In place of origin (around 1996)	Amount	651.1	143.0	1000.4	384.7	324.1	405.3	142.1	3050.7
	%	21.3%	4.7%	32.7%	12.6%	10.6%	13.2%	4.6%	
Resettlers in resettled area (in 2000)	Amount	1630.2	161.1	1417.1	246.3	435.3	516.8	109.6	4516.3
	%	37.5%	3.7%	32.6%	5.7%	10%	11.9%	2.5%	

**Table 4-25: Household Expenditure Structure in Yunnan (in yuan)**

		Agri. Prod. input	Electronic appliances	Daily consumption	Gifts	Medical care	School fees	Others	Total
Population remaining in the place of origin (in 2000)	Amount %	69.5	11.3	626.6	31	118	109.3	170.3	1136
		6.1%	1%	55.2%	2.7%	10.4%	9.6%	15%	
Resettlers In place of Origin (average in 1999)	Amount %	211	121.5	639.2	78.5	178.2	624.2	294.5	2147.1
		9.8%	5.7%	29.8%	3.7%	8.3%	29.1%	3.4%	
Resettlers In the resettled area (in 2000)	Amount %	306.6	169.6	732.5	120.8	337	533.7	3.4	2203.6
		13.9%	7.7%	33.2%	5.5%	15.3%	24.2%	0.2%	
Local Population in the resettled area (in 2000)	Amount %	383.6	154	516.1	46.5	343.1	90.1	227.8	1761.2
		21.8%	8.7%	29.3%	2.6%	19.5%	5.1%	12.9 %	

*Crop Profitability*

The resettlement area in Ningxia is a typical irrigation area. The water is drawn from the Yellow River. The production pattern of is that of modern irrigated farming, that is, high input and high output agriculture. In the field survey, resettlers said that a very important reason for moving was to seek "sweat for sweet". It signified that they were sure they would gain a good harvest if they worked hard because irrigation could ensure a good yield. Farmers referred to production in their place of origin as "food given by God", since they felt that production was not in their own hands but at the mercy of the weather and in particular the rains.. We can see from Table 4-26 that unit currency output in the resettlement area is one and half times higher than in the place of origin. We can see clearly that agricultural profitability is a very important pulling force for many farmers to move.

**Table 4-26: Cost/benefit analysis of maize production in Ningxia**

	Input per land unit/1 mu (yuan)						Total input per land unit/ (yuan/mu)	Output per land unit (kg/mu)	Unit Currency Output (kg/yuan)
	Seed	Fertilizer	Pesticide	Irrigation	Hired labor	Tax			
In place of origin	30	45	6	0	0	6	87	75	0.85
In the resettlement area	15	101	24	118	46	2	306	400	1.3

#### 4.4 Accessibility

##### *Access to land and food security*

In poor areas, food security very often relies on land area and its productivity. This is certainly true in Ningxia and Yunnan. A strong argument in support of resettlement is that the reduction in population will reduce pressures on community resources, including water, wood for fuel, and arable land. However, this assumption can only be true if resources exist and if these resources are re-allocated among the population remaining after the resettlement.

The land situation in Ningxia and in Yunnan is quite different. The one is a cross-county resettlement from a dryland mountain area to irrigated land. The other takes place within the border of one administrative village with movement from dryland, mountainous grazing areas, to a valley with paddy fields. There was allocation or purchase of irrigated land in the resettlement area in Ningxia. However, there was no change in land possession in Yunnan.

The land area for resettlers before resettlement in Ningxia was similar to that for the remaining population. On average, each resettler household had 22.6 mu (1.5 ha) of dryland and those remaining had 24.6 mu (1.64 ha) (see table 4-27). After resettlement, resettler households were given less land - only 7.4 mu (0.49 ha) per household - but this was irrigated land and potentially more productive (see table 4-27). Arrangements may vary in different areas concerning how to deal with the land left behind. In Xiapu Village of Ningxia, no clear policy was laid down on how to handle the land. What happened was

that resettlers left their arable land to their relatives so that they could keep access to the production or other benefits of the land under informal family arrangements. Hence, population reduction following resettlement did not create more living space to the remaining population in general, only to the relatives of the resettlers who were able to use the arable land that the resettlers left behind.

In the research village in Yunnan, there were no official changes taking place in land holding. No matter whether farmers stayed or moved, their land remained the same. Resettlers in Yunnan already had better land than the population remaining before resettlement. Having paddy fields or not is the predominant indicator of household well being (see table 4-3 and Table 4-4). Each resettler household had on average 2.2 mu (0.15 ha) paddy field before resettlement, and they continued to keep the same land after resettlement. The population remaining had only 0.35 mu (0.023 ha) paddy field per household on average (see table 28), and their situation will continue to be the same.

**Table 4-27: Farmers' access to land in Ningxia (mu/household)**

	Dry land	Paddy field	Irrigated land	Grassland	Vegetable land	Forest land
Population remaining in the place of origin	24.64	0	0	2.08	0.148	11.345
Resettlers in the place of origin	22.621	0	0	4	0	2.12
Resettlers in the resettlement area	0.04	0	7.4	0	0	0

**Table 4-28: Farmers' access to land in Yunnan (mu/household)**

	Dry land	Paddy field	Irrigated land	Grassland	Vegetable land	Forest land
Population remaining	11.07	0.35	0	0	0.543	1.55
Resettlers in the resettlement area	9.742	2.177	0	0	0.823	2.429
Local population in the resettlement area	7.71	1.758	0	0	0.297	1.945

Table 4-29 shows that the food security situation of resettlers has greatly improved in Ningxia. 86.8 percent of the resettlers have reasonable food self-sufficiency in the resettlement area. The level of food security increased by 47.3 percent in the 4 year period after resettlement. However, only 28.6 percent of the population remaining in the place of origin have food self-sufficiency.

**Table 4-29: Household food security in Ningxia**

	Food self-sufficient	
	No. of household	Percentage
Population remaining in the place of origin (in 2000)	12	28.6%
Resettlers in place of origin (around 1996)	15	39.5%
Resettlers in the resettlement area (in 2000)	33	86.8%

*Access to drinking water*

Resettlers have access better water sources in the resettlement area in Ningxia. They are able to collect water from a water tap located in the central place of the village. Water is supplied at particular times of day for several hours a day. The problem is that sometimes the water supply stops for several days without any forewarning. In the place of origin water came from both wells and tap water, but at present tap water is no longer available for most of the time due to a lack of water at source during the dry season. There is also a shortage of water in the wells during the dry season.

In Xiapu, the place of origin of Ningxia, access to drinking water has always been a problem. In September 1995, a drinking water project was implemented with financial support from the Poverty Alleviation Fund. The total investment was 250,000 yuan (about 31,000 US\$). Two hundred thousand yuan (about 25,000 US\$) was used for purchase of facilities, and 50,000 yuan (about 6,000 US\$) was used for 'food for labor'. After completion of the project, 200 households had access to tapped drinking water from 1995 to 1999. However, since that time, there has been no water during the dry season. The source of water for the project was an underground spring but the deterioration in the natural environment caused a decrease in its volume and perhaps even the disappearance of the water source. Under such circumstance, no matter how many people move out, those who remain will still have insufficient drinking water.

Resettlers in Yunnan also have better water resources than those in the place of origin. A water tank was built in the resettlement area from which water is piped to a tap in the center of the village. But the supply of water is not guaranteed. No warning or explanation is given before an interruption in supply. Resettlers collect water from wells when there is no water which



provide a sufficient supply all year round. The place of origin continues to suffer from a water shortage. There are two water sources there. One is rainwater, the other one is spring water. During the rainy season from May to November, farmers collect rainwater as drinking water. During the dry season from December to April, farmers go to the mountain to collect spring water.

*Access to markets and labor input in market activity*

Resettlers in Ningxia have much better access to markets in terms of distance than those in the place of origin. Resettlers now go to market much more often than their compatriots in the place of origin. The distance to the marketplace is 2 km in the resettlement area instead of 5 kilometers in the place of origin. The frequency of going to market has more than doubled (see Table 30).

Resettlers in Yunnan also have much better access to market in terms of distance than in the place of origin, so that they also go to the market place much more often than before. The distance to the marketplace is only 200 meters in the resettlement area in Yunnan, but was 28 km in the place of origin. Resettlers go to marketplace about 10 times more than they used to, going once every 5 days. The population remaining in the place of origin only goes to the marketplace once every 48 days on average (see table 30).

**Table 4-30: Access to market and farmers' frequency of going to market place in Ningxia and Yunnan**

	Ningxia		Yunnan	
	Distance	Frequency	Distance	Frequency
Population remaining in place of origin	5 km	Once every 45 days	28 km	Once every 48 days
Resettlers in the resettlement area	2 km	Once every 20 days	200 meters	Once every 5 days

*The Change of different gender's involvement in market activity in Yunnan*

With the increased frequency of going to the marketplace in the resettlement areas, women in the resettlement areas get involved in market activities more often than those in the place of origin. In the place of origin, women only share 27 percent of the market activities, but in the resettlement area, women share more than half (51.5 percent) of the market activities (see table 31).

**Table 4-31: Different gender's involvement in market activity in Yunnan**

	Frequency to the marketplace (times per year per household)	Women's frequency to marketplace	
		Frequency	Share
Population remaining in the place of origin (in 2000)	11	2	17.8%
Resettlers in the place of origin (in 1999)	8	2	27%
Resettlers in the resettlement area (in 2000)	30	16	51.1%

*Access to loans*

The loan status presented in Table 4-32 and 4-33 includes both formal loan and informal loan. Table 4-32 shows: (1) People in both places of origin and in the resettlement area in Ningxia have access to loan because almost 90 percent of interviewees in both places borrowed loans; (2) Resettlers in the resettlement area have higher demand for cash flow so that their loan size is bigger than population remaining in the place of origin. Table 4-33 shows: (1) People in the resettlement area in Yunnan have much better access to loans because more than 90 percent of the interviewees from resettlement area had borrowed

money. Only one third of the interviewees from place of origin borrowed loans.

According to the field interview, both commercial loans and informal loans played very important role in Ningxia in terms of loan size and number of people who borrowed loans from each channel. About half of the households both in the resettlement area and in place of origin borrowed money from either of the two channels. However, in Yunnan, informal loans played a much more important role than commercial loans for farmers in both the place of origin and in the resettlement area. In the place of origin in Yunnan, none of the interviewees borrowed money from the formal system, but one third of the interviewees borrowed money from informal sources. The average loan size was 905 yuan. In the resettlement areas in Yunnan, about two thirds of the resettlers borrowed money from informal sources and the average loan size was 4442 yuan. About one third of the resettlers borrowed money using commercial loans and the average loan size was 10167 yuan.

**Table 4-32: Loan status in Ningxia**

	Households with loan		Average loan size (yuan)
	Number	%	
Population remaining in the place of origin in 2000 ( N=42 )	37	88.1%	2279*
Resettlers in place of origin around 1996 (N=38)	30	78.9%	1273
Resettlers in the resettlement area in 2000 (N=38)	34	89.5%	2760

*The number is the average of 36 households. The loan that one household borrowed was not included in the average because the loan size is 80000 yuan.*

**Table 4-33: Loan status in Yunnan**

	Households with loan		Average loan size (yuan)
	Number	%	
Population remaining in the place of origin in 2000 (N=30)	10	33.3	905
Resettlers in place of origin in 1999 (N=31)	14	45.2	3514
Resettlers in the resettlement area in 2000 (N=31)	28	90.3	6282
Local population in the resettlement area in 2000 (N=14)	12	85.7	3576

*Access to communication*

Telephone communication is a quick and reliable way of communication in modern society. Communication through face-to-face contact is the most backward way for long-distance communication mostly because it takes too long for the message to arrive. In this research, face-to-face contact includes personal contact and passing messages through a third person. The question that we asked about methods of communication in the questionnaire is that which is the most frequently method that you use for your long distance communication.

Resettlers in Ningxia (see table 4-34) now have better methods of communication than the population remaining in the places of origin. Both the population remaining and resettlers, before their resettlement, relied on face-to-face communication as a major way to contact the outside world. Eighty-two point nine percent of the population remaining in the place of origin mainly uses face-to-face contact for their communications. Sixty-nine point two percent of resettlers, before resettlement, used the same method for most communication. However, now 52.6 percent of resettlers use the telephone for most of their communication. Forty-four point seven percent of resettlers still mainly rely on face-to-face contact.

The same trend is evident in Yunnan. Resettlers in Yunnan have now improved their methods of communication (see table 4-35). No farmers remaining in the place of origin in Yunnan have access to telephone. But, 35.5 percent of resettlers in the resettlement area use telephone as their major communication method to the outside.

**Table 4-34: Ways to reach the outside in Ningxia**

	By telephone		By mail		Face to Face Contact	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	househol		househol		househol	
	ds		ds		ds	
Population remaining in the place of origin (N= 41)	7	17.1%	0	0	34	82.9%
Resettlers in place of origin (N= 37)	5	13.5%	6	16.2%	26	70.2%
Resettlers in Resettlement site (N= 38)	20	52.6%	1	2.6%	17	44.7%

**Table 4-35: Ways to reach the outside in Yunnan**

	By telephone		By mail		Face to Face Contact	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	househol ds		househol ds		househol ds	
Population remaining in the place of origin (N= 41)	0	0	2	6.7%	28	93.3%
Resettlers in place of origin (N= 37)	1	3.2%	4	12.9%	26	83.9%
Resettlers in Resettlement site (N= 38)	11	35.5%	3	9.7%	17	54.8%

*Access to education*

Resettlers have better access to education than the population remaining in the places of origin in Ningxia. In the place of origin in Ningxia, the primary school is located 1 km away from the interviewed village. Middle school is located 7 km away. In the resettlement area, in Ningxia, primary school is located 500 meters away, and middle school is located in 1 km away.

The same as in Ningxia, Resettlers in Yunnan have also better access to education. In the place of origin in Yunnan, primary school is located in 1 km away, and middle school is located in about 28 km away. In the resettlement area in Yunnan, both primary school and middle school are located in 1 km away.

**4.5 Changes in the Gender Division of Labor**

Resettlement usually involves changes in production activities due to differences in production structure in the different areas. These differences may include differences in cropping patterns and the share of labor allocated to different production activities within the overall distribution of labor. Changes in production activities not only bring about changes in household livelihoods and in patterns of income and expenditure structures, as already described in previous sections, but also changes in the everyday lives of women and men.

Resettlers have undergone different kinds of changes in production structure in Ningxia and Yunnan, the former being affected fundamentally because of the shift from rainfed to irrigated agriculture (Tables 4-36, 4-37 and 4-38), and the latter retaining the same land type and cropping system, though their income and production structure underwent some change (Table 4-23).

In this section, I examine changes in production structure and labor input in Ningxia but not in Yunnan. The reason for this is that resettlers in Yunnan are recent-comers and have only one year in the resettlement area. It is therefore too early to identify any significant trend.

All policies and official discourse relating to resettlement projects ignore the distinction between men and women, treating them instead as members of an indivisible household unit. In reality, however, women and men are often affected differently by the same projects. Thus, in this section, I not only consider general differences in production structure between places of origin and resettlement areas but I also highlight the changed involvement of women and men in the various production activities.

Tables 4-37 and 4-38 show clearly the differences in crop production and their impact on the labor requirements for the different crops in Ningxia. Table 4-36 summarizes the total labor requirement and women's labor obligations. In the place of origin, women are responsible for 60 percent of total cropping activities or about 203 days which makes up about two-thirds of their entire labor time; whereas, in comparison, men provide 40 percent or about 137 days which constitutes about one third of their entire labor time. In contrast, in the resettlement area the total labor requirement for crops is reduced, due to the small size of the household plot and to a less diversified cropping system. This also means that farmers are not able to obtain access to additional land even though they may have surplus agricultural labor. Thus in the resettlement area, women share 66 percent of total cropping activities or about 39 days, for which they contribute only about one tenth of their total labor time; whereas men provide only 34 percent of total cropping activities or a total of 20 days, which adds up to 5 percent of their entire labor time. Although, overall, women continue to supply by far the larger input into agricultural activities, both male and female labor requirements are considerably reduced.

**Table 4-36: Gender division of labor in crop production in Ningxia**

	Labor Required	Crop Production	
		Women's Share	Women's Labor input
In Place of origin	339 days	60%	About 203 days
In the resettlement area	59 days	66%	39 days

**Table 4-37: Seasonal Crop Calendar and Gender Division of Labor in the Original Place in Ningxia**

	Average Area per House-hold (mu)	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Wheat	6.0		Land leveling 2 days M:70% F:30%	Sowing 0.5 day M:70% F:30%	Weeding 4 days M:0 F:100%	Pesticide App 2 days M:0 F:100%	Harvest 2 days M: 50% F: 50%	Plough 4 days M:100% F: 0				Fertilizer 30 days M:30% F: 70%	
Flax	3.4		Land leveling 2 days M:70% F:30%	Sowing 0.5 day M:70% F:30%						Harvest 2 days M:50% F:50%			
Potato	6.2			Sowing 2 days M:70% F:30%					Harvest 2 days M:50% F:50%	Plough 2 days M:100% F: 0			
Mizi	2.4				Sowing 2 days M:70% F:30%	Weeding 4 days M: 0 F: 100%	Harvest 2 days M:50% F:50%						
Off-farm labor		Many male labors go for off-farm activities from March to June and from August to October.											

*Labor input figure in the table refer to labor input for each land unit*

Table 4-38: Seasonal Crop Calendar and Gender Division of Labor in the Resettlement Area in Ningxia

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	August	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Maize	Plough 0.5 day M:70% F:30%		Sowing 3 days M:50% F:50%	— Weeding and fertilizer 20 days M:20% F: 80%				Harvest 7 days M:40% F:60%	Cutting straw 4 days M:0 F:100%			
				8 times of irrigation every 20 days since Apr., it takes about 2 hours every time, both men and women will join when they are available.								
Wheat	Sowing 1 day M:30% F:70%			— Weeding and fertilizer 4 days M:0 F:100%	— Harvest 7 days M:40% F:60%							
Off- farm labor	Most male labors look for off-farm activities all year round when they finish their own agricultural work at home.											

Labor input for 8 mu



There are also big differences in livestock production between the place of origin and the resettlement area, since the purpose of animal raising is different. In the place of origin, animal raising is primarily for animal power, while in the resettlement area it generates income and provides meat for consumption. Women's labor input in animal production is double that of the place of origin. In the place of origin, livestock husbandry is not developed due to the low production of grain. Low production of grain results in lack of food and straw for feeding animals so that the number of animals is relatively small in the places of origin. But many households do raise animals for animal power because they need it for carrying goods up and down the mountain roads and paths.

In the resettlement area, most households have a surplus of food to feed the animals. Many households raise chickens and ducks, but they are not able to raise cattle or other large animals because there is no space in the home yard. In the place of origin, it takes women about an hour every day to take care of animals and sometimes men also share the task when at home. In contrast, in the resettlement area it takes about three hours every day for women to take care of the animals and men hardly ever look after them, even if they are available.

In both places of origin and resettlement areas, off-farm activity or wage labor is a major household source of cash income, and mostly men who engage in such activities. In the places of origin, male laborers spend between 5 to 7 months working off the farm. The types of activity range from one person to another and from time to time, but they include construction work and mining mainly in and around Yinchuan (the capital city of Ningxia), Xinjiang and Inner Mongolia. The distance traveled to obtain off-farm work is considerable so workers do not return home very often. They prefer to save on transportation costs and travel time. In the resettlement area, male laborers engage in wage labor throughout the year on two large state-owned farms located close to their homes, where there is a regular demand for agricultural labor.

#### **4.6 Socio-economic Vulnerability in the Resettlement Area**

The results of a farmer group discussion in the resettlement area of Ningxia are recorded in table 4-39. The purpose of the exercise was to obtain a general idea of how farmers understood their own situation and what major problems they faced. Such knowledge is important in order to understand the complexity of the current livelihoods of resettled farmers and their households. It is important to point out that not all resettlers moved at the same time: some came earlier and much later. Many arrived to observe the resettlement area several times before they finally made their move. Hence latecomers where

able to get to know some of the strengths, weaknesses and risks before they decided to move. And in the end, all resettlers, it seems, made their decision based on some kind of 'trade-off' model, that is, in every single case they came to the conclusion that they believed that they would gain more in moving than they might lose in staying put.

Having irrigation water available is the most attractive element to resettlers when deciding to move. Having irrigation water means food and income. However, from the 'strength, weakness and risk' analysis, we can see that this most attractive element also involves high risk, since crops can be damaged when the water supply is insufficient. Water supply problems may be caused by many different reasons; for example, unstable electricity supply, blocked irrigation ditches, slow water flow, a small volume of water, burnt out water pump, etc. In the field survey, a farmer called Ma Yongzhen told us that he had lost in crop production due to irrigation problems. He explained:

*"In Spring of 1997, the water supply suddenly stopped because the transformer was damaged due to overloading. This was caused by a seized-up water pump. The water pump was jammed by mud because of the small quantity of available water. We normally apply chemical fertilizer before we irrigate our crops. But crops get burned to death if no water is applied. Such sudden interruption of the supply of water for irrigation caused tremendous crop losses that year. Normally the yields in my field can reach 350 kg/mu, but the harvest was only 50 kg/mu that year."*

Table 4-39 provides an estimate of the loss of Mr. Ma's crop production in 1997 due to this irrigation problem.

**Table 4-39: The loss of Ma Yongzheng' crop production due to irrigation problem**

Unit input	Unit output		Per unit loss	No. of units	Total loss
	Expected output	Actual output			
192 yuan	350 yuan	50 yuan	164 yuan + 300kg grain	4	656 yuan +1200kg grain

Irrigation problems are not the only risks. Pests and diseases are also a great risk in mono-production systems. For example, in 1999, pests and diseases spread throughout the whole village. Average maize production decreased to 100 kg/mu., even though production had been increasing since 1995 after the irrigation system begun functioning (see table 3-8 in chapter three).

The following table summarises the strength, weakness and risks that resettlers experienced in their lives in the resettlement area.

**Table 4-40: Strength, weakness and risk analysis by resettled farmers in Ningxia**

Aspects	Strength	Weakness	Risk
Irrigation agriculture	Much higher output than dry land, output is assured as long as input is made, food security is assured.	Input is too high, especially irrigation water fees, requires intensive labor input, especially irrigation management for every half month during busy season	Water supply cannot meet water requirement, sometimes, the insufficient water supply caused reduced harvest.
Mushroom production	Very high economic return, increased income	Price is unstable, requires intensive labor input, quality of seeds are not guaranteed, low technical level of farmers, plague of insect pest	Lack of technical service and other related services
Wage labor	Many available Opportunities, widened income Sources	Wage labor supply is more than demand	Money is not paid on time
Drinking water	Water tank and collection point is very close, good water quality	Collection points are not enough, water is only Supplied twice every day	Sometimes water is not supplied, which happened 2 to 3 times every month when there was no water for 3 to 4 days every time. For example, in August 2001, water supply stopped 6 times, water was not supplied for 7 days on one of those occasions.
Education	Quality is higher than in place of origin, better equipment and better management	Higher school fees	Drop-off due to higher School fee

#### 4.7 Summary

Certain clear messages can be drawn from this summary of findings about the outcomes of resettlement. It was predominately those who already had some economic advantage that resettled; and it was those who resettled that benefited from the opportunities to achieve better incomes, food security, access to drinking water and to improved social infrastructure. In addition, the

summary stresses the differences experienced by female as against male resettlers.

*Who have resettled?*

**Those who are resettled in Ningxia have the following characteristics:**

- Those with better economic status moved. The Household Sorting result shows that, of the total number of those who resettled in the sub-village in the place of origin in Ningxia, 96% were above the middle economic level, of whom half fell into the category of the better-off. Only 4% came from the poorer farmer category (see table 4-1).
- The resettlers tended to have smaller size household. As seen in table 4-9, the percentage of larger size households (i.e. those with 6 or more members) was much smaller in the resettlement area.
- Younger people (i.e. those up to age 45) moved, although a considerable number of older people also did so (see table 4-11).
- Those who moved, on average, have higher educational levels. As shown in table 4-16, about half of the population (47 percent) in the place of origin are illiterate, whereas 65 percent of resettlers have primary or secondary schooling.

**Those who are resettled in Yunnan have the following features:**

- Those with better economic status moved. The results of the PRA exercise indicate that more than half (55 percent) of the resettlers were better-off farmers in their communities of origin. Most fell above the middle level economically (87 percent) and far fewer (14 percent) were poor farmers in their communities of origin (see table 4-5).
- Those with better arable land moved. Resettlers had better land holdings before their resettlement than the population that remained in Yunnan. Possession of paddy fields is the predominant indicator for household well being (see tables 4-3 and 4-4). Each resettled household had on average 2.2 mu paddy fields before resettlement. They continue to keep the same landholdings after the resettlement. The population remaining only had 0.35 mu paddy field per household (see table 4-28).
- Those who moved had, on average, much higher educational levels (see table 4-17).

*How have resettlers benefited?*

**Those who resettled in Ningxia have benefited in respect to the following criteria:**

(1) Net cash income: Resettlers have improved their economic situation after resettlement since they now make higher net cash income than they did in the place of origin. Household annual net cash income of resettlers in Ningxia increased on average by 128 yuan, every year, after 4 years of resettlement (see table 4-18).

(2) Household Assets: Resettlers in Ningxia have improved the value of their productive fixed assets over the years in the resettlement area (see table 4-20).

(3) Food Security: Resettlers have a much better food security situation than those who remained behind. 86.8 percent of the resettlers are food self-sufficient. In contrast, only 28.6 percent of the population remaining in the place of origin have achieved food self-sufficiency. The level of food security has increased by 47.3 percent in the 4-year period after resettlement (see table 4-29).

(4) Access to Drinking Water: Resettlers have access to better water sources than those that remaining behind. Resettlers have access to tap water most of the time, whereas the population remaining in the place of origin only has access to well water during the rainy season.

(5) Access to Land: Resettlers have access to irrigated land, while those remaining behind only have dry land. The irrigated land is much more productive than the dry land: the unit of currency output of maize production in the resettlement area is one and half times higher than that in the place of origin (see table 4-26).

(6) Access to the Market: Resettlers in Ningxia have much better access to markets in terms of the distance to the marketplace than those remaining in the place of origin. Resettlers now go to market much more often than those who did not resettle. The distance to the marketplace is 2 km in the resettlement area in Ningxia, but is 5 km in the place of origin. Such privileged access allows resettlers to visit the marketplace more than twice as before (see table 4-30).

(7) Access to Communication. Resettlers in Ningxia now have better communications than the population remaining in the place of origin. Before resettlement, resettlers relied on face-to-face communication as the major way

of contacting the outside world. Now more than half (52.6 percent) of the resettlers use telephones for most of their communications (see table 4-34).

(8) Access to Education: Resettlers have better access to education than the population remaining in the place of origin in Ningxia. In the place of origin, the primary school is located 1 km away from the village and the middle school some 7 km away. In the resettlement areas, the primary school is located 500 meters away and the middle school only 1 km. Furthermore, farmers reflected that the quality of education in the resettlement area is so much better than that in the place of origin.

Those who resettled in Yunnan have benefited in respect to the following criteria. It is too early to make any assessment of how resettlers have benefited at household level in Yunnan because they only moved about a year ago. Hence, the following summary points only reflect on changes at community level.

(1) Market: Resettlers in Yunnan have much better access to the market in terms of distance to the marketplace than those remaining in their place of origin, and they visit it much more frequently than they did before (see table 4-30). The distance is only 200 meters from the resettlement area in Yunnan, but is 28 km from the place of origin. Resettlers frequent the marketplace about 10 times more often than do the population remaining in the place of origin. On average resettlers go every five days as against 48 days for those living in the place of origin.

(2) Communication: Resettlers have improved their methods of communication (see table 4-35). No farmers remaining in the place of origin in Yunnan have access to telephone; but 35.5 percent of resettlers use the telephone as their major means of communication with the outside.

(3) Education: Resettlers have better access to education. In the place of origin in Yunnan, the primary school is located 1 km away, and the middle school about 28 km away, whereas in the resettlement area, both schools are located at any easy distance of 1 km.

(4) Farmers generally considered the quality of education in resettlement area to be much better than that in the place of origin.

*Changes in Women's and Men's Lives after Resettlement*

Both women and men have encountered tremendous changes in their lives following resettlement. Evaluation of the impact of the changes on women and men's lives can only be satisfactorily attempted after some years of resettlement. Nevertheless, what we can do is to foresee some gender impacts and to illustrate some activity changes after resettlement.

It is envisaged that girls' education will eventually improve in the resettlement areas of both Ningxia and Yunnan. Some case studies show that resettlement households have a tendency towards having fewer children in each family. In the place of origin, where families have more children, family educational resources tend to focus on boys' rather than girls' education when family resources are limited. In the resettlement areas, family educational resources may be used for the education of both boys and girls when the family's financial status is improved and there are fewer children to be supported. For example, Mr. Xi Qi, who is now living in Moon village but is originally from Xiapu Village, said in the field interview:

*"I feel ashamed when I think about my hometown where people raise 6 and 7 children but feed them with potatoes. People here only have 2 to 3 children, but they feed them with good food, even fish, which I have never had in my life, and they provide them with good education. I now have one boy and one girl. I will support them to go to school as long as they are capable."*

It is also foreseen that women's health status will eventually be improved in both resettlement areas in Ningxia and Yunnan. Several factors are contributing to this: (1) Women have better access to health services, especially during their period of pregnancy and child delivery; (2) The heavy workload of women has reduced, even though the length of their working hours may remain the same.

Households in both Ningxia and Yunnan will encounter changes in agricultural activities. For the same reasons as mentioned above, only the changes in Ningxia will be discussed here. In their place of origin in Ningxia, women devoted two-thirds of their labor time to crop production, whilst the men contributed only one third. In contrast, in the resettlement area, women devoted around 10 percent of their entire labor time to crop production and men only 5 percent. On the other hand, women's labor input into animal production doubled as compared with their commitment in their place of origin. In the place of origin, it took women about an hour every day to take care of animals and men also sometimes share tasks when they were at home. This differs from the resettlement area, where it is not unusual for women to spend three hours a day on this task, and usually without the assistance of the men.

One clear change in women and men's lives in Yunnan, however, is the increased involvement of women in market activities. The interviews indicated that, while women shared only 27% of these activities in the place of origin, in the settlement area they were responsible for half (51.5 %). Hence in the future it is likely that we will witness a burgeoning of trading and market enterprises among women.



## **The Policy Dimension of Resettlement Projects - Dichotomy of declared aims and objectives pursued**

### **Introduction**

In chapter four I analysed the outcome of the resettlement projects, exploring the key questions of who has benefited and in what ways. The findings showed that in both Ningxia and Yunnan the resettlers belonged, in large part, to the better-off groups from the places of origin who were now able to enjoy the much improved natural resources, infrastructure and cash income levels. In short, it was those who had already achieved better access to land and resources and a relatively higher standard of living that reaped the advantages of resettlement. This raises the question of whether this outcome was in line with the primary objectives of a government programme that was aimed at poverty alleviation.

The present chapter examines why precisely should policies and projects aimed at poverty reduction end up benefiting the better-off rather than the poorer farmers. My central argument hinges on the paradoxical adoption from the outset of the project of both 'economic growth' and 'poverty reduction' objectives. Once this was manifest, it was only a matter of time before the poverty reduction objective was overshadowed and finally displaced by the pursuit of the economic growth objective. It is therefore important to distinguish between these two kinds of aims and justifications. On the basis of this, the chapter concludes by stressing that while resettlement seems appropriate for tackling problems of regional development, the same cannot be said for achieving poverty reduction.

This chapter falls into two parts. Part I is a detailed description of policies and policy implementation. It covers information at national and regional/provincial level, and at the level of the research sites. The information is drawn from government documents, secondary data and interviews with government officials. There are four main sections. The first introduces the origin of government-organized voluntary resettlement projects in China and the second reviews national level policies and their implementation. This is followed in the third and fourth sections by accounts of the financial support and implementation of such projects in Ningxia and Yunnan. Part II builds upon the empirical findings and analysis of these two case studies in order to offer a research-based assessment of Chinese resettlement policy.

## **Part I: Official Version of Policy and Its Implementation**

### **5.1 Origin of government-organized voluntary resettlement projects in China**

The origin of the government-organized voluntary resettlement projects of this study is two-fold. One stems from a local initiative, the other from a national program. The original ideas for such efforts were to improve infrastructure and to construct irrigation in the plains in order to resettle population from the poor, dry mountainous areas. Irrigation infrastructure for the improvement of crop production and the movement of population to areas with better agricultural conditions is part of human history. Perhaps what is different in the origin of the type of activities that I refer to are the following features. They have a short time scope – all have occurred in current Chinese history. They are organized and supported by central and provincial/regional governments in the name of poverty reduction. They are voluntary in nature. The local initiative for such resettlement projects is the Water Pumping Program of Tongxin County of Ningxia. The national initiative is the “Three Xi Fund” program.<sup>1</sup>

#### *The water pumping program of Tongxin County of Ningxia<sup>2</sup>*

The Policy formulation of the ‘Three Xi Fund’ was enlightened by a water-pumping project called the ‘Water Pumping Program of Tongxin County of Ningxia’. This program started in June 1975 and included two sub-projects – the ‘Tongxin Water-pumping System’ (started in June 1975), and the ‘Guhai Water-pumping System’ (started in 1978). The overall project infrastructure was completed in 1987 with a total investment of 178.85 million yuan. The total irrigated land reached 240,000 mu (16,000 ha). This project was implemented in a place where there was a vast area of dryland. After the completion of the water-pumping program in Tongxin County, land productivity increased from 50-80 kg/mu (750-1200 kg/ha) to 600-800 kg/mu (9000-12000 kg/ha). The total beneficiary area covered 350 thousand square meters, which covered 52 administrative villages, 17,100 households and 85,200 people. Among those who benefited, 35,200 (6,700 households) were already living in the area and 50,000 (10,400 households) were resettlers.

<sup>1</sup> This paragraph presents views of the author.

<sup>2</sup> Source of Information: “Report on Resettlement and Construction of the Water-pumping Project of Tongxin” by Party Committee of Tongxi County and People’s Government of Tongxin in October 1996.

*The "Three Xi" Fund for Poverty Alleviation*<sup>3</sup>

Government-organized voluntary resettlement for poverty alleviation originated in the Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region in 1983, the year in which the Chinese government made a special budget available to support poverty alleviation activities in the so-called "Three Xi regions" (all have Xi in their names, meaning 'west') and they include Xiji County, Haiyuan County and Guyuan County of Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region; Dingxi and Hexi Prefectures of Gansu Province. The Gusu provincial government put forward propaganda such as 'Utilize the advantage of Hexi, assist the poor of Dingxi'. It meant that the improvement of irrigation infrastructure would be carried out in Hexi to accommodate the resettlement of population from the dry land mountainous area of Dingxi. The Ningxi Government also formulated a similar strategy. It specified two approaches in its strategy: one the local development approach, and the other, the alternative (resettlement) approach. The total population of Xiji, Haiyuan and Guyuan Counties were 1.2-1.3 million. It was believed that 700-800,000 people could improve their living standards by improving the local infrastructure and farming techniques. Resettlement was believed to be the only way to alleviate the situation of poverty for the rest of the population, that is some 400-500,000 people living in places with no access to transportation, lacking water resources, suffering from severe natural disasters, a high altitude, and a lack of arable land.

**5.2 Resettlement Policy and Its Implementation at National Level<sup>4</sup>**

China practices a centralised management and institutional system wherein central government wields a big influence at regional and local levels. However, this is not to say that the implementation of policy is linear but rather a mixed process of adoption, accommodation, misunderstanding and, at times, distortion of central government policy at lower levels<sup>5</sup>.

*Recognition of Resettlement for Poverty Reduction at National Level in the 1990s*

The "Three Xi Development" has always been given positive remarks by local and central government. The general impacts were summarized as (1) the resettled population is no longer in absolute poverty soon after the

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<sup>3</sup> Source of information: "Report on Resettlement and Construction of the Water-pumping Project of Tongxin" by Party Committee of Tongxi County and People's Government of Tongxin in October 1996

<sup>4</sup> Source of information: "Theory and Practice of China's Resettlement for Poverty Reduction", by Poverty Alleviation Office of State Council, Edition of Selected Materials about Resettlement for Poverty Reduction of National Workshop on Resettlement for Poverty Reduction and Development in 21<sup>st</sup> Century" in Guanxi, December 2000

<sup>5</sup> This paragraph presents the view of the author.

resettlement. Most of the resettlement population made the move in the first year, settled in the second year and had enough to feed and to clothe themselves by the third year. So resettlement is considered as both a long and short-term way to solve poverty. (2) Population pressure in the place of origin is reduced. After moving out part of the population environmental problems can gradually be resolved, and the return of arable land to grassland and forestry become possible. (3) The wasteland and water resources of the resettlement areas can be fully utilized.

With the recognition of such positive impacts, resettlement for poverty reduction and development was further legitimized by the '8-7 Poverty Alleviation Program' issued by central government in 1994, a program to alleviate the poverty of 80 million poor people within a period of seven years. The program states that *'resettlement is recommended for population living in areas where productive and living conditions are difficult for survival and development'*.

#### *Resettlement Project Implementation across China*

With the policy support of central government, many provinces and regions started resettlement projects in the mid-1990s onwards. Table 5-1 provides a summary of the investment and population resettled in 16 provinces of China based on available statistics.

**Table 5-1: Government-organized voluntary resettlement in China's 16 Provinces/Regions**

Province/ Region	Starting year	Resettled population (thousand)	Population to be resettled in overall plan (thousand)	Subsidy per person (yuan)	Investment made (100 million yuan)	Total investment needed (100 million yuan)
Gansu	1983	560.92	500	463	2.64	30
Ningxia	1983	300	300	1000	2.87	3
Inner- Mongolia	1986	180	200	4500	5.3	10
Guangdong	1991	225	No information	1100	2.59	
Guangxi	1993	212.3	20	3500-4500	11	10
Guizhou	1994	85	300	1000	0.8	2.325
Sichuan	1994	25.8	100	1300	0.38	7.4
Qinghai	1994	130	130			
Xinjiang	1994	155.9	337.8	5000	7.62	30
Hebei	1994	72.7	46.7	3000-5000	6.344	2.5
Shanxi	1996	117	220	1000	0.81	6.6
Tibet	1996	43.2	300	8500	3.5	25.5
Hubei	1996	200	300			
Liaoning	1997	14	26	3000		1.7
Yunnan	1997	169	830	3000-6000	5.37	40
Shaanxi	1998	288	1226	2000	5.7	30
Total		2580	About 5000		About 56	About 200

Source: edition of selected materials on resettlement for poverty reduction from the 'National Workshop on Resettlement for Poverty Reduction and Development in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century', Guanxi, December 2000

The above table shows that many people are still to be resettled in the government-organized resettlement projects in the future. Although governments at different levels also recognise the many difficulties encountered in resettlement projects, they are convinced of the effectiveness of resettlement for poverty reduction and development.

### **5.3 Resettlement Policy and its Implementation in Ningxia**

#### *Policy and its implementation at regional level*

##### **Achievement made in Ningxia<sup>6</sup>**

Twenty-three resettlement areas were established in 16 years of effort from 1983 to 1999. All such areas have access to irrigation water. Of the 23-resettlement areas, 11 are intra-county, and 12 are inter-county. Of the eleven intra-county resettlements, six were on land reclamation sites that had previously been empty of population. Five were based on land reallocation, where resettlers were moved to areas where the average arable land area per household was higher and where, after improvement of existing irrigation systems, local government was able to reallocate land holdings and put aside arable land for resettlement.

Up to 1999, the total investment made had reached 287.27 million yuan (about 35 million US\$). Irrigated land accounted for 560 thousand mu (37.3 thousand ha) and the total resettled population numbered 216,885. The population already resident in the area that had locally benefited numbered 83,874.

##### **The provision of a policy framework from Central Government to Ningxia Regional Government<sup>7</sup>**

In the early 1990s, the Ningxia regional government was given the following policy framework and standard by the national government:

- Each resettler should be given an 80 yuan (about US\$ 10) subsidy for house construction and a timber quota of a half cubic meter with par value;
- Trucks should be arranged as and where possible to help resettlers to move. Later, this item was changed into a subsidy of 80-100 yuan (about US\$ 10-12) per household towards transportation costs.
- All kinds of taxes would be waived for the first five years after resettlement, including the agricultural tax paid in grain.
- Water rates would be waived for five years time after resettlement.

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<sup>6</sup> : "Theory and Practice of China's Resettlement for Poverty Reduction", by Poverty Alleviation Office of State Council, Edition of Selected Materials about Resettlement for Poverty Reduction of National Workshop on Resettlement for Poverty Reduction and Development in 21<sup>st</sup> Century" in Guanxi, December 2000

<sup>7</sup> Source of information: Interview of Mr. Ma Zhenjiang on August 16, 2001, the director of Division of Resettlement, Poverty Alleviation Office of Ningxia

- The infrastructure investment would be shared by different stakeholders according to the following principles: Regional government was responsible for making the investment in physical infrastructure such as water supply, electricity, roads and the main irrigation system. Respective administrative departments would be responsible for making investment in the social infrastructure such as schools, hospital and medical services, credit systems etc. The County Government of the place of origin would be responsible for providing subsidies to resettlers that took account of their difficulties over cash, food and production inputs in the very first year of resettlement. It is suggested to use "work-relief program" when county government has no enough financial capacity. Farmers and government should make joint investment in land levelling in the resettlement area.

#### **Regional government's principal supplementary policy<sup>8</sup>**

- Resettlers were allowed to keep their original homestead and arable land for three years, and were free to make a final decision on where to live at the end of the three-year period.
- Resettlers and the resettled areas would be under the administration of the county government of the places of origin, which was for eliminating the fears and feelings of insecurity of the resettlers.

#### **Targeting Process:<sup>9</sup>**

- Steps in the general targeting procedure of the resettlement program is:
- Identification of the resettlement area and corresponding places of origin.
- Allocation of quotas by regional government to selected county governments in places of origin.
- Allocation of quotas by county governments to township governments in places of origin. Quotas basically indicate how many people should be resettled every year from each selected township.
- Allocation of quotas by township authorities to village committees in places of origin. Quotas basically indicated how many people or households should be resettled.
- Farmers sign up their names.
- Village committees select eligible resettlers from those who have signed up.

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<sup>8</sup> Source of information: Interview of Mr. Ma Zhenjiang on August 16, 2001, the director of Division of Resettlement, Poverty Alleviation Office of Ningxia

<sup>9</sup> Source of information: Interview of Mr. Ma Zhenjiang on August 16, 2001, the director of Division of Resettlement, Poverty Alleviation Office of Ningxia

**Main regional criteria for those who would be eligible for resettlement<sup>10</sup>:**

- Poor households from poor areas
- Those who have observed family planning
- The more educated – where at least one family members has completed middle school education
- The younger population, in general they should be under 35 years old.
- Be hardworking.
- Resettlement application to be made in the name of the household (which meant resettlement was about household rather than individual resettlement).
- Those who suffered from dementia, were widowers, or simple-minded were not allowed to sign up.

The above-mentioned criteria were just the principal ones. The local authorities were allowed to formulate site-specific criteria.

**Policy changes in Ningxia in July 1997<sup>11</sup>**

In April 1997, a joint program was formulated between Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region and Fujian Province. Fujian, as a relatively richer province, made a commitment to invest in Ningxia for resettlement for poverty reduction and development project.

The criterion for household selection changed at this stage. The level of poverty was no longer used as a key criterion for selection. Those who were willing to move and who had the economic capacity to do so would be given the opportunity. In 1997, 2000 yuan (about 244 US\$) was required for getting resettlement permission. It was said that the money would be used for public infrastructure, such as digging wells, road construction and drinking water system.

**Policy changes in Ningxia in September 2000<sup>12</sup>**

Before September 2000, resettlement areas were under the administration of the county governments of the places of origin, even though the areas were located in the administrative border of other counties. Both governments and resettlement populations paid a high cost for such a management model. For many years, governments in the counties of origin insisted on administering the resettlement areas mainly because they could directly manage the earmarked

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<sup>10</sup> Source of information: Interview of Mr. Ma Zhenjiang on August 16, 2001, the director of Division of Resettlement, Poverty Alleviation Office of Ningxia

<sup>11</sup> The same as above

<sup>12</sup> The same as above



funds for resettlement. However, the effectiveness of the management was not encouraging because they lacked the knowledge to manage irrigated farming areas since their previous knowledge and experience was with dryland farming only. At the same time, there was insufficient cooperation and support from the county authorities in the resettlement areas and counties of origin. Since these authorities had no official roles in managing the resettlement areas, they were reluctant to get involvement when they were needed. Furthermore, the county government in the place of resettlement considered the resettled population to be a burden because they were much poorer than their own resident population. Neither did the authorities in the places of origin have great interest in the resettled population, because any investment in them made no contribution to the direct development of their own county. For solving these problems, on September 15 of 2000, the management of the resettlement area was officially transferred from the counties of origin to the resettlement counties for all 12 resettlement areas in Ningxia.<sup>13</sup>

*Policy and Its Implementation in Minning Resettlement Area and in the Research Site*

**Current development status of the resettlement area<sup>14</sup>**

The resettlement area is now officially named Minning Resettlement Area, named after the cooperation between Fujian Province (the abbreviation of Fujian Province in Chinese is 'Min') and Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region (whose abbreviation is 'Ning'). The other name of the area is Yuquanying Resettlement Area. It is named after the original landowner - Yuquanying State Farm. The total resettlement area covers 66 thousand mu (4,400 ha). It governs nine administrative villages and 50 sub-villages. Up to July 2001, the total resettlement population had reached 18.5 thousand, and the total number of households numbered 3,300. The total investment had reached 33.79 million yuan (4.12 million US\$), of which the central and regional government had invested 23.51 million yuan, and the Fujian Provincial Government 10.28 million yuan.

**The development objectives and overall plans of the Minning Resettlement Area<sup>15</sup>**

The overall development objectives of the resettlement area set by the government of Ningxia are the following:

<sup>13</sup> There are in total 12 inter-county resettlement programs in Ningxia.

<sup>14</sup> Source of information: Interview of Mr. Pu Zhenru on August 9, 2001, the director of Minning Development Zone of Yongning County of Ningxia Province

<sup>15</sup> Source of information: Interview of Mr. Pu Zhenru on August 9, 2001, the director of Mingning Development Zone of Yongning County of Ningxia Province

- To develop it into a demonstration area for resettlement for poverty alleviation;
- To develop it into a demonstration area of modern agriculture;
- To develop it into a demonstration area of industrialized agriculture;
- To develop it into a demonstration area of home yard production, through generating cash income from having high value crop production around the home yard.

#### **Settling process<sup>16</sup>:**

- **Registration.** After the completion of the targeting process described above, resettlers are selected. Those selected receive a resettlement permission certificate from the township government of the place of origin. With this certificate a resettler can go to the resettlement office for registration.
- **Land allocation.** Individual households will receive a piece of land for cultivation and to build a homestead: The location of the land is decided by lottery.

The total resettlement area has been divided into several administrative villages, and each administrative village is composed of several sub-villages consisting of about 50 households. A lottery is used for the allocation of land to resettlers because land quality differs from one plot to the other and issuing a site allocation by lot can avoid conflicts. Secondly, people from the same communities of origin tend to group together and this often leads to the development of clan power. A lottery ensures that people from different villages and townships will be intermixed. Thirdly, the grouping of people from different places helps to generate broader contact among resettlers.

#### **The resettlement process reviewed by a government official<sup>17</sup>**

Ma Zhenjiang, Director of the Division of Resettlement and Poverty Alleviation Office of Ningxia, in reviewing the resettlement process in the resettlement area stated that after the selection of resettlement households, a date for moving would be set. The Village Committee would arrange for trucks to collectively assist the movement of resettlement households. Normally, it was the strong laborers, mostly the men, that went first to the resettlement areas. They needed to prepare the basic living and farming conditions, such as house construction and land levelling, before moving the whole household. In the beginning, many

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<sup>16</sup> Source of information: Interview of Mr. Pu Zhenru on August 9, 2001, the director of Mingning Development Zone of Yongning County of Ningxia Province

<sup>17</sup> : Interview of Mr. Ma Zhenjiang on August 16, 2001, the director of Division of Resettlement, Poverty Alleviation Office of Ningxia

resettlers just dug pits and covered them with plastic as temporary places to stay. Then they started to build houses and level land. Government officials from the places of origin had to come with the resettlers. They were responsible for the farmers' technical training. Officially recognized resettlers would be given a subsidy, official residential permission, and homestead and arable land. Those who resettled without official permission had to take full responsibility for themselves and take the risks associated with having no officially recognized status. Some resettlers decided to move back to their places of origin after living in the resettlement area for sometime and in such cases, often sold their land and houses to someone else even though such land trading was illegal. There were also cases where resettlers decided not to farm but to engage in off-farm activities in nearby areas.

In conclusion, the post-resettlement population could be categorized into three types: (1) Resettlers who lived in the resettlement areas. Some focus on farming activities, and others focus on non-farming or off-farming activities; (2) People who travelled back and forth, keeping on their livelihoods in both places of origin and the resettlement area, and thus committing their time to both places. (3) Returnees who decide to go back to their places of origin after living in the resettlement areas for a period.

#### **Brief profile of the development of the Resettlement Area<sup>18</sup>**

- 1990: a resolution was passed to establish the Yuquanying Resettlement Area and the Resettlement Office of Xiji County was set up to implement the plan. At that time, about 20 staff from different government bureaux, agricultural, livestock, forestry and construction, formed a team and worked in the resettlement areas.
- Late 1990 and early 1991: the Xiji County government organized officials and technicians from various bureaux (agriculture, forestry, water conservation, livestock, urban construction, electricity and land, to carry out development planning in the resettlement area.
- July 1991: the Resettlement Office organized land levelling, constructed irrigation systems in the so-called 'eastern railway area' of the resettlement, and expanded the level one pumping station. For these works, the resettlement office provided the machinery and the farmers gave their labour.
- September 1991: land planning was carried out, including the most important decision on land allocation policy. Each resettled household was to be given 8 mu (0.53 ha) of arable land and 0.8 mu (0.053) of homestead land.

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<sup>18</sup> Source of information: Interview of Mr. Pu Zhenru on August 9, 2001, the director of Mingning Development Zone of Yongning County of Ningxia Province

- October 1991: the 500 households who had participated in the farmers' self-organized resettlement initiative were given first priority to resettle in the resettlement area. Some of them, as the first group of resettlers, came to build their houses.
- Autumn 1991: the school was opened with one classroom, shared by 28 children of different ages.
- 1991: the water management station was established.
- 1992 – 1993: the level two water-pumping head was constructed.
- End of 1992 saw the completion of Yuquanying Middle School.
- 1993: the resettlement office started to organize land development in the so-called 'western railway area' of the resettlement.
- Autumn and winter 1993: construction of a 7-km road.
- May 1994: the level two pumping station started to provide irrigation water.
- July 1994: the regional government added the so-called Ganchengzi area to the overall resettlement area. Land was reclaimed and a water system was constructed in the new area, and a quota of 1,500 households was made for voluntary resettlement.
- August 1994: 670 households resettled in Huangyi Village and Wuhe Village. 440 households resettled in Muland Village and Moon Village.
- Spring 1995 to autumn 1996: a drinking water system was constructed, after which some resettlers were able to get access to tap water.
- October 1995: the Ganchengzi and Western Railway (three grades) Primary Schools were established.
- Winter 1995: Number 5 sub-village of Shuanggou Village was the first to get access to electricity. It was planned that electricity would be made available to all the villages by the end of 2001.
- Autumn 1996: the building of the Resettlement Office was completed. Officials from the both the local county or county of origin were now able to start full-time work in the resettlement area (previously they had had to travel between their home offices and the resettlement area).
- 1997: the level one main channel was extended to increase irrigation coverage from 2,000 mu (about 244 ha) to 8,000 mu (about 976 ha);
- 1997: cooperation between Fujian Province and Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region was established. It was agreed that the Fujian authorities would invest in and thus support the development of the resettlement area.
- 1997: a water tower was built and a 16-km water pipe was laid. A well was dug to provide drinking water for Nanjiang and Minning Villages.
- 1997 to 1998: about 1100 households moved to the resettlement area. They settled in Nanjiang Village and Minhe Village.

- 1998: the level two main channel was constructed and so irrigation coverage reached 16,000 mu (about 1,951 ha) of arable land and 3,000 mu (about 366 ha) of home yard land for cultivation.
- Winter 1998: electricity was made available in Moon, Lanyi and Wuqi villages;
- September 1998: Minning Primary and Middle Schools were completed.
- 1998: eleven wells were dug to meet water demand for home yard production;
- 1998: a 1.1-km road was constructed;
- 1998: a power transformation station (35 thousand-volt) was built.
- 1998: a post office was built, a telecommunication station was established, and a grain storage station was constructed.
- 1998: a researcher and technicians from Fujian University conducted research on the feasibility of a mushroom plantation in the resettlement area. The study proved that mushroom production in the resettlement could be productive and this resulted in researchers and technicians from Fujian beginning mushroom production extension work in the area.
- 1998 to 1999: 280 commercial apartments along the main street of the resettlement area were built for sale, covering 8,400 square meters.
- June 1999: a clinic was established.
- September 1999: a market place was set up.
- 1999: flood control infrastructure was put in place.
- June 2000: the third National Workshop on Mushroom Technology was held in Yinchuan. The Minning Resettlement Area was selected as the field visit site for the participants.
- September 15th 2000: the resettlement area was administratively handed over to Yongning County Government. Before September 15th, the Xiji County Government was administratively in charge of the resettlement area even though it was geographically located in Yongning County.
- In 2000 a 1.7-km length of flood control bank was built, along with a 5-km flood discharge channel.
- August 2001: with the expanding of telecommunication capacity in the area, individual households were able to install private telephone lines.
- August 2001: the Minning Resettlement Office submitted an official application for the resettlement area to receive Township status and form a township level government.

## **5.4 Resettlement Policy and its Implementation in Yunnan**

### *Policy and its Implementation at Provincial Level*

#### **A short history of resettlement for poverty reduction and development in Yunnan<sup>19</sup>**

Stage one: 1996 to the end of 1998. In 1996, The Provincial Leadership Group for Resettlement and Development was established, which was responsible for the coordination of resettlement projects at provincial level. During this stage, most resettlement projects were inter-prefectural. By the end of 1998, 11 resettlement sites had been established, and 32,000 people had been resettled. Many lessons were learned from this stage, and one key lesson learned was that inter-prefecture resettlement created many problems, such as problems related to resettler adaptation to new areas that were far from their places of origin.

Stage two: end of 1998 to the end of 2000. Many such resettlement projects were launched in 80 Counties across Yunnan Province. In March 1999, the Provincial Government released Provincial Document No. 67, which indicated a strategic change of resettlement focus from inter-prefecture to intra-county resettlement.

Stage three: from the end of 2000 to date. Resettlement for Poverty Reduction and Development has become a key strategy for regional development. To December 2000, the total resettlement population in Yunnan had reached 169 thousand, returnees accounted for less than 10%

#### **Government justification for resettlement for poverty reduction and development<sup>20</sup>**

The provincial government was fully convinced that resettlement is the most effective way to reduce poverty and stimulate development. This is firstly because it is believed that resettlement is the most rapid way to reduce poverty. The hard evidence provided by Yang Bin, Deputy Director of the Resettlement Division of the Poverty Alleviation Office of Yunnan, is that 70% of resettlers were no longer in absolute poverty within two years of resettlement. Second, resettlement programs can promote economic and industrial development, and production structural adjustment. Third, it is believed that reduced population pressure in the places of origin will improve the ecological environment. Fourth, farmers adopt new ideas and concepts very quickly after resettlement.

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<sup>19</sup> Source of information: Interview with Mr. Yang Bin, the deputy director of Resettlement Division of Poverty Alleviation Office of Yunnan, on July 9, 2001.

<sup>20</sup> Source of information: Interview with Mr. Yang Bin, the deputy director of Resettlement Division of Poverty Alleviation Office of Yunnan, on July 9, 2001.

And finally, resettlement is in line with the central government development strategy of promoting the development of small and medium size towns and cities.

**Resettlement policy at provincial level<sup>21</sup>**

- Arable land of 3 mu (0.2 ha) per person should be guaranteed for resettlers, and that one mu out of the three must be relatively highly productive for insuring food security. A 300 yuan (37.5 US\$) subsidy should be provided for improving land productivity.
- Homestead land of 0.3 mu per household should be guaranteed;
- Compensation should be provided to the original landowners if their land is to be utilized for resettlement. No compensation would be attached to State owned land. Collective land should receive compensate of 250 yuan/mu (about 457 US\$/ha). The sources of funding for paying the compensation should be arranged in the following ways: the provincial government should provide land compensation payment for cross-prefecture resettlement; provincial and county government should jointly provide a land compensation fee for intra-prefecture resettlement; and the county government should be responsible for intra-prefecture resettlement.
- A housing subsidy of 6,000 yuan (750 US\$) should be given to each resettlement household in inter-prefecture resettlement; 5,000 yuan (625 US\$) should be given to each resettlement household in inter-county and intra-county resettlement. Dwelling space for each resettlement household should be more than 60 square meters. The authorities should be responsible for construction of houses for resettlers, but resettlers should contribute their labor.
- Resettlers are requested to do register their households after two years of living in the resettlement areas, and those who wished to do so earlier registration would be given permission;
- Land contracts in the places of origin would be terminated two years after resettlement;
- The provincial budget for inter-prefecture resettlement is 10,000 yuan per person, which includes both the household subsidy and investment on infrastructure.
- 1.5 percent of the total input for any resettlement project should be used for technology extension work, such as: technical training and technical demonstration;

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<sup>21</sup> The same as above

- It is strongly suggested that resettlers should be under the administration of the local government in the resettlement areas rather than by government in the place of origin;
- Agricultural taxes, taxes for local special products, enterprise tax, tax for the construction of infrastructure and for fixed assets were to be reduced or waived.

*Description of Policy and Its Implementation at County Level and in the Research Site<sup>22</sup>*

**Resettlement policy of Cangyuan County Government:**

Selection of resettlement sites: (1) The areas should have good natural resource endowment in terms of land, forestry, water and others; (2) The areas should have less population density, so that land can be made available to meet the following requirement: each household to have 0.3 mu of homestead land, and each person could have on average, 1 mu (0.07 ha) of arable land, 3 mu (0.2 ha) of forest land for firewood and 3 mu (0.2 ha) for economic activities, such as fruit tree, coffee, sugar cane or tea production; (3) The areas should have good access to drinking water facilities, electricity and roads.

Budgeting principles: The amount of subsidy in cash and kind to resettlers is based on how much can be left after infrastructure investment out of the overall budget available. In concrete, the first step is to budget for the overall infrastructure needed; the second is estimate how many households or people are to be resettled, and the third is to come up with the amount left for giving as a subsidy to each resettlement household.

Land Compensation: Governments at prefecture, county and township level have no financial capacity to pay land compensation, so resettlers have to pay for that when it is needed.

**Targeting process:**

- First Step: Provincial government allocate quota to prefecture and county level
- Second Step: County and township government identify target groups for resettlement
- Third Step: Report back to provincial government for approval

**Selection criterion of eligible resettlers set by county government:**

- The net income per capita per year of resettlers must be lower than 560 yuan (about US\$ 68);

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<sup>22</sup> Source of information: interview of Mr. Luo Kaixiang on July 14 and 15, 2001, Director of Poverty Alleviation Office of Cangyuan County of Lincang Prefecture, Yunnan Province



- Those who are eligible to move should be from places with extremely poor living and production conditions, with no development potentials, and with poor access to drinking water and transportation;
- They must be willing to move;
- They should be younger than 45 years old;
- They should have labour capability;
- They must be literate;
- They should be knowledgeable about production technologies.

### **Project implementation at county level**

In 1999, the first central/provincial government supported project on 'government-organized' resettlement for poverty reduction and development was approved in Cangyuan County. The total budget was 37.9 million yuan (4.7 million US\$). The project plan was to resettle 4000 people within the 4 years from 1999 to 2002. Up to the end of 2000, 2,461 people had been resettled. The project implementation included basically three steps: field survey, project design and implementation.

Field survey: Even though the project was only approved in 1999, its preparation started much earlier. In May 1997, the county government organized the first meeting to discuss issues related to central/provincial supported resettlement projects after being informed that Cangyuan County had been listed in the overall provincial plan. More than 40 people from various government bureaux and township governments participated in the meeting. Resettlement policies were formulated in this meeting. A field study was organized straight after the first meeting. Four study teams were formed. Sites for field study were basically identified on data from county statistics and information from county poverty alleviation office. In total, 36 villages of the 7 townships were visited, among which 16 villages of 4 townships were proposed as the places of origin, and 20 villages of 3 townships were proposed as the resettlement areas. It took a month to do the study. The following activities were conducted in the field survey: household visit, farmers' meeting, and mobilization of farmers' participation. The main information gathered at household level from proposed places of origin concerned the farmers' basic living and production conditions, and their opinions on resettlement. The main information gathered at village level from the proposed places of origin was land to population ratio, average grain possession, average net income, sources of income, industrial development and qualification of the labor. In the proposed resettlement areas, the following activities were conducted: convincing the local population to give some of their land to resettlers, identification of the resettlement site, and policy propaganda. In June 1997, a survey report was completed.

**Project design:** The County Poverty Alleviation Office, which is in charge of all poverty reduction activities in the county, formulated an overall project design based on the field survey report in cooperation with various bureaux. This overall design was then submitted to the Provincial Poverty Alleviation Office. Then a feasibility study was conducted in 1998 after the overall design had been approved.

The overall project design consisted of 7 sub-projects in 7 administrative village. Mangkaba Resettlement Project is one of the 7 sub-projects. All the sub-projects follow the same policy framework and implementation process. However, the details of project implementation may differ from one to the other due to site-specification.

The justification for the Mangkama Resettlement Project is the following: (1) The resettlement site, Mangkaba, is on the border with Burma. It was designated as a provincial trading port in 1997. (2) The natural resource endowment is rich in water resource and forestry. (2) Farmers' income level in the selected place of origin is relatively higher so that they had a certain economic capacity to cope with resettlement.

#### **Project implementation at the Mangkaba resettlement site:**

A project implementation team was formed for the implementation of the Mangkaba resettlement project. The team comprised people from different bureaux. The team set up an office on the site for organizing land levelling, homestead land allocation, village road construction, a drinking water system among others. While the team started working on the site, farmers were also requested to build their houses.

**Land issue:** There is no arable land allocation involved in the project. Mangkaba resettlement project is an intra-village resettlement project, which means that the place of origin and the resettlement area fall within the same administrative village. The distance between the place of origin and the resettlement area is 28 km. Resettlers will keep the same land holdings after resettlement. However, homestead land will be allocated to each resettlement household according to the set standard. The land where resettlers were to build their home area was currently being used as rotation land by locally resident farmers. The County government requested these farmers to give up this land for free.

**Household residential registration.** Resettlers were not allowed to be registered in the place of origin and the resettlement site. Once they had moved, they had to give up their residential registration in the place of origin.

**House construction standard:** Resettlers were requested to build houses with at least a 1.5 meters of brick wall. No straw and wood structure sheds were to be allowed in the resettlement site. Resettlers were requested to build a pigsty and cattle-raising shed while building their house. Each resettlement

household was to be given 1,500 yuan (188US\$) in cash, 80 asbestos shingles and other construction materials in kind (worth about 1,800 yuan in total) (about 225 US\$).

Home yard production promotion: 10 pomelo seedlings were distributed free to resettlers for promoting home yard economic production. However, the survival rate of the pomelo seedlings was very low, which was believed to be caused by the resettlers' having little knowledge of fruit tree cultivation.

Energy saving promotion: Two demonstration households were selected to install a bio-gas system for promoting bio-gas for cooking energy rather than firewood. Each demonstration household was given a 3,000 yuan cash subsidy. However, one of the two systems installed has never been in use because the quality of construction is so poor it will not run.

Technical training: The resettlement policy at provincial level demands that a certain percentage of the budget should be used for technical training. But this was not implemented.

#### **Brief Profile of the Development of the Resettlement Site**

- Early 1999: the Mangkaba resettlement project was approved by the provincial government. The provincial government provided financial support for a quota of up to 100 households/500 people.
- March 1999: the Township government organized a meeting to discuss the Mangkaba project. Village party secretaries, village committee heads and deputies of Manggang Administrative Village and some sub-village leaders participated in the meeting. At the meeting, township officials delivered the resettlement policy to the participants. Sub-villages of origin were finally identified. Straight after the meeting, sub-village meetings were held in the relevant sub-villages. In these meetings, farmers were informed that they could sign up their name with sub-village leaders.
- June 1999: County government organized a meeting with sub-village leaders, at which they were to submit the list of names they had gathered. In total, 126 households signed up their names, and they were all permitted to move. In the meeting, sub-village leaders were asked to pass on the message that farmers were requested to start to build their houses in October.
- October and November 1999: Plots of homestead land were made ready for farmers to choose, which means that the project implementation team had drawn up 126 plots of homestead land for the 126 households to choose where to build their houses. Each piece of homestead land was 188 square meters (18 m x 16 m).

- Mid-November 1999: Another sub-village leaders' meeting was held. The purpose was to ask sub-village leaders to urge farmers to come to the resettlement site to see the progress made, to speed up preparation of house construction materials, and to come to get them to build their houses quickly. Resettlers were asked to complete their house construction by June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2000 (in the end only 10 households finished building their houses by the deadline). At that time, many farmers came to say that the designed size of homestead land was too small to raise animals such as pigs and chicken, and they requested to have larger plots of homestead land. To respond to the farmers' request, the size of the homestead plots was extended to 320 square meters (20 m x 16 m). However, for having houses in tidy line and row, some plots were much less than the standard size, for example, less than 20 m in length, or a width of less than 15 meters. When farmers found out that the size of their homestead land was smaller than it should be, it was already too late to do anything.
- March 2000: A sub-village leaders' meeting was again held to urge resettlers to build their houses.
- June 2000: A sub-village leaders meeting was held for getting information on how many farmers had built their houses. The information was used for issuing subsidies because only those who had built their houses were eligible to receive a subsidy.
- July 2000: County Poverty Alleviation Office gave out subsidies to farmers who had finished building their houses and, at the same time, announced that subsidies to those who did not finish building their houses by June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2000, would be reduced to 1000 yuan (about 125US\$) in cash and only 80 asbestos shingles (worth about 1600 yuan, about 200US\$, in kind).
- May 2001: Many resettlers only managed to finish building their houses in May 2001. Subsidy to these resettlers had not been given at the time of the field interview in July 2001. By May 2001, 131 households in total had been resettled, 886 people had moved, and 8 households were to move after their house construction had been completed. The total number of resettlement households exceeded the planned number. Farmers who did not complete building their houses by June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2000, received only the asbestos shingles subsidy. Those who accepted their cash subsidy in asbestos shingles received their full subsidy in value. But those who still wanted a cash subsidy were not guaranteed when or whether they would get it.

## Part II Discussion

The policy analysis of this research aims to 'demythologise' planned intervention. To achieve this we need to consider a number of issues:

- (1) Planned intervention is composed of 'multiple realities' and so we will need to know 'whose reality counts' (Chambers, 1997). However, the answer to this is not straightforward because the issue of differing meanings and judgements always entails a 'battlefield of knowledge' (Long, 1992). That is, people from different backgrounds and with different experiences and interests will express divergent views on what they expect from development. Such differences and the negotiations over meaning that follow are illustrated in this research by how arguments about poverty reduction are overshadowed by those concerning the goals of economic growth (for an elucidation of this, see later section in this chapter).
- (2) We will need to differentiate between theoretical and policy models. But frequently '*[t]he interrelations of theoretical and policy models are.... often left unexplicated and therefore unclear. It becomes important then to focus on intervention practices as they evolve and are shaped by the struggles between the various participants, rather than simply on intervention models, by which we mean the ideal-typical constructions that planners, implementers or clients may have about the process.*' (Long, 2001:30) In this chapter, Part I has concentrated on intervention models of government at different levels; while Part II intends to elucidate intervention practice.
- (3) Planned intervention is mostly not supported by adequate analysis at the bottom end of the intervention process. '*Indeed the bottom end of the process is largely assumed rather than fully described and analysed. There is, for example, no adequate analysis of power relations and organisational resources and social expectations*' (Long, 2001:47). One of the findings of this research is that most resettlement policy guidelines remain on paper only.
- (4) '*[S]tate policies are not all that consistent and often not easily identifiable*' (Long, 2001:47). This statement is illustrated by two findings: that no clear policy guidelines existed on where the places of origin should be located exactly, and that ambiguity of policy made it possible to divert the use of resources for poverty reduction to the support of economic growth.

### Concerns Arise in Government Policy and Its Implementation

#### No clear policy guidelines on where the places of origin should be

In the resettlement process in both Ningxia and Yunnan, the very first step is the identification of places of origin. However, no specific guideline or criteria of how to choose the places of origin can be found in any policy papers. Such questions were raised in the field research with officials at different levels. Unfortunately, no further information can be provided, simply because there were no such criteria or specific policy guidelines to follow. The policy indication can be traced at national level is what is stated in the '8-7 Poverty Alleviation Program': 'Resettlement is recommended for population living in areas where productive and living conditions are difficult for survival and development'. However, it is impossible to use this policy statement as such to make any specific targeting, and also the policy statement at the national level was not intended to provide site-specific criteria. The outcome of the absence of a clear policy guideline is that the villages of origin for the resettlement project were among the relatively better off villages. Xiapu Administrative Village in Ningxia ranks among the two best-off villages of the seven villages in Xiapu Township. In Manggang Administrative Village, Yunnan, the income levels of farmers are the highest of the nine administrative villages of Nanla Township.

The field research indicates that the unit for targeting the area in the place of origin varies for the different projects in different provinces/regions. The targeted unit in Yunnan is the sub-village area (sub-villages in the mountainous area in Manggang Administrative Village). This means that farmers from the sub-villages in this mountainous area were eligible to move as long as they fitted the further selection criteria. In such case, mis-targeting at unit level is avoided as long as the targeted sub-villages are correctly targeted. The targeted unit area in Ningxia is the county (Xiji County). This means that farmers from Xiji County are eligible to move as long as they fit the further selection criteria for resettlers. In such a case, mis-targeting tends to take place at a lower level. It means that resettlers tend to come from relatively better-off townships or villages.

Such tendency is the result of negotiation processes between different levels of administration. Very often, the decision about where the project is to be sited rests on the power leverage of local officials and the political significance of the places rather than being in accordance with the indicators and guidance of policy. In Ningxia, resettlers from Xiji County owe their thanks to the leadership of Mr. Ma Zhengxun in gaining political support from the provincial government for the resettlement project<sup>23</sup>. In Yunnan, resettlers owe thanks to t

<sup>23</sup> For the detailed story, see Section 6.1 of Chapter Six

he geo-political significance of their location which borders Burma. Hence, the significance of policy guidelines are degraded in the process of policy implementation. Assuming that government wishes to improve project monitoring, then clear policy guidelines are required for resettlement projects for the correct targeting of places of origin. And it is much easier to target the right place of origin if the unit of targeting is at a lower administrative level.

**The focus on the development of a resettlement area diverts the use of poverty reduction resources to economic growth**

That no clear policy guideline existed for targeting the places of origin is not surprising, because the foci of both projects in Ningxia and in Yunnan are on the development of resettlement sites rather than on poverty reduction for the poorer population in the places of origin.

Government has made a colossal investment in the resettlement area in Ningxia and a large investment in the resettlement site in Yunnan. In the process of resettlement in both projects, no attention has been paid to development within the places of origin. In the field research, the preliminary findings were already showing that the majority of resettlers were the better-off farmers. It meant that the poorer farmers in the places of origin would remain poor after the project. The researchers raised this preliminary finding with local officials. The answers received were that in the first place it was important to focus development on the resettlement area/site, otherwise farmers would not move. Secondly, the population in the places of origin, in the end, would all be moved out, so that it was a waste of money to make any further investment there. Furthermore, any returns on inputs were too low. However, neither argument stands. Firstly, the development potential in the resettlement area/site is already apparent to farmers and therefore a great incentive to move. In the end, the poorer farmers are only a small percentage of the overall resettled population due to social and economic constraints. Secondly I cannot see any possibility of moving all the population out of the places of origin because of the social and financial constraints involved. Only the better off in the places of origin in both Ningxia and Yunnan in the end had the possibility to move and there are yet poorer places. Secondly, saying that 'all' the population will be moved is in essence against the principle of voluntary resettlement, since some farmers may not want to move even when they are living in perceived impossible conditions.

In fact, the important role of the Minning resettlement area of Ningxia now lies in its support of regional economic development. The significance of the development of the Mangkaba resettlement area of Yunnan lies in its role in promoting trade with Burma. The Government had made a big investment in infrastructure in the resettlement area by using poverty alleviation resources, and all the achievements realised in the resettlement area are also claimed as

achievements for poverty reduction. However, the outcomes of the resettlement process show that, in fact, the resources have been used in such a way as to support economic growth rather than poverty reduction. Hence, the focus on the development of resettlement areas, first of all, does not serve the declared aim of reducing poverty in the places of origin, secondly, it diverts poverty reduction resources to the promotion of economic growth.

### **Policy guidelines on the selection of resettlers remain on paper only**

Looking at policy guidelines for selection of resettlers and crosschecking on who has actually moved, we can draw the very clear conclusion that policy guidelines are not implemented.

Field studies in Ningxia show that among the total population resettled in the research site in Xiapu sub-village, the poor population amounts to only 7 percent. This is a joint product of having no clear policy guidance for selecting resettlers, and the social dynamics ongoing in the process of resettlement. The first criterion listed in the regional principal criteria for who is eligible to be resettlers is 'Poor households from poor areas'. This criterion gives no concrete indication on where these poor areas are, or on who the poor households are and how to justify selection. Information from several sources, including the story of Ma Yongzhen<sup>24</sup> in Moon Village, confirmed that more than a quarter of resettlers who are now living in Moon Village purchased their land. Land trading among individual landholders is illegal in China. However, it has been going all the time in the resettlement area in Ningxia. And with increased land productivity and improved social and irrigation infrastructure, land prices are rising dramatically. So, those who purchased their land are again among the better and best-off farmers, not only in villages of origin but even in the region.

Field studies in Yunnan show that the poorer population amount to only 14 percent of the total population resettled in the research site of origin in Shangwantang, and Shangwantang and Huoshaozhai sub-villages. Unlike in Ningxia, policy guidance in Yunnan about the selection of resettlers is rather precise. The criterion of resettler selection is that net income per capita per year of the resettlers must be lower than 560 yuan (about US\$ 68). However, in the implementation stage, such poverty criterion was not referred to. This is a reflection of both true attitude of officials towards resettlement and the problem in using income level as an indicator. In the implementation process, all farmers who are willing to move and who are capable of moving are all given permission to move. The average annual net cash income of the resettlers was 2,772 yuan, more than double that of the remaining population in the research site in the sub-villages of origin. Such phenomena drew no attention from local officials because their primary interest is in the economic development of the

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<sup>24</sup> For detail story of Ms. Ma Yongzhen, please look at chapter five.



resettlement site rather the poverty reduction impacts on the place of origin. Income level is the most widely used standard or criterion in development projects. In my view it is problematic to use income level as an indicator in complex rural communities. I have not come across a single project that has in fact targeted the beneficiary group by applying the income level as an indicator, although many project documents do make this claim.

There are also other criteria in the policy guidelines. Education, age, health, family planning status are also used as selection criteria in Ningxia, and education, age, labor capability, level of know-how are used as selection criteria in Yunnan. However, these criteria were not reflected at all in the actual implementation process.

**The development belief carried in the criteria of resettler selection is controversial to project aims**

As mentioned in the previous section, criteria for resettler selection are actually not implemented. However, it is still worth discussing the meaning of such criteria because they can reflect government belief in development.

There are two items respectively that refer to education and age in the regional principal criterion for selection of resettlers in Ningxia. It says that 'being educated' means that at least one family members should have completed middle school education; and 'being younger population', means that in general 'they should be younger than 35 years old'. There are also two items respectively that refer to education and age in the selection criteria of Cangyuan County of Yunnan. It says: 'Illiterates should not be considered; and settlers should be younger than 45 years old'.

Very often, the majority of the population is illiterate in places where living conditions are extremely difficult and the population is very poor. The aim and the policy are controversial in a poverty reduction project if the project requires an educational level of the beneficiaries. It is widely accepted that people who are too old to work should not participate in poverty reduction projects, but rather they may be helped by relief projects. But being younger than 35 years has nothing to do with labour capacity and being 45 is also too young to be excluded from the labor force. When I asked the local official why the criteria stated a preference for the younger population, I was told that this is for the consideration of the future development of the resettlement area.

My interpretation of the criteria is that, even though the overall aim claimed by the projects is poverty reduction, the underlining rationale is actually for the economic development of the resettlement. Such an underlying rationale was later legitimised in the new policy guidelines in Ningxia in 1997. The criterion of resettler selection changed at this stage. Level of poverty was no longer used as a key criterion for selection of resettlement population. Those who were willing to move and who had the economic capacity to move would

be given the opportunity. Two thousand yuan (about 244 US\$) was required for getting resettlement permission. This seals the formal transformation of a resettlement project for poverty reduction into an economic development project.

### **How appropriate is resettlement for poverty reduction**

The decade from the end of the 1970s to the early 1980s was a transitional period for the Chinese government when the focus of official policy shifted from political movement to economic development. The foundations for economic development were still very weak and the majority of the Chinese population was poor. Economic development served directly the purpose of poverty reduction. At the time institutional reform and projects for development had a direct impact on poverty.

In the wake of several decades of socialist movement, income differentials among the population were small. Official statistics appeared to confirm that at the time, voluntary resettlement was an appropriate policy to tackle poverty reduction.

Consequently central government allocated substantial resources and remains today committed to further enhancing its support for poverty reduction and development. However, I would argue that the current national and provincial policies for resettlement for poverty reduction are based on the success stories of the 1980s, which are no longer relevant to the situation of 1990.

National statistics show that the majority of the poor population in China's rural areas had overcome absolute poverty by the early 1990s (see table 6-2). In the 1990s growing economic disparity manifested itself in the following manner: (1) economic disparity between eastern and western regions increased substantially; (2) Rural communities near cities prospered, towns even more so; (3) Rural communities with better access to transportation became better off; (4) Rural communities endowed with good natural resources were the first to escape poverty; (5) Income disparity among farmers within the same communities became more and more pronounced due to a number of social and economic factors. The same intervention policy would affect different economic groups differently. My research shows that within the beneficiary group of resettlement projects the better-off farmers soon outnumbered the poorer farmers.

**Table 5-2: Number of Poor Population in Rural China**

Year	Central Government Designated Poverty Line (in yuan)	Total Poor Population in Rural Areas (in millions)	Percentage of Rural Population (%)
Before 1978		250	
Early 1980s	200	125	
1990	300	85	9.5
1991	304	94	10.4
1992	317	80	8.8
1993	350	75	8.2
1994	440	70	7.6
1995	530	65	7.1
1996	580	58	6.3
1997	640	50	5.4
1998	635	42	4.6
1999	625	34	3.7
2000	625	32	3.4

**Sources:**

*Data before 1978 and early 1980s from Zhu, Fengqi, Anti-poverty Research in China, China's Planning Press, 1996, pp5*

*Data from 1990 to 1998: China Conquering Rural Poverty, World Bank County Report, China's Financial and Economic Press, 2001, pp25*

*Data from 1999 to 2000: Monitoring Report of China's Rural Poverty in 2001, China's Statistics Press, pp8*

**Poverty reduction versus economic growth**

People from different academic backgrounds and experience have a variety of views on the meanings of development. Table 5-3 shows the meanings over time as summarised by Pieterse (2001). It illustrates the complexity of the meaning of development.

**Table 5-3: Meanings of Development over Time**

Period	Perspectives	Meanings of development
1870>	Latecomers	Industrialization, catching-up
1850>	Colonial economics	Resource management, Trusteeship
1940>	Development economics	Economic (growth) – Industrialization
1950>	Modernization theory	Growth, political & social Modernization
1960>	Dependency theory	Accumulation – national, Autocentric
1970>	Alternative development	Human flourishing
1980>	Human development	Capacitation, enlargement of people's choices
1980>	Neo-liberalism	Economic growth – structural reform, deregulation
1990>	Post-development	Authoritarian engineering, disaster

*Source: Pieterse, 2001:7*

The term 'development' is a neutral term, with no negative or positive meaning in itself. Yet people tend to refer to development only as a positive sense. We therefore have to be cautious and put the term development into its respective context.

The changing meaning of development is closely linked with development intervention by developed countries in the developing countries following the Second World War. Such development intervention is often carried out in the form of development projects with different foci. Many development projects share the objective of poverty reduction. The various international organizations and development agencies have their own interpretation and policy guidelines for poverty reduction and economic cooperation. This implies that different policies and approaches can be adopted for poverty reduction and economic cooperation.

We can see clearly from the above table that the meaning of development has always been linked to the concept of economic growth, although it has been commonly accepted in development studies that development is not equal to economic growth. Development has broader social and political ramifications, including justice, equality, human rights and so forth, which are fundamental to the rationale of poverty reduction.

The term 'development' came into fashion with the process of decolonisation in the early 1950s, as more and more development projects took hold throughout the formerly colonised territories. At one extreme, development may be simply an extension of the idea of growth, taking into

account growth in the capacity to generate consumer goods and progress towards a more equal distribution, along with growth in consumption per se (Little, 1982). Or development may be defined in terms of the fulfilment of basic needs such as food, clothing, shelter, health care, and education (Streeten et al., 1981). Alternatively, development may be defined in terms of the 'levels of individual functioning and capacities' (Sen, 1988a; Marglin, 1990: 2).

The World Bank economist, William Easterly (2002: 13-14), believes that there is a linear link between economic growth and poverty reduction. In his book *The Elusive Quest for Growth*, he used the research results generated by his colleagues to show how economic growth and poverty reduction are directly linked:

*'My World Bank colleagues (Ravallion and Chen) collected data on spells of economic growth and changes in poverty covering the years 1981 to 1999. ...The answer was quite clear: fast growth went with fast poverty reduction, and overall economic contraction went with increased poverty.'*

He further argues:

*'There are two ways the poor could become better off: income could be redistributed from the rich to the poor, and the income of both the poor and the rich could rise with overall economic growth. Ravallion and Chen's ...findings suggest that on average, growth has been much more of a lifesaver to the poor than redistribution.'*

At macro-level, economic growth will certainly contribute to the wealth growth of the whole society, which may also benefit the poor. My question is, however, do we need to analyse whom among the poor benefit. In Ravallion and Chen's research, *'the poor were defined as the part of the population that had incomes below \$1 a day at the beginning of each period they were examining.'*

My concern in targeting poverty groups is the necessity to differentiate poverty levels among the poor population in general. In my research sites, according to statistics, the average farmers' income level of the whole administrative village, or even the whole township is consistently below the government designated poverty line. For example, the average farmers' net income per capita per year in 2000 in Manggang Village (the research area of Yunnan) was 521 yuan (about 65 US\$), substantially below the national poverty line of 625 yuan (about 78 US\$) in 2000. This means that we can generally target the entire population in Manggang village as poor.

However, in looking at the outcome of resettlement in my research findings, on average the net cash income level of the re-settlers is more than double that of the population staying behind. Who then should benefit from poverty reduction projects? Should it be those who are better off and therefore have the capacity to move? Economic growth models analyse poverty reduction from a macro-level, neglecting this disparity among the poor.

The economic growth of a region and a county will certainly bring more opportunities to rich and poor alike by enabling them to generate better incomes. The development of local industries and urban centres for example provide opportunities for wage labour to the poor population, who are in need of cash and who cannot make a living on their very limited arable land. The challenge is how to uplift the poorest groups to directly benefit from economic growth, or only marginally benefit from economic growth.

The fundamental concern of economic growth is economic return from investment made, rather than on who might benefit from the investment. It is difficult to have promising economic returns from investing in poor areas with an overwhelmingly poor population. Hence the economic growth model will forever benefit the better-off groups first, and the poorer groups may benefit 'at the margins'. Economic growth is necessary for social development and poverty reduction but is not sufficient to ensure that the poor benefit equitably.

The objectives of poverty reduction projects always include the increase of income of the poor, which is absolutely justifiable if the beneficiaries are indeed the poor. The problem is when such an objective is translated into an indicator for measuring project achievement then the pursuit of economic output may overtake other concerns such as justice, equity and human rights. It is always easier to measure economic output than other social and political objectives.

I argue therefore that the pursuit of economic growth in poverty reduction projects should not displace the pursuit of the broader objectives of such projects. The reality of our projects teaches that once economic objectives make their entry, the economic growth model will become the dominant model, assisted by the local social dynamics and government organizations motivated first and foremost by the economic growth objective.

Hence I would argue further that the distinction between a poverty reduction and an economic development approach holds the key to achieving poverty reduction. It is based on the observation that poverty reduction is still the government's overall commitment and that the undermining of social justice and equality in poverty reduction projects is due to dependence on misleading epistemological and methodological approaches and concepts.

The first objective of the overall development objectives of the resettlement area set by the government of Ningxia is 'to build it into a demonstration area of resettlement for poverty alleviation', which clearly indicates the key objective of poverty alleviation. The second and the third objectives are 'to build it into a demonstration area of modern agriculture' and 'to build it into a demonstration area of industrialised agriculture', sending a clear message about the pre-eminence of economic growth. Going through the brief profile of the development of the resettlement area, we see the emergence of a new development area with huge investments, with potential prosperity and highly attractive for those who have the capacity to look for a 'new' life and for

development opportunities. What one sees is how the second and third objectives are pursued in this development picture to the detriment of the first.

The second and the third overall development objectives of the resettlement area set by the government of Ningxia clearly reflect the focus on regional development. Looking back at the policy guideline released in 1997, one sees that the level of poverty was no longer used as a key criterion for selection of resettlement populations. Those willing to move and having the capacity to move would be given the opportunity to do so. 2,000 yuan (about 244 US\$) was required for getting resettlement permission. It was said that the money would be used for digging wells, road construction and drinking water systems. In such a case, the economic contribution by better-off farmers was considered crucial to supporting the development of the area.

In the case of Yunnan, the unit of resettlement area is much smaller than that in Ningxia. The resettlement area of Ningxia is on the scale of a township. In Yunnan it is only part of an administrative village. The resettlement project is linked to support the development of the provincial trade port with Burma. The objective of poverty alleviation will first be over-shadowed and in the end quietly replaced by the objectives of economic growth.

When a local government focuses more on regional development rather than poverty reduction, the policy framework and project implementation will automatically favour the better off and not the poor. Regional development may promulgate integrated development, but it is often economic growth-centred integrated development: Poverty reduction is very much marginalized and often given no space. The policy guidelines of both Ningxia and Yunnan say nothing about regional development having precedence over poverty reduction. Yet examining implementation and policy guidelines leads to a different conclusion.

## **Social Dynamics of the Resettlement Process - The same land means different things to different people**

### **Introduction**

Chapter four evaluated the outcomes of the resettlement process and showed that the economically better off make up the majority of the resettlers. The present chapter identifies the social factors that have contributed to this and examines how economic factors operate within existing social dynamics. My argument is that resettlement is the product of interaction among different stakeholders, and that such interaction involves cooperation, compromise, conflict, incompatibility and negotiation. I further argue that in the process it is the better-off farmers who are strategically placed to take economic advantage, manoeuvre within local power configurations, utilize their knowledge, mobilize their well-established social networks, and thus to benefit directly. In this situation, it is the poorer farmers – the supposed beneficiaries – who are generally left out. Economic factors, then, are important but they do not offer a complete and satisfactory explanation for these outcomes. Indeed, economic benefit is frequently the result of other social factors.

It is important therefore to understand how such poverty reduction projects designed to help the economically disadvantaged finish up excluding them. Moreover, it is simply inadequate (if not perverse) to excuse the 'failure' of these poverty projects by referring to the economic incapability of the poor. The first part of this chapter then pays attention to the underlying social factors that enabled some farm households to move whilst others were inhibited from doing so.

A second purpose of this chapter is to explore women's issues in resettlement. Chapter four illustrated the kinds of changes taking place in women's and men's involvement in agricultural work, and showed how their lives are affected in different ways after resettlement. However, in official resettlement policy gender is not a category of consideration. The household is simply assumed to be a unit comprising the common interests of all family members including both men and women, and therefore the working social unit for resettlement. In contrast to this viewpoint, the cases and analyses provided in this chapter show how women's concerns are neglected in the process of resettlement at household level and offer some explanation for this. Part I pursues a sociological explanation of why the better off move, and Part II deals specifically with women in resettlement.



Even though the foci of the two parts are different, the rationale for having them together comes down to three points. (1) Though often neglected, gender dynamics are an essential part of social dynamics. (2) Sociological argument must understand how and why the same land acquires different meanings for the poorer and the better-off, as well as for women and men. And (3) both parts have one issue in common when discussing issues relating to the poor and to women, namely the matter of the deprivation of rights. The poorer are deprived of their rights in resettlement areas because they have much less access to the resources of poverty reduction schemes than do the better off. Women are deprived of their rights in resettlement because both women and men are seen as part of a unified household, in which in fact only men are the decision-makers.

It is difficult to grasp the dynamics of social position and gender, and different researchers may look at different aspects of the same problem or project. Data for the previous chapter were gathered through questionnaire interviews in a structured way, which was designed to yield a systematic comparison among different reference groups. However, information for this chapter is not drawn from structured interviews, but from open-ended and semi-structured interviews. Tools used for such interviews were: individual personal interviews, key informant interviews, group discussions, story telling, and exercises involving the direct ranking of people and points of view, and so forth. It is important to stress that all the issues discussed in this chapter arose during the research process rather than being hypothesized beforehand. The methodological correctness for such an approach is based on the assumption that farmers know their situation best and that logical inference can be drawn from the case studies one collects. Clearly one may obtain very different stories or versions of such stories from the different people one interviews, and of course individuals differ in their life experiences. And it doesn't make sense to put the pile of stories into SPSS or Excel tables for analysis no matter how many stories we gather. The only option we have is to attempt to understand what the stories tell us, to listen to more stories, and to identify key issues in the process of listening and interpreting the stories. Of course it is researchers themselves who identify the stories and issues they find relevant and they base this on their own knowledge and experience. This accounts for the sometimes conflicting interpretations offered for what appear to be similar texts or phenomena.

The discussion of these issues and the formulation of critical analytical concepts build on the cases of Ningxia and Yunnan, two rather different examples of resettlement. Here the question arises as to whether or not these case studies can be used for generalization? Case studies are used to provide insights into the ongoing social dynamics in order to answer the 'why' of the empirical research findings. Everyone in history has a different life span as

compared to others, but still everyone's life story reflects social history. Hence, we can I believe use personal stories or case studies to interpret trends in projects or societies. The case study method tries to tell us 'why', and the data analysis in the previous chapter tries to tell us 'what' happened. Nevertheless, I cannot say that the trends identified in my research represent (statistically) the general trends in all such kinds of project. But certainly I can demonstrate their significance for the cases in question and also characterize the types of mechanisms or dynamics associated with these processes and trends. Indeed, the fact that they exist and manifest a degree of coherence in my description suggests the need to explain them by reference to more general theoretical principles. As Mitchell (1983:207) puts it, *'The validity of the extrapolation (from case studies) depends not on the typicality or representativeness of the case but upon the cogency of the theoretical reasoning.'*

The issues and concepts identified and used for the interpretation of the social dynamics of the resettlement process are agency, kinship, social network, knowledge, power configurations, and rights versus capacity. For elaboration of each issue or concept, cases or stories will first be described in detail, followed by discussion.

## **Part I: Sociological explanations as to why the better off moved**

It is easy enough to explain why the better off can move by simply using economic indicators: the better off are able to move because they have enough economic capacity to cover the cost of resettlement and to bear the possible risk. The need for sociological explanations as to why the better off move is because: (1) economic factors always work together with social factors; (2) it is not always the case that economic factors take precedence over social factors, in some cases, it turns out to be the other way round; (3) sociological explanations help to understand how the social dynamics work in a way that prevents poverty reduction projects from reaching their target.

### **6.1 Farmers' Agency – A force to encounter**

The following story tells us the origin of the Minning resettlement project in Ningxia. It illustrates how farmers made the resettlement legal. We can see from the following case how a farmer leader, supported by the mass of farmers, in the name of poor farmers engaged government into approving a farmers' project. Several distinct sites of encounter between farmers and officials, between farmers and other stakeholders, and among farmers themselves are traced in the following case.

*The Story of Ma Zhengxuan, a Village Party Secretary*

Mr. Ma is the party secretary of Xiapu Village (place of origin) of Xiji County of Ningxia. He was born in 1947. He has high school education. He became party secretary in 1980. On August 11, 2001, I interviewed Secretary Ma at his home. He is the one who knows the history of the resettlement to Moon Village. He told me the story of how Moon Village became a legal resettlement area.

Originally, the land of Moon Village belonged to Yu Quan Ying State-owned Farm. The farm covers a broad range of land that is not manageable by its own staff, so that part of its land is left wild. The farm creates many seasonal job opportunities for farmers living in the area, especially farmers from the mountainous area. Farmers who come to work on the farm as wage laborers not only earn an income from working on the farm, but they also obtain know-how in irrigated farming and learn the general knowledge of life in the irrigation area. Besides all other messages, one clear message these workers got was that there was wasteland on the farm. Having learned the farming techniques and the benefit of living there, some farmers began to wonder whether they could themselves cultivate the wasteland. At the time, Yang Wanchang, who is originally from Gu Yuan County (Xiji and Gu Yuan are nearby counties), was working on the farm as a marketing official and recognized the intention of some of the farmers. So, he wrote up a contract, and then went to the farm manager. He proposed to the manager that the farm could easily benefit by simply contracting out the wasteland to farmers. In the contract, one party was the farm, the other was the Agricultural Committee of Gu Yuan County. A state-owned farm is not allowed to contract out its land to individual farmers, so individual farmers could not appear in the contract, even though the idea behind it was to contract land to individual farmers. Mr Yang succeeded in convincing the farm manager to agree to and sign the contract on December 30, 1988. Then he went to the Agricultural Committee of Gu Yuan County to sell his idea. The Committee leaders refused to agree to the contract because they were not convinced of the political correctness of such a contract. Although he had obtained no official permission, and one party only signed the contract, Mr. Yang went back to the village he came from. He told farmers that they could get a piece of land in the irrigation area if they would pay a certain amount as contract fee, which was 42 yuan/mu (80 US\$/ha). He told farmers that they could first pay half of the money as down payment. Forty households gave him money. Altogether he collected 50,000 yuan (about 6000 US\$). When he brought back the money to the farm manager, the farm manager refused to take the money because there had been no official agreement from the Agricultural Committee, and he was afraid to take any political risk by contracting land to individual farmers. At the same time some of the farmers had found out the land under the contract was not irrigated land but wasteland. The initiative was about to fail.

Having heard the information, in March 1989, Village Secretary Ma went to find a copy of the contract and, although it had no official stamp from one of the parties and of course was not notarised, he still thought that the farmers might stand a chance of getting access to the farm land.

Around October of 1989, Secretary Ma, together with six other farmers, went to collect soil samples from the farm. Then they went to the county town of Xiji, and first took the soil to the laboratory to have its quality examined. What they found out was that the soil was good for farming so long as there was water available. They then went to see the officials of the County Party Committee and the County Government. They expressed the farmers' willingness to contract the land from Yu Quan Ying State-owned Farm. He stressed that this was the only possibility to help the poor farmers in the mountainous area. County officials said that the idea was good one, and that was so far all they could say. So, although Mr Ma had received no official support, he was encouraged by the positive discussion.

Having received a positive reaction from the Agricultural Construction Committee of Xiji County, although there was no written document, in March 1990, secretary Ma and his people went to the supervisory body of the state-owned farm, the Agriculture and Land Claim Bureau of Xiji County to express their wish. What they wanted was to contract the land based upon the contract formulated by Mr. Yang Wanchang. But they were denied.

Secretary Ma did not give up. Between March and May 1<sup>st</sup> he made many manoeuvres to seek opportunities. He fully understood that the contract was not effective because one party only had signed it. He understood that state policy restricts the free contracting of land to individuals. He was also aware that in reality they did not have a legal framework to substantiate their request. He knew that he could not reach his goal by taking the official route. So he simplified the whole story into a distorted short version to stimulate the farmers' anger. He reformulated the story in this way: "The farm manager did not honour the contract so that those poor farmers who had already paid their money could not get their land. Yang Wanchang had taken the money away so that the poor farmers had lost both their hard-earned money and their land." This story passed around very quickly, creating great anger among the farmers. While doing so, Secretary Ma started to prepare an action to draw the government's attention. He planned the action based on a Chinese saying: "When too many people commit illegal practices, the law cannot punish them". He created the belief that those who supported and joined the action would get land when the action succeeded.

The major action took place from May 1<sup>st</sup> to May 10<sup>th</sup>. Under the organization of Secretary Ma, over 500 farmers from Xiji County, Gu Yuan

County and Hai Yuan County<sup>1</sup> gathered around the office building of the Yu Quan Ying State-owned Farm. They sat there quietly. They brought food, pans and firewood with them. They said that they would not go unless they were properly answered. Secretary Ma formed a small team to manage the action to ensure that: (1) Farmers kept discipline, because they wanted to impress on the government that they were victims rather than insurrectionists; (2) there was enough food for every one; (3) Medical services were provided; (4) A secretary would take down the names of all the people who joined the action so that they would be sure of the possible benefits from the action.

This farmer's action drew great attention from the government of Ningxia Autonomous Region and also from the central government. The government realized that they must solve it in a proper way and manner because the majority of the people who joined were of Hui nationality, otherwise, the problem might turn into a political issue. Observers were sent from the government to the site, they reported that the farmers were very disciplined; and that the farmers said nothing bad about the government, but only longed to have better land.

On May 11<sup>th</sup>, 1990, the regional government sent 12 big buses to take the farmers back home and promised that a resolution would be made to meet their request. While the buses were taking the farmers home, a discussion was taking place in the regional government office. Three farmer representatives from the three counties were invited to the government office. Secretary Ma was one of the three. The farmer representative, Mr. Wang Hanqing from Gu Yuan County said in the meeting that "the government should not only give the land to the farmers, but should also give full management rights of the area to farmers, because the farmers will lose once government interfered." A furious row burst out between Mr. Wang and an official. Secretary Ma stood up, calmed down the official and pushed Mr. Wang out of the room in order to stop the fight. Then Secretary Ma was given the opportunity to talk. Secretary Wang said: "No effort could succeed without the support of the Communist Party and the Government. Land is important, but we can do nothing with the land without irrigation and a road. Irrigation and roads can only be built with government financial investment. The farmers gathered together because they were so poor and they needed help from the government. So we are here to ask for government support." Secretary Ma won big applause for his speech.

A resolution was made on that day. Three areas were identified as resettlement areas, one for each county. Xiji County got the best area, which is where Moon Village is now located. The other two counties got two very poor areas with heavy saline soil, where now very few people have been resettled.

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<sup>1</sup> These are the three poorest counties in Ningxia Autonomous Region and in China as a whole. Many Muslim people live in this area.

All the farmers who had joined the action were given priority to move to the resettlement areas. Secretary Ma kept the record book very carefully. The record showed that all together there were 520 farmers who had joined the action. Among them, 410 were from Xiji County. And among the 410 (79% of the total) from Xiji, 140 (27%) were from Xiapu Township. 80 of them (15%) were farmers from Secretary Ma's village.

### Discussion

Agency is a very useful concept in explaining the influencing powers of, in particular, those who are assumed powerless. It is not an easy concept to grasp. Ortner (1999: 147) in her article 'Thick Resistance: Death and the Cultural Construction of Agency in Himalayan Mountaineering' defines the concept of agency in the context of her research as "*agency (which can be shorthanded as empowerment) is both a source and an effect of power ... it is both a source and an effect of 'culture'.*" That it should be defined by two further difficult concepts, 'empowerment' and 'culture' makes it even more difficult to grasp. However, the use of the concept of agency opens an arena for understanding the interaction of different actors in a given context, especially when conflicts of interest are involved. The purpose of my case study and analysis in this section is therefore not to enter further into the conceptualisation of agency, but to understand its practical functions and implications. My interest is to elaborate how agency functioned in a specific context of resettlement in order to draw people's attention to the complex reality of rural transformation. I choose to use Long's (2001:240) conceptualisation of agency as the basis for the discussion:

*'Agency refers to the knowledgeability, capability and social embeddedness associated with acts of doing (and reflecting) that impact upon or shape one's own and others' actions and interpretations. Agency is usually recognized ex post facto through its acknowledged or presumed effects. Persons or networks of persons have agency. In addition, they may attribute agency to various objects and ideas, which, in turn, can shape actors' perceptions of what is possible. Agency is composed, therefore, of a complex mix of social, cultural and material elements. Strategic agency signifies the enrolment of many actors in the 'project' of some other person or persons'.*

The core of the above case is about shaping other persons' actions in the interaction that takes place between the different actors. In the first place, Secretary Ma shaped the other farmers' views on the contract and land issue, and in so doing turned it further into an organized action. The farmers' organized action influenced and shaped the government's resolution. This is a very typical case of how farmers can shape government action. People, especially Chinese people, are accustomed to thinking that government is the most powerful body in shaping people's actions. However, in the above-mentioned case, we may conclude that government had the *authority*, which may be turned into power to shape people's action, but that *'persons or networks of*

persons have agency which may impact upon or shape one's own and others' actions and interpretations' (Long, 2001). Under the current Chinese system, the government is authorized to control almost all the country's natural and financial resources. This authority over resources makes the government a powerful body for shaping people's actions, as Secretary Ma declared in his speech: "irrigation and roads can only be built with government's financial investment. So we are here to ask support from government". However, although farmers have no authority, they do have agency and so can shape the government's decision-making, such as making the former illegal contract into an official project.

Shaping of others requires appropriate responsive strategies and action, which often involve 'speculation' about discourses. Ma Zhengxuan and his supporters did not accept that mountain farmers should have no access to irrigated land, and what they did was actually an extremely politically sensitive movement to request land rights. But Ma Zhengxuan did not put forward this discourse and agenda when he confronted government officials. He used politically acceptable discourse (official discourse) to legitimate their illegal action. He is a skilled and persuasive negotiator, and good at manipulating discourses and he makes use of the other party's discourse to his good advantage. Such a strategy is often used by the perceived powerless. They use the discourse of those in power to realize their own hidden agenda.

### **The production of farmers' agency through social interaction**

It is at points of social interaction that actors define their individual and common or conflicting interests. Such sites involve physical encounters, conversations and exchange of ideas, and often focus on the performance of publicly recognised events. It is through an understanding of such interactional dynamics that one comes to identify and weigh up the importance of collective action as well as processes of opposition, incompatibility and negotiation.

(1) *The emergence of a common identity in the process of interaction among farmers.* The term 'farmer' categorises people who are engaged in farming as their major employment, though this common label does not necessarily generate any common identity among farmers. In fact, farmers are such a heterogeneous group that it often does not make sense to label them in this way, although this does not deny the possibility of some such form of identification emerging under certain conditions. Identity is a difficult concept because it is hard to generalize or specify one's identity. However, a specific context can make identity emerge. For example, gender identity emerges in a mixed sex group, but not in a single sex group, where maybe race emerges as identity. In the above-mentioned case, Hui nationality and being the poor from a mountainous area emerged as crucial identities for getting mutual support. There are no statistics to show the distribution of Hui and Han people in lowland and mountainous areas, but Hui people tend to think "why shouldn't more Hui

people move to a better area". Secretary Ma told me that poor farmers from mountainous areas were discriminately named 'Mountain Men'. Mr. Ma said repeatedly to his supporters in the process of rallying them to the cause "We must prove that once we are given an opportunity we can create a good life as well, just like those 'water ducks' (name given to the people living in irrigated area) can." At that special moment, no matter whether they were poor or rich, no matter which village they came from, the mountainous 'poor' Muslim people were all brothers. In that event, they shared the risk and were hopeful to gain the benefit together.

*(2) The forming of common interests in the interaction process, which further activates agency.*

The ability to influence others or to pass on a command (e.g. to get them to accept a particular message) rests fundamentally on 'the actions of a chain of agents each of whom 'translates' it in accordance with his/her own projects' (Long, 2001, see also Latour 1994). People form collective modes of action on the basis of common interests and interlocking projects (Long and van der Ploeg, 1994). The common interests and project that farmers had in the above-mentioned case focused on obtaining a piece of better land in a lowland area. Such an interest became an incentive for farmers to develop collective agency.

*(3) The forming of farmers' collective action strategies at the interface with government officials.*

Common identity and common interests brought the farmers into alliance. The collective action of this alliance was the demonstration in front of the State farm. Farmers used this collective action as a strategic break-through in this case. Power does not always lie in the hands of those who have authority. As Long (2001:10) says: 'Someone having power or knowledge does not entail - like the zero-sum model - that others are without.' An ancient Chinese saying, from *Tactics of Sunzi* says, 'By knowing yourself and knowing the other party, you will win every battle', which gives a winning strategy when two parties confront each other. If one wants to win a power game, then on the one hand one has to know what advantages one has and how to use them, and on the other hand, know what the other party wants and what are its weaknesses. Secretary Ma knew what the government wanted to hear and what the government feared. He knew that what government wanted to hear, especially in a time of social chaos, was that "Government has been doing a good job for poor farmers", which was what he said in the meeting with government officials and this made him win the best land for his people. He knew that what government feared was social instability, which was why he organized a disciplined farmers' gathering.

Farmers' agency is something to be taken into consideration. Formulation of regulations or policies should fully consider farmers' acceptance and resistance because any regulations or policies that are not seen by the farmers as being in their interests will only stay on paper rather than being implemented



in reality. Consideration does not mean follow, but understanding and analysis. There are many examples of how policies cannot be well implemented because of people's resistance, even if those policies claim an ultimate goal of serving the good of the people. Take the example of the tree planting in Xiapu village. The 'Return land to forest and grass' policy is to protect the environment and local people's long term livelihoods, but it often faces great resistance from local people. In the case of Xiapu, the trees planted under WFP project support were all cut down after the completion of the project<sup>2</sup>. Punishment or guarding very often cannot prevent local people from cutting trees. For meeting their needs, farmers have many ways to manoeuvre against regulations. This is the agency that farmers have. For any successful project, farmers' agency must have been mobilized.

The irrigated land in the resettlement area is very valuable, especially after several years of investment by both government and farmers. According to my field interviews, the land price has increased about 50 times already since 1990. This at least indicates two things: firstly, there is a high demand for resettlement in the resettlement area; secondly, land is being sold and purchased even though arable land in China is not a liberalized commodity. Governments at different levels have formulated policies to stop such land trading. In 1996, Xiji County government issued an official document (No. 15 Document, Yuquanying Resettlement Development Area of Xiji County) to stop the trading of land. Two clear points were made in this official document: one is that farmers from outside Xiji County are not allowed to resettle in this resettlement area; the other is that land selling and land transfer are not allowed. It was also made very clear that land would be confiscated if purchased or not belonging to the officially recognized owners. However, what happened in reality was that those who purchased land and who were from outside Xiji County were still living in this resettlement area. I was told in the field survey that the Resettlement Office was unable to implement the policy because resistance was too great. It was estimated that more than 30% of the resettlers purchased their land. These people made the following efforts to prevent the implementation of the policy. (1) They continued the use of the name of the legal owner after land transfer so that it is difficult for officials to find out the fact of land trading. (2) They formed informal alliances among resettlers who bought land so that they would stand together if needed. (3) They made lots of contacts, especially with officials at different levels, to pressure the Xiji County government into not implementing the policy.

Such ongoing land trading and continuous price increase of land has excluded poorer farmers from involvement in the resettlement. Economic advantage not only has an economic function, it can also generate other social

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<sup>2</sup> For detailed information, see chapter three.

functions. The reason why so many people can overcome the policy barrier of banning the purchase of land is not only because they have money to buy the land, but also because they use various channels to make the illegal purchase possible. These channels can be through relatives or friends. Some of these channels work well when they are reinforced by money.

We cannot then use a simply right or wrong judgment to measure the outcome of human agency. The movement led by Ma Zhengxuan won the possibility for the farmers from Xiji County to move to the irrigated farming area. The ongoing and hidden land trading to a great extent has excluded poor farmers' access to the resettlement area. Both were the outcome of human agency, both were in the first place illegal actions but were accepted by the official framework.

In both Ningxia and Yunnan, some poorer farmers also moved to the resettlement areas even though they only make up a small number of the total resettlers. So we cannot conclude that resettlement programs do not benefit the poor at all, but we can conclude that resettlement to prosperous areas benefits the better off more than the poor. This is an outcome of the operation of agency. We cannot quantify agency itself due to its nature of 'embeddedness' and its composition of a 'mix of social, cultural and material elements'. The effects can only be found out *ex post facto*, and thus a functional analysis offered only by observing how agency manifests itself. Persons or network of persons, institutions or government agencies all have agency. We may compare ways to give outlet to agency, but we cannot quantitatively compare who has more agency. Farmers' agency can be restricted by government policy in one way, but it will find other ways of outlet whenever it is possible. Such outlet emergence can have various forms: forming of alliances, being resistant, shaping other's behavior, enrolling other people or government officials or agencies etc. Agency of the poorer is restricted in outlet due to social and economic disadvantage, especially in competitive conditions. When the better off and the poorer are in competition for the same resources, such as resettlement to a prosperous area, it is easier for the better off to win because they can mobilize more social and economic resources than the poor. Hence resettlement to a prosperous area cannot be used for poverty reduction. Such resettlement may be used for economic development plans.

Interface analysis provides the possibility of identifying different sites of agency. Human agency cannot be identified unless interaction between different actors takes place; and the power of agency cannot be recognized unless counter power co-exists. The dramatic interface scene involving demonstration in front of the state farm illustrates key elements of an interface perspective<sup>3</sup>. As Long (2001:69-72) puts it: '*Interface.. [is] a site for conflict,*

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<sup>3</sup> It is important here to stress that, although social relations must feature in all interface

*incompatibility and negotiation. Although interface interactions presuppose some degree of common interest, they also have a propensity to generate conflict due to contradictory interests and objectives or to unequal power relations.*' We see the following key actors in this scene: farmer leader, farmers, farm manager, and government officials. The farmer leader put huge pressure on government by organizing the farmers' demonstration, but he did not make any critical statement to government during the whole process. That was to give he and farmers room to withdraw or to move forward for even more confrontation, depending on how the government responded. That was also to give government a space to act positively to the farmers' request without loss of face. In the process of the farmers' demonstration, the farmer leader kept testing the space for maneuver, and he closely observed government's response when planning his next coping strategy. At the same time, high-level government officials kept sending observers to define the nature of this farmers' demonstration. The interface between the different actors did not remain static but kept shifting and redefining itself. One could not say that the outcomes of the interactions taking place were predetermined.

It is not only at dramatic events that one can identify interfaces. They also may emerge in ordinary day-to-day circumstances. The ongoing land trading in Minning Resettlement Area is an example of how government policy was not implemented and instead a black market arose involving in day-to-day encounters among different local actors. The key actors involved were: farmers who had officially recognized pieces of land in the resettlement area, farmers who had no land in the resettlement area and an interest in buying land, and government officials at various levels. When conducting field interviews, I came across a female farmer who, I understood, had a piece of land in Moon Village in the resettlement area of Ningxia. A village leader introduced me to her then he left as we agreed that he would do so in order for me to talk privately with her. I first asked how much land her family had, and from when did she start living here. She told me that she and her husband had 8 mu of farming land and that they had come here in 1998. Then I asked her where was her village of origin. She told me that she was from a village of Yanchi County. I was surprise and said: "Oh, so you are not from Xiji County. Do you know how many farmers who live here are not from Xiji County?" She was immediately alerted by my question. She stopped talking with me, looked at the floor. Then she said: "I am here living with my old uncle, helping him with his farming. I myself have no land here." I knew that she would no longer tell me the truth because she was not sure about what I was going to do with the information

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situations, when we talk about 'interface' we are underlining the fact that there exist 'critical point[s] of intersection between lifeworlds, social fields or levels of social organisation where *social discontinuities*, based upon discrepancies in values, interests, knowledge and power, are most likely to be located' (Long 2001: 243).

that she would give to me. When I came out from this woman's house, I saw a farmer standing on the road side smoking. I could see that he was interested in talking with me. So, I went over to him and started chatting. He invited me to go to his home yard, where he told me that he had bought two pieces of land in Moon Village. He said that he was not afraid to tell me this because more than thirty per cent of the residents in this village have purchased such land. He said that some effort was once made by the resettlement management office to stop the sales of land, but that this was only done due to the political and administrative pressure from above. He said: "I've heard that you are from Beijing, then you must have the opportunity to meet with provincial officials. I guess that they will not raise land issues because there are so many other problems to worry about. Will you make a report to the provincial officials? I hope that you will raise with them the issue of high electricity fees for irrigation."

From this one can see the different reactions of the woman and the male farmer when they put their views to me. They are also likely to do the same in their contact with other people, such as fellow farmers, local officials, high-level officials, other outsiders, though on the other hand, the encounters they experience may over time lead to some change in their perceptions and responses. For example, farmers' attitudes to land prices, official regulations concerning land possession in the resettlement area, and to land sales are likely to change as the interactions between the different actors are reconfigured.

## **6.2 The function of kinship - Shared risk gives a safer feeling**

The following cases are about pioneer resettlers. In the whole process of my research, I repeatedly asked myself the same questions: who has moved and who has not, why were some able to move and others not. When I interviewed Ma Shaolin, who was among one of the first to move to Moon Village, I realized the important function of kinship, especially in the case of social change. It is hard to judge how many resettlers gained kinship support and how much they gained, but the fact of what Ma Shaolin said that 80% of the pioneer resettlers were his relatives is convincing enough to show its function. It also implies that kinship works for both the poorer and the better off. Very often, the better off only form alliance with the poorer when they need non-economic support.

### *The Story of Ma Shaolin*

Mr. Ma is now living in Moon Village in the resettlement area of Ningxia. He is 32 years old and a high school graduate. He learned sewing in 1990 right after his graduation. He is married and has a 5 years old son and a daughter of 7 years. Mr. Ma is the party secretary of the village. The family opened a

relatively big shop in the village selling all sorts of items for daily consumption items and for farming. It also provides services, such as making windows and doors. His wife manages the shop on a daily basis. Mr. Ma's father is the party secretary of Xiapu Village of Xiji County in Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, which is the place of origin of many resettlers in Moon Village.

He studied for middle and high school in the county town of Xiji County, which is 20 kilometers away from his village of origin. He had been longing to leave his poor village for a long time, so that he went to seek a new life in a place nearby his current residential place in November 1991. There is a railway nearby Moon village, people name the area east of the railway as Railway East Area, the area west of the railway as Railway West Area. Moon Village is located in Railway West Area. In 1991, Mr. Ma started living in Railway East Area, which was then deserted sandy land. I asked him why he chose to stay in the wild land without proper irrigation at that time. He answered that he could not think of staying all his life in the poor village where he was born, he wanted to create a new life in a new world. He believed at that time that the area where he is now living would have a bright future because the land was even and not far from the capital city of Ningxia. At that time, there were only about 60 people living there, they were all new resettlers. Most of them were relatives. Mr. Ma said that 80% of them were his relatives. For example, three of them were cousins, 8 uncles, and the others more distant kin. At the beginning of the settlement, nearly all of them came without their families, so that the group consisted solely of males. At that time, they were not legal residents.

I asked Mr. Ma how he felt when he had no legal residence. He said that he knew from his father that nothing is impossible in this world. His father had been the Village Party Secretary in his village of origin for about twenty years. He had to deal with government rural policies and farmers' responses on a day-to-day basis. He learned that government policy would never work out according to policy statements but according to people's interpretations and manipulation. For instance, policies regarding forest protection and illegal land claims never worked out as formally intended in his village of origin. Those who cut trees were not really punished. Reporting to the higher level administration was always formulated according to the expectations from above rather than reflecting the facts. Hence, he concluded that there is no clear boundary in reality between legal and illegal status. However, to take advantage of the possibility living in the grey area of illegal status, one needs a coping strategy. After Mr. Ma generated his idea of moving to the Railway East Area, he started discussions with many of his relatives when occasions when they were having meals together or during casual visits. Some of these persons began to follow his idea simply because they believed that this was a choice made by the son of the Village Party Secretary and it must be a good one since he was a high school graduate. Mr. Ma said that he would not live in the new

settlement area alone no matter how firm his idea was. The risk in social, economic and political terms would be too high for him to move alone. That is why he migrated together with a group of male kinsmen. His coping strategy followed the Chinese saying: "*Law does not punish the numerous [offenders]*". In the meantime, the possibility of the relatives supporting each other would be much higher than in the case of non-relatives.

In June 1994, Xiji County government legalized the area as a legal resettlement area. Thus the 60 people became legal residents. Mr. Ma remembered that 370 households were given permission to resettle. However, many of those from the 370 households decided not to stay after their first visit to the resettlement area in August, because what they saw was deserted land, with insufficient irrigation water and high temperatures. Mr. Ma guessed that about 100 households decided not to resettle. Those 100 households sold their right to resettle to other people.

Ma Shaolin received help from his father both in the spiritual and financial sense. For example, when he moved from Xiapu village to Moon Village, his father paid 1000 yuan (about 125 US\$) for transportation for him and also gave him 2000 yuan (about 250 US\$) for production inputs.

### *The Story of Xi Qi*

Xi Qi is 30 years old. He has one boy and one girl. He told me:

"When I was in my place of origin, we lived in a big family with 24 members, but we only had 37 mu (about 2.5 ha) of dry land in total. I could not feed my own children. I simply had no way out. When I knew that I could move to the resettlement area, my reaction was that I would move as long as grass could survive on that land. I knew that I myself had no money to pay for the land and no materials to build a house to stay. I borrowed money from all possible sources that I could have access to. I asked my father to allow me to cut two poplar trees to build a house in the resettlement area, but he only gave me some waste materials from our old house instead. I came to the resettlement area in 1991 together with Ma Shaolin. I came because I had nothing to lose compared with Ma Shaolin. Why should I have any fear when he had none, considering his education and family background. I thought at that time that I would stay here as long as a tree can grow one or two leaves on this land. I had a safer feeling because many relatives came together. We did not necessarily financially support each other, but it kinship implied as kinsmen we would help situations of destitution. I managed to stay. In 1994, I was given the official allocation of 8 mu (about 0.5 ha) of land and I also bought an additional 8 mu for 1,600 yuan (about 200 US\$) from someone who did not want to come. The one I bought land from only came to the resettlement area once and then gave up because he was not confident about the future life here. All of us who came early bought more land later. We knew the government ban on land sales. But I

didn't have more to lose than others who bought more than one plot. I spent 2,600 yuan (about 325 US\$) to level the two pieces of land. I now feel very glad that I moved here. I now live a much better life than those who are living in my village of origin. I would have had more than 2 children if I hadn't moved. In my home village, farmers raise 5 to 6 children on potatoes. Now, I choose to have less children but feed them on rice, wheat, meat and even fish."

### *Discussion*

The study of kinship 'has existed ever since the mid-to-late 1800s, when LH Morgan and his interlocutors invented the study of kinship...' (Peletz, 1995:344), and 'for an anthropologist, kinship is the hard core' (Leach, 1967: 10). 'Contemporary kinship studies tend to be historically grounded; tend to focus on every day experiences, understandings, and representations of gender, power, and difference; and tend to devote considerable analytic attention to themes of contradiction, paradox, and ambivalence.' (Peletz, 1995 343) Despite all the different and changing aspects involved, I understand that two main threads have always been interwoven in the study of kinship: one is the symbolic meaning of kinship, the other is the structure and function of kinship. Thus, for example, Anderson et al (2001: 5), paraphrasing Jan den Ouden's work on kinship, point out that 'Kinship does not imply a set of rules, roles and relations that force people into immutable forms of behaviour. Rather, these 'structures' are interpreted, manipulated, and meaningfully and strategically deployed by specific social actors ... kinship is a set of structural properties or organizing principles and, thus, a resource in social action'. But any structural interpretation faces the risk of reducing the reality, because 'after all, kinship is a matter of flesh and blood, the result of sexual passion and maternal affection, of ... a host of personal intimate interests' (Malinowski, 1930:19). In my thesis, despite the appreciation of the complex reality involved in kinship relations, I pay more attention to the practical functions of kinship relations. That is, I wish to draw attention to the complex reality of rural social change by bringing the issue of kinship relations into what is usually perceived of as an oversimplified planned intervention process.

Very often, when we discussed with local officials why people decided to resettle, they tended to say, "because there is better land, better irrigation and more opportunities". However, from the above case, we can see clearly that land and water were not the only decisive factors shaping people's decision-making, since, in the face of the same land and water availability, some people chose to stay and others not. The above case shows that kinship relationships were a very important influencing factor for the pioneer resettlers who first lived in the resettlement area. Kinship relationships in themselves may not be very active or functional. Their dynamic lies in the interactions that take place among relatives, and which bring certain tangible rewards. Like interfaces, a network of kinship ties 'becomes an organised entity of interlocking relationships and intentionalities. Continued interaction encourages the development of boundaries and shared expectations that shape the interaction' (Long, 2001:69-72) and the commitments of the

parties involved. These ties are reinforced when the network or group of kin is pitched against outsiders or competing kin groups.

The reason why kinship can be a resource for social action is that kin relationships have the following practical functions:

- (1) A kin relationship is a good basis for developing mutual trust. Trust is important for getting access to resources. People will only lend money to those they can trust so that we very often find, especially in poorer communities, that farmers borrow money from relatives. People prefer to exchange labour and share costs with kinsmen/women because they believe that they will not be cheated, and they know where and how to get their money back if they are.
- (2) A kin relationship may offer the parties to the exchange free help when one or other needs it. This does not happen so easily among acquaintances.
- (3) A kin relationship may provide the parties with mutual financial support, though such help may only be secure among close relatives.
- (4) A kin relationship frequently guarantees the parties mutual support for publicly expressed opinions without ever questioning their legal correctness. This is widely reported to have been the case in so-called 'traditional' Chinese society and continues today.

The key point here is that kinship is essentially a resource for action rather than a certainty for action. All the above practical functions of kinship are more likely to take place among kin than non-kin, though we must also note cases where 'fictive' kinship (i.e. close friendships, or forms of child or adult adoption, that are cast in the same social and moral mould) perform the same role. On the other hand, there will be many cases where no significant exchange takes place between the members of a kin group, but do within social networks based on other criteria.

As the case describes, in 1991 a group of people resettled. At that time, they had no legal status and they had no access to sufficient production infrastructure, which means that they lived in a situation of high risk both in terms of agricultural production and in the political sense. What do people need in a risky situation? Support, and from whom do we tend to look for this? From people we trust and who trust us. Yet who trusts us, and whom do we trust? Those we know better; namely family members. This, then, is how I interpret why, in the above case, 80% of the first group of settlers were kinsmen of Mr. Ma. He felt a lot safer, he said, to have his relatives around even though so many things were unpredictable. More importantly, Mr. Ma developed interlocking relationships among pioneer resettlers in the course of day-to-day life. Many of these he had contact with in his village of origin. Hence the sharing of risk even among relatives cannot be taken for granted.

The above cases give an explanation of why some of the poorer farmers could also manage to move. When people are desperate for something, they can



mobilize all their energy and resources to reach their goal, just as did Xi Qi. However, it is easier for people to do things when they have enough resources and confidence, especially economic backup, rather than when they possess only courage and no fear of losing due to their having nothing.

The wording of government policies has to be standard, firm and formal. The ideology behind such official language is that policy is about enforcement. The expectation from policy implementation is a linear outcome. Kinship, a concept used in everyday life and in sociological studies, is not compatible with such policy language. It reflects the gap between ideologies of government policies and day-to-day social dynamics. When policy for resettlement was formulated, no official would think that kinship would play a very important role in the initial stage of resettlement. The implication of our research finding is that the actual process of resettlement is an outcome of social dynamics and does not necessarily run in accordance with the criteria of policy frameworks. The resources and instruments that the government has are different from those of the farmer. Government has control over land, infrastructure, credit and other scarce resources, while farmers have agency, kinship and social networks. The government's image of projects is how government enrolls farmers because of its control over scarce resources. However, farmers respond to government projects based on the social system they are embedded in and the personal knowledge they have acquired, rather than on the policy framework. Farmers can resist, distort or make use of policies or projects. So, there are gaps between officials' and farmers' views about the project, and between the government approach and farmers' day-to-day livelihood dynamics. The bigger these gaps are the bigger the gap between government-claimed objectives and the outcome of the project implementation will be.

### **6.3 Social networks –work differently for different people**

The following two cases show how a better-off family could obtain support from its social network to be able to move to the resettlement area whereas a poorer family could not. The previous section discussed the concept of kinship. There is overlap between the concepts of kinship and social network, though networks include relations beyond kinship. That is, kinship relations can only become part of a social network. The motivation for setting up such networks is more for achieving certain social, political and economic returns, whereas the dynamics in kinship relations is more for the sharing of resources and risks. Hence, despite the overlap of the two concepts, the boundaries and the effects of the two concepts are different.

For a proper understanding of the following cases, some important background information is necessary. Local officials told us that Mangkaba

Resettlement Area in Yunnan had been identified as a demonstration resettlement project for poverty reduction, so that everything must be implemented well for providing demonstration effects. In China, once a demonstration site is established, the site will expect a lot of visitors, including officials at different levels. Hence local officials would always try their best to set up an impressive demonstration site. A question to ask is what are the indicators for an impressive demonstration. I had a discussion with the local officials about this. Local officials said: "First, the resettlement village should have a very good appearance, such as: good housing, clean public toilet, good water supply etc. Second, farmers should earn higher income after moving here." I asked what they meant by good housing and was told that new houses should have a stone foundation and the first 80cm should be of brick construction. No straw and wood structured houses would be allowed. Now I understand why many farmers who did not move told me that they could not move because they could not afford to build a standard house.

#### *The Story of Peng Zhongmin*

Mr. Peng is now living in Mangkaba Resettlement Site of Mang Ka Village of Chang Yuan County in Yunnan. He originally lived in Xia Wan Tang sub-village of Mang Ka Village, and he was the sub-village head. Mr. Peng is 40 years old. His wife is 35 years old and they have three children, two daughters of 17, and 9 years old. The son is 12 years old. He told me how he moved to Mangkaba B Resettlement Site:

"I got to know about the resettlement program from government mobilization meetings. Officials first came to inform us about the resettlement program in April 1999. They came to our village every couple of days, all together they came five or more times. Very often they knocked on farmers' doors when they called for meetings. I went to one of the meetings. In the official meeting, hardly any farmers presented any of their own opinions. I did not say anything either in the official meeting. I have to think hard before making any decision. My decision was made in the exchanges I had with my other family members, relatives, neighbours and close friends. I discussed the matter with my wife. I told her that the government was concerned about us and was offering us a very good policy. We could now move to Mangkaba, which was near to the market. We could grow vegetables, and we could do small business. Besides this, the government would provide us with 80 pieces of asbestos tiles and 1,500 yuan (about 183 US\$) as subsidy. We were also to be given a quota to cut down some trees for building our new house. I think that moving to Mangkaba is especially good for our children's future. After saying this, my wife agreed with my opinion, and my children were excited about moving to Mangkaba. My eldest daughter said, "It is a great opportunity to move to Mangkaba, because we can do business there and it is very good for us,

the next generation." I then went to see my relatives and friends to get their opinions. They all supported the idea to move. One of my uncles said: "There is a saying: 'Trees die by moving, people thrive by moving'." I went then to meet my friends who were doing business in Mangkaba. They all gave me positive perspectives. I was especially impressed by a comment from one of my friends: "Life without alternatives will shrink. You have few development alternatives in your village of origin, but you have many opportunities here in Mangkaba." I felt very much encouraged. Then I participated in tree cutting organised by the township government. I cut 90 trees for building my new house. Later, government finished its residential plan for the Mangkaba resettlement site. Together with some neighbours, I went to the site to select where to build my own house based on the government's ground plan. At that time, not so many people had made their final decision to move so I had plenty of choice as to where to build my house. It was good that I came with a few neighbours, otherwise I might have hesitated in making a final decision because we were among the very first to make such a decision to move. After having selected where to build, I started to look for people who could help me to build my house. I borrowed more than 2,000 yuan from my brothers and uncles, and more than 4,000 yuan from a friend who lives in the resettlement area."

The following table summarizes steps of house building as described by Mr. Peng.

**Table 6-1: Expenditure spent and help gained in building a house in Mangkaba Resettlement Area in Yunnan – The case of Peng Zhongmin**

Step	Activities	Time spent	Who participated	Expenditure on renting cars or trucks	Other expenditures
1	Dig foundation of the house	(no data)	Peng and his two brothers	0	0
2	Purchase of stones	5 days	Peng	325	250
3	Purchase of sand	2 days	Peng	160	100
4	Purchase of lime	2 days	Peng	20 (using a friend's truck)	170
5	Build the house	25 days	Peng and 6 relatives		2970
6	Purchase of bricks	2 days	Peng	215	2100
7	Purchase door and window frames	1 day	Peng	10	1800
8	Purchase concrete	Half day	Peng	20	900
9	Purchase mud and sand from riverbed	2 days	Peng	100	300
10	Transportation of wood	6 days	Peng	360	0
11	Purchase of tiles	Half day	Peng	20	1800
12	Render walls, fix frames, etc	11 days	Peng and his two brothers	0	0
13	Build kitchen	15 days	Peng and his two brothers	0	0
14	Move	3 days	Neighbours and relatives	240	1000 (for eating)
Total		75 days		1470	11390

Then Mr. Peng continued his story:

"During the days we built the house, I stayed nearly all the time at the in Mangkaba site, and my wife and children were responsible for farming at home. On the first day we started to move, I hired two tractors from my home village, and 16 people from the village (two of them my brothers, ten of them my cousins and uncles, four of them neighbors) helped me to load stuff onto the tractors. They also each gave us a cash gift of 60 yuan (7.3US\$). We served those who helped us nice meals. I walked back to my own village the next day. We continued to pack up. We finally moved everything down two days later. Five people from my own village, my two brothers, two cousins, and an uncle came to help. Now, I am here with a great hope, but also with a debt of more than 6,000 yuan (about 750 US\$)."

#### *The Story of Bai Laoda*

Bai Laoda lived in Xia Wan Tang sub-village (place of origin) of Mang Ka Village of Yunnan. Many people from that village moved to the Mangkaba resettlement site. Bai's family stayed behind. Bai Laoda is the eldest son of the family. He had just graduated from a local technical school and is now looking for a job. His father is 48 years old and his mother is 50 years old. His first younger brother is 15 years old, and still studying in high school. His second younger brother is 13 years old and studying in primary school. His elder sister is 24 years old. She is illiterate and moved to her husband's place after marriage. His younger, unmarried, sister is 18 years old with primary school education.

I asked him whether he knew about the resettlement program and what he thought about it. He answered, "I knew about the resettlement program. It is, of course, good to move to the resettlement site, but we are simply not able to move because we have no money to build a house in the resettlement site. My family has already borrowed more than 7000 yuan (about 850 US\$) from relatives and friends to support my education and my brother's."

I asked him: "I heard that many other people borrowed money to build their houses, why don't you also do that. Do you have relatives and friends from whom you can borrow money?" He answered: "Every family here has many relatives around. The problem is that my family has borrowed money from all possible sources, from nearly all our close relatives and some distant relatives, and we have not repaid the money. Now, when they know that we have no capacity to repay the money, they will not lend us money again."

#### *Discussion*

According to Mitchell, Barnes first introduced the notion of social network in 1954. The idea arose because researchers found that *'they could not present their findings adequately within the framework of a typical compact institutional analysis*

characteristic of the structural approach' (Mitchell, 1974:281). Powell and Smith-Doerr (1994:368), in their article 'Networks and Economic Life', point out both the significance of the application of the concept and the challenge to be met in fully developing it. *'In contrast to deterministic cultural (oversocialized) accounts, networks afforded room for human agency, and in contrast to individualist, atomized (undersocialized) approaches, networks emphasized structure and constraint. Indeed, networks offered a middle ground, a third way, even if no one was quite sure whether networks were a metaphor, a method, or a theory'* (Barnes, 1972). Researchers choose to explain different aspects of these relationships according to the purpose they have in mind, such as communication, flow of gossip, exchange etc. For field research methods, Mitchell (1974:295) concluded that *'at present it seems that no alternative to data collecting based upon participant observation has been devised that is suitable for testing propositions derived from network notions'*. Long (2001:242), from a more rigorous actor-oriented perspective, provides a condensed concept of network:

*'Networks are made up of sets of direct and indirect relationships and exchanges (interpersonal, inter-organizational and socio-technical). They usually transcend institutional domains and link together a variety of arenas. Networks are characterized by flows, content, span, density and multiplicity.'*

In current academic and policy discussions, the importance of the human and social components of development, seen as complementary to economic and technical factors, has gained increasing attention. The return to the study of social networks and social capital are examples of such appreciation. Pretty (2001:211) identifies the benefits of social capital in the following way:

*'As it lowers the costs of working together, social capital facilitates co-operation. People have the confidence to invest in collective activities, knowing that others will also do so. They are also less likely to engage in unfettered private actions that result in negative impacts, such as resource degradation. Although there are already many different descriptions of social capital, we identify four central aspects: relations of trust; reciprocity and exchanges; common rules, norms and sanctions; connectedness, networks and groups.'*

In the present research I have chosen to work with the notion of 'social network' rather than the more general term 'social capital'. My reason for doing so is that I wished to focus on the mobilisation of social ties and their associated normative components, and not so much on overarching cultural and institutional frameworks. The central point here is that 'bonds of trust and support do not reside in the realm of abstract moralities or cultural dispositions [or formal rules and regulations] but rather in the strategic management of ongoing relationships, exchange contents and social meanings that are constructed around them' (Long, 2001:155). My primary interest then is in the individual's or group's ability to mobilise a variety of resources through the use of networks and to do this, as Portes (1995:200) puts it, 'on demand'.

But having made this point, I would like to add that the 'rediscovery' of the importance of social capital has undoubtedly helped to encourage economists to take more serious account of these social and human phenomena. It may also have increased the confidence of social workers and development practitioners to provide a practical orientation to planned social organisation. It is my choice, though, to use the concept of social network to address the day-to-day processes and practices of social organisation.

In the context of my research, the functions of networks can be identified as follows:

- (1) *Information benefits.* Information flow brings out an element of the interface perspective. The interface between information providers and receivers is not only a site of information passage, but also that of informal organization, development initiatives and interlocking relationships. Many networks have an informal structure. Actually, it is hard to define types of network structure and functions due to their dynamic nature. But clearly information flow is one such important function. In the questionnaire survey of my research, the interviewees were asked where they gained the information about resettlement. I received 27 responses from the Yunnan research. There were two channels of information transmission, one is through government officials or village meetings, and the other is through friends, neighbours and relatives. Twenty-two per cent of the respondents said that they acquired the information from official channels, and 88% from informal channels. The information flow through networks meets the information gap between formal structures and the individual farmers.
- (2) *Construction of knowledge.* Burt (1992:13) refers to network contacts as '*a matter of trust, of confidence in the information passed and the care with which contacts look out for your interest.*' Hence, the benefit from network contact not only lies in access to information, but also to trust in the information passed. Trustworthy information is essential for decision-making. In the case of Peng Zhongmin, he acquired information on resettlement from official channels, but, as he emphasises, his discussions with his relatives and friends were the key to his decision to move. Persons in networks thus process information through their network contacts and this leads to the construction of knowledge. In this sense, knowledge arises from a complex set of interactions and encounters with different horizons.
- (3) *Resource benefits.* The existence of an effective and diverse set of social ties gives the possibility of mobilising material and financial support for the solution of pressing problems. But the extent to which social networks can generate such resources will differ between the poorer and better off. Nevertheless, we must recognise that, whatever the nature or volume of

material and financial flows, such flows tighten network relations and generally encourage other network functions.

In the case of Peng Zhongmin, he spent in total 12,860 yuan (1,608 US\$) for moving and building his house. The following table shows the economic status of different groups of population in the place of origin and in the resettlement site. We can see that resettlers had to borrow more money than they had previously had to borrow after they moved to the resettlement site. Most people had just finished constructing their houses and settled in the resettlement area when we conducted the interview. Nearly all interviewees told us that they had borrowed money to construct their house and for transportation. Let us assume that farmers repay their loan or debt by using their cash accumulation. I here define cash accumulation as cash income minus cash expenditure. On average, cash accumulation of the population that remained in the place of origin was 154 yuan annually (about 19 US\$) (cash income minus cash expenditure), while that of the resettlers while living in the place of origin was 625.8 yuan (about 78 US\$). If we assume that the 6,287 yuan (786 US\$) that resettlers borrowed on average was all used for house construction and for moving, then it would take them *about 10 years* to repay the loan/debt assuming that they stay at the same economic level as before. If the ones who remained had moved then it would have taken them *more than 40 years* to repay the loan/debt assuming that they stayed at the same economic level. No one will borrow an amount of money that may take 40 years to repay. Maybe, one can earn more income after resettlement, but it is hard for people to make decisions based only on possibility.

**Table 6-2/Table 4-19: Household Annual Cash Income, Expenditure and Debt in Yunnan**

	Loan/Debt	Cash income	Cash expenditure
Population remaining in the place of origin	905	1290	1136
Resettlers in the place of origin	3514	2772.8	2147
Resettlers in resettlement place	6287	2790	7666.1
Residents in resettlement place	3576	3845	1761

Economic reasons are key factors in decision making for resettlement. However, although resettlers in general are better off than those remaining behind, they are not rich enough to cover all the resettlement related costs so that they have to borrow a great deal of money too. For example, Mr. Peng borrowed more than 6,000 yuan (about 750 US\$). When Mr. Bai said that his family had no



money to move, he basically meant that he was no longer able to borrow enough money because his family had already borrowed about 7,000 yuan (about 875 US\$) for his education.

### **Network building for the better off**

Mr. Peng has been always been supported by his social network in the process of resettlement. In the beginning he received psychological support from his relatives and friends by encouraging him to move. Then, he borrowed money from his friend, brothers and uncles for the construction of his house after his decision to move. And then, he had his brothers, relatives and neighbours to help with house construction and with moving. At the same time, he also received small cash gifts from them. One night during our stay, Mr. Peng organized a family banquet for the so-called 'happy movement'. Everyone who had ever offered help in the process of the movement was specially invited and all others in the village were also welcome. All the research team members were also invited. The network can be certainly strengthened and enlarged through such an event.

### **Network 'depletion' for the poorer**

Mr. Bai's family borrowed money from relatives and friends in order to support his education. He has now finished his study, but his family has not repaid the debt. Now, they are unable to get further support from the friends and relatives who once helped them. As Mr. Bai said: "When they know that we so far have no capacity to repay the money, they will not lend us money again." Mr. Bai's family is no longer able to get support from the same network. It seems that the network, or the social capital it embodied, has for the time being been exhausted.

Resettlement projects that expect farmers to make an economic input beyond the poor person's social and economic capacity will only in the end help the better off. This is because the better off not only have a better economic foundation than the poor but they also have a more effective social network to support them.

## **6.4 Knowledge – Arising from 'an encounter of horizons'**

The following two cases tell us how people with different knowledge about the same thing make different decisions. Most people in poor mountain villages in Xiapu County of Ningxia have heard about the resettlement. However, their level of knowledge about the resettlement area differs a lot. People can gain knowledge from different channels, such as books, mass media, interpersonal

contact, personal experiences and so on. The effectiveness of knowledge from different channels on decision-making is different. Unlike researchers and scientists, who often refer to secondary data, direct personal experiences are always the most effective knowledge pool for farmers in their decision making.

Better-off farmers and poorer farmers from places of origin very often have different levels of knowledge about the resettlement areas. Better-off farmers have more resources to enable more mobility to gain personal knowledge about the resettlement area. For instance, better-off farmers could afford to pay for the costs of acquiring personal knowledge by, in the case of Ningxia, paying a visit or even testing the life there for a short period.

### *The Story of Ma Jiye*

Ma Jiye is now living in Moon Village in the Ningxia resettlement area. He is 30 years old. He has two boys of 8 and 6 years old. Mr. Ma said:

"I started doing off-farm labour before 1990. I worked in places nearby Yinchuan (the capital city of Ningxia), and found that people living in the plain area had a much better life than those living in the mountains. I noticed that farmers with irrigated land would never face the problem of starvation, but farmers with rain-fed land had always to work for food. I dreamed to have a piece of land in the plains. I joined the farmers' gathering of May 1<sup>st</sup> to May 10<sup>th</sup>, 1990, through which I gained the right to be allocated a piece of land in Moon Village. Each household could only get 8 mu (0.53 ha) of land. In 1994, land was allocated by lottery to avoid dispute. That was how I got my land finally. When many farmers sold their right of resettlement to other people, I was not influenced.

In the summer of 1994, I came to build a simple house because we were told that those who had not built a reasonable house in the resettlement area would not be allowed to resettle. Some other people also came to do the same. Land allocation for each household was decided by lottery, so that people from different villages were all mixed. We did not know each other in the first place. I needed help to build a house, so did the others. It took me about half a month to build a simple house. During that period, we all lived together and ate together so that we became familiar with each other very soon. Not knowing each other beforehand did not prohibit mutual help. It became really hot then. Having no irrigation system at that time, we were not able to grow crops. To build a house there was just a way of claiming a piece of land there and, of course, to provide a place to stay for the next visit. I would not have done it without government pressure. I did not come for the next two years. I went to Xinjiang, Lanzhou and other places for wage labour.

In April 1995, I came to Moon Village again. Just to try my luck, I planted *mizi* [bulrush millet]. I spent all together 112 yuan (14 US\$) for seed and hiring draught animal power. I stayed for about two months in Moon Village. I went

back home for a month. After harvesting the crops at home, I came back to harvest the crops that I had planted in Moon Village. I harvested 4 bags of *mizi*. I went back home with the harvest. I did not come again for another two years because I the harvest was not much without irrigation.

In March 1997, I came to Moon Village again and found out that we could then grow crops because the irrigation system had started to run. I decided to build a real house. It took us about a month to build the house. During that period, I was responsible for overseeing the construction and my wife was responsible for growing crops in the home village. I did not stay the whole time in Moon village during that one month because I had to help with farming and harvesting at home, so that I had to travel all the time, which cost me over 500 yuan (62 US\$). We spent more than 7,000 yuan (850 US\$) building the house. We borrowed 4,000 yuan (488 US\$). In September, we moved. We spent about 400 yuan (49 US\$) hiring a truck. Finally, we had resettled."

#### *The Story of Ma Wenli*

Mr. Ma Wenli lives in Shangma Village of Xiapu Township. Unlike Xiapu Village of Xiapu Township from which many households moved, only one household, whose head was the deputy secretary of Xiapu Township government, moved to the resettlement area from Shangma Village. Although both Shangma and Xiapu Villages are in Xiapu Township, Shangma Village is much more remote in terms of transportation. Ma Wenli said: "I am 55 years old. My wife died several years ago and I am living with my son, my daughter-in-law and three grandsons. We have in total 27 mu of dryland. My son goes for off-farm activities from Spring to Autumn every year, from which he makes a cash income of about 1000 yuan every year. The officials from County and Township government once came to inform us villagers that we could apply to move to Yuquanying resettlement area (Minning Resettlement Area) in 1992. Each household had to pay 300 yuan resettlement fee. I did not apply because I had no money to pay the resettlement fee. I have never been to the resettlement area. Some people said that one could make a better living there and could produce enough food to eat. Others said that only those who were rich could afford the irrigation charges and could therefore make a better life. Those who were poor and could not afford the irrigation charges had an even had a worse life than had had before in their home of origin. I would like to move there if I now had another chance."

#### *Discussion*

Fredrik Barth (2002: 1) defines knowledge as 'What a person employs to interpret and act on the world ... [it] includes feelings (attitudes) as well as information, embodied skills as well as verbal taxonomies and concepts: all the ways of understanding that we use to make up our experienced, grasped reality.' Barth's definition of knowledge emphasizes both

the possession and the substance of knowledge. For further understanding of how knowledge contributes to day to day life and decision-making processes, we have to look into the dynamics of knowledge. Norman Long uses concepts of knowledge processes and knowledge construction to elaborate the dynamic nature of knowledge. The concept of knowledge processes implies that knowledge is not static but is always constructive and destructive. Long (2001: 242) states that,

*'Knowledge construction is, at one and the same time, 'constructive' in the sense that it is the outcome of many decisions and selective incorporations of previous ideas, beliefs and values, and 'destructive' in the sense of transforming, disassembling or ignoring other existing frames of conceptualization and understanding, and 'localized' in specific institutional domains and arenas whether of global or local scope'.*

People employ knowledge. The possession of knowledge empowers people. Decisions and actions are outcome of knowledge processes. The actors involved may interpret the same projects differently in knowledge process.

The knowledge that different actors possess cannot be attributed with equal weight. That is, knowledge is not neutral, rather it intimately and unavoidably involves political issues (Sillitoe, 1998:231). One obvious example is that farmers' knowledge is unlikely to have been taken account of in the government officials' knowledge system. In the resettlement process, farmers are seen as passive recipient of whatever is offered by the government. Government officials have not developed awareness of the need to appreciate farmers' knowledge. This is a result of the long dominating development belief system of economic growth and modernization. The misfit between such a development belief system and local social dynamics often leads to failures of planned intervention. The widespread adoption of bottom-up participation as opposed to top-down modernization approaches (Sillitoe, 1998:223) has opened up challenging opportunities for pursuing development alternatives. The recognition of indigenous knowledge is in line with such pursuits. 'What precisely is involved in this concept (indigenous knowledge) is nowhere defined', declares Stirrat (1998:242). Sillitoe (1998:223-35) tends to define indigenous knowledge versus scientific knowledge in research areas of natural resources management, even though he also recognizes that there are also relations of power and domination involved, which are only addressed in passing in his paper (ibid.: 243). I suspect that the key issues are not the concrete substance of indigenous knowledge, especially the technical content of it. I wonder whether we can ever define the boundary of indigenous versus scientific or modern knowledge. The significance of the concept is its social, cultural and political implication for recognizing the 'lowers' knowledge. Furthermore, *'Indigenous knowledge is not locally homogeneous. Differences will exist along gender, age, class, occupational, and other lines and among individuals of similar social status'* (Scoones and Thompson, 1994:16).

In the field survey, I very often asked farmers who gave up resettling: "Why did you choose not to resettle?" A range of answers was received. For example, one farmer said: "I did not have enough money to resettle. You know it costs a lot to build a house, and it costs a lot to hire a truck to move". The answer sounded reasonable, but it actually did not reflect the real complex decision-making process. It seems that the most influential factor is whether or not one has money to invest, but in my view, it is the confidence to take the risk of investing. What gives people confidence for future investment is knowledge about the likely return from the investment. Ma Jiye had worked as a wage laborer on the plains and had spent some time as an agricultural laborer on irrigated farming land before he resettled. Such experiences gave him the knowledge that he could have a better life by farming on irrigated land and living in the plains. Many other farmers also heard that one could lead a better life by having irrigated land, but such second hand messages were not strong enough to build their confidence for a decision-making as big as resettlement. Looking back at the case of Ma Shaolin, he told me that about 100 farmers sold their right to resettle to other farmers soon after they received their allocation of land in 1994. Those 100 farmers must have heard of the better life to be had in the plains area, which was why they had joined the farmers' gathering in May 1990 and gained the right to have such a piece of land. However, they gave up the idea right after they saw the wilderness they had in hand at that time, because they had self no experience or first hand knowledge about irrigated farming. Most of those farmers who sold their right for sure could have generated enough money to make the resettlement investment.

I have no doubts that Ma Wenli's family is very poor, and that it is now difficult for them to generate enough money to purchase land in the resettlement area. I am also sure that Ma Wenli could have afforded to pay the 300-yuan resettlement fee and built a simple place to stay in the resettlement area in the early stage of resettlement. But he could not decide to do that, because he had no knowledge about what was actually going on in the area and how he could make a living there. The message he got from other people even generated more doubt about the possibility to make a better life there because some people had told him that "only those who are rich can afford the irrigation fee so that they have a better life, and those who are poorer can't afford it so that they have an even worse life than they had at home." The contrast case to Ma Wenli's is the story of Mr. Xi Qi (For the detailed story, see Section 6.2 of this chapter) Mr. Xi Qi was in debt for all his resettlement cost, so he was for sure not in a better economic situation of Mr. Ma Wenli. But, Mr. Xi Qi moved.

*'An interface approach depicts knowledge as arising from 'an encounter of horizons'. The incorporation of new information and new discursive or cultural frames can only take place on the basis of already-existing knowledge frames and evaluative modes, which are themselves*

*re-shaped through the communicative process. Hence knowledge emerges as a product of interaction, dialogue, reflexivity and contests of meaning, and involves aspects of control, authority and power.'* (Long, 2001:71)

Knowledge is constructed in the process of interaction among different actors, and from personal experiences, so that it cannot be given. Therefore, we cannot blame people for having no knowledge, but we have to question why they have not had the opportunities to know. This is fundamental for defining how to help the poor. Poor people are often blamed as ignorant of 'available good opportunities'. But the same opportunity means different thing to different people. It is difficult to convince people to believe in something beyond their personal knowledge. This is especially true for farmers. If we cannot think in the way that poorer farmers think, we should not be surprised about the gaps between policy goals and farmers' responses.

Different economic situations may generate different levels of knowledge about the outside world because poor economic situations certainly restrain mobility. Ma Jiye could afford to travel many times to the resettlement area to learn about the situation there and also to generate his own knowledge about making a life there because he actually cultivated land there before he finally moved.

The anticipation of quick achievements in government program/project rationale and project implementation often results in the exclusion of benefits for the poorer. To gain knowledge about any new place needs time. Knowledge cannot be taught but learned. One can hear of opportunities but confidence is best built on personal knowledge. The poorer have slow or even no response to new initiatives because they very often have less or little knowledge about the outside world, and they also have less capacity to take risks, foreseen and unforeseen. Hence, the poorer should not be blamed by their less active response to any new initiatives. Rather the government should review its program/project rationale and formulation, especially the time span for project implementation and the choice of resettlement area in the case of resettlement projects.

There are different types of resettlement in the government organized voluntary resettlement programs in terms of distance from places of origin. Types of resettlement include cross-provincial, cross-county, cross-township and cross-village resettlement and intra-village resettlement. The resettlement project in Ningxia on which we conducted our research is an example of cross-county resettlement, and the one in Yunnan is an intra-village resettlement. People with less mobility tend to have more knowledge of nearby places and have little knowledge of distant places, which proved to be true in the two research areas. Everyone we interviewed in the villages of origin in Yunnan had been to the resettlement site because it was only two hours walking distance

away. But many people in the village of origin in Ningxia had never been to the resettlement areas because the distance was about 400 km.

By emphasizing the importance of knowledge, we have to realize that knowledge is only one of the many determinants. Many farmers from the place of origin of Yunnan did not move due to economic constraints even though they had relatively better knowledge about the resettlement area. My point is that it is difficult enough for farmers to move even though they can manage financially, no need to say how difficult when first of all they have to overcome the economic constraint.

### **6.5 Power configurations**

The following case shows that Mr. Ma Yongzheng could get rid of local power control, left his village of origin and settled in resettlement village as long as he could afford the cost of resettlement. The case confirms that the resettlement project for poverty reduction have already ended up as an economic development project. Social and economic dynamics are working under the economic growth model. Under the economic growth model, economic factors take precedence of other factors such as political power despite the influence that political power may have. Observations about power configurations involving the Village Head and the Village Secretary in the resettlement village aims to address the relationship between authority and power. Both cases inform us about how resettlement opens up opportunities for new power relations in which some factors may acquire a different weighting in comparison with how they function in places of origin.

#### *The Story of Ma Yongzheng*

Ma Yongzheng is 52 years old and now living in Moon Village. He has primary level school education. He moved from Xiapu Village of Xiapu Township. His wife, who is 48 years old also finished primary school. He has 4 children, a daughter of 18, and three boys of 16, 14 and 10 years old. The girl has primary school education, the first boy has also primary school education, and the two other boys are both still in primary school. He moved to Moon Village in 1998.

Mr. Ma told his story thus:

"When I had the idea to move, my family disagreed. My parents said to me: 'We were born here, and we have been here all our life, you were born here and you could also stay here.' My parents thought that there would be no good future after moving. There are mainly two reasons for them to say so. One is that the amount of land allocated to each household is very small. Only 8 mu to each household no matter how many children you have, and children will have no chance to get land after they grow up or get married. The other reason is that

wage labour cannot earn much money even if there are wage labour opportunities. I understand why my parents think in this way because they have spent their whole life in Xiapu so it is hard for them to think of living in other places. Not only my parents, but also my 5 brothers disagreed with my proposal. They think that Xiapu isn't so bad and that people can survive so that there is no need to move. Some other people in my village of origin also think that I am stupid to move because they think that everywhere is the same. I thought a lot before I moved, but the reason why I made my decision without any hesitation was because I wanted to get rid of a religious imbroglio."

In the early 1990s, there occurred a big affair between two religious groups. People in the sub-village where Ma Yongzheng previously lived belonged to two different Muslim groups, the Sha Gou Group, and the other called the Chen Jia Gou Group. The leader of the Chen Jia Gou Group was Ma Yucheng, and the leader of Sha Gou Group was called Ma Fuli. Ma Yucheng was then one of the leaders of the Administrative Village. [Mr. Ma requested that the names of the villages should not be mentioned in any written papers, so the name of his sub-village of origin is given here]. The Chen Jia Gou Group was relatively smaller and weaker than the Sha Gou Group so that it always came under the Sha Gou Group in religious practice. In 1990, Ma Yucheng once proposed to the Sha Gou Group that it should become on an equal level to the Chen Jia Gou Group. The Sha Gou Group took such a proposal to mean a separation of the Chen Jia Gou Group from the Sha Gou Group and so Ma Yucheng's proposal was refused. There has been a dispute between the two groups since then.

He explained:

"There were 48 households in my sub-village of origin, 42 households belonged to the Sha Gou Group and 6 households to the Chen Jia Gou Group. The water source of the village is located in the place where members of Chen Jia Gou Group lived. Since the dispute members of the Sha Gou Group were often refused water from the water source. With the accumulation of all sorts of disputes between the two groups, something big happened on May 14, 1991. On that day, while members from the Sha Gou Group were at religious worship, members of Chen Jia Gou Groups from different villages came and challenged Sha Gou Groups. Confrontation started and neither of the two sides withdrew. About 20 people from the Sha Gou Group were killed because they were not prepared. Even the leader of the Sha Gou Group, Mr. Ma Fuli tried to calm down his members after the killing, for members of the Sha Gou Group wanted to take revenge. Then, members of the Sha Gou Group went and killed more than 30 members of Chen Jia Gou Group. The Chen Jia Gou Group then got hold of several dozen guns and killed even more members of Sha Gou Group who were only equipped with agricultural tools. After this gunfight, the government assigned troops to stop the conflict. Leaders from both sides were



arrested and are still in prison. The Chen Jia Gou Group finally gained its separation from the Sha Gou Group even though both groups lost their previous leaders.

"I belong to the Sha Gou Group. I was then the leader of our local security team, so I had authority to access the guns. When the conflicts upgraded to a gunfight, my people asked if they could take the guns in my charge. Although I am not highly educated, I do know how serious that would be if I used the guns for such purposes, so I refused. Since then, I have been cut off from my religious group. I was not allowed to participate in any religious activities in my group. My relatives were forced not to make contact with me. One of my brothers was physically attacked simply because he came to visit me. My family and myself were deeply affected by this. I felt very much depressed and could not have a normal life there. I felt that I really needed to go somewhere else to start a new life.

"If the village leaders of my village of origin would have had a decision-making role in deciding who could move and who could not, I would not have had a chance to move. Religious leaders sometimes are village leaders, and if not they have a strong influence on the village leaders. Sometimes my village of origin received government poverty alleviation support, such as relief or low interest loans, and it was always those leaders who decided who was to get these resources. The criterion of allocation for those resources was not those who were the poorer, but which religious group they were in or who was more powerful or who was close to those in power. However, in the case of resettlement project, I could buy land as long as I had money. In the first place, in 1997, I bought two pieces of land in Minning Village of the resettlement area, which is next to Moon Village. I paid 3,900 yuan for each piece of land. Later, Minning Village requested that all those who had bought land must finish building their houses by the end of September 1997. The house standards set by the Resettlement Office was so high that each house would cost at least 10,000 yuan. I could not afford to build an expensive house within such a short period of time so I sold the land in Minning Village and bought two pieces of land in Moon Village. I bought the land from two households who could no longer to manage to live here due to lack of labor. I knew the two households through a close friend. More than 40% of the resettlers now in Moon village purchased their land rather than got the allocation from the resettlement project for poverty reduction.

"I have a positive view of life in the resettlement area. The village of origin I lived is located in a mountainous area. Although there is vast land there, the harvest can hardly be assured. Such extensive cultivation has no future. However, in the resettlement area, there is a good harvest as long as there is water. At least, food security is assured. Furthermore, we can easily get cash income from wage labour. This is because we have easy access to good and fast

transportation to the state-owned farms, to big cities and to information here. I normally work as a wage labourer 10 days every month. I feel no regret at all at moving.

"Of course, expenditure here is much higher than in the place of origin, but my views are wider here, my thought gets active here, and I believe that my children will have a better future here."

*The Village Head and the Village Party Secretary*

Normally, the administrative village committee is composed of Village Party Secretary, Village Head and Village Accountant. The Village Party Secretary is supposed to be the one in full charge of village affairs. He/she is appointed by the Party Committee of a level than the village, and is therefore not elected by the villagers. When we first arrived at Moon Village, together with township officials, the person who received us was Mr. Ma Wenxi, the Village Head. In the first meeting held in the village it was important to be accompanied by a higher official. This gave us "official" status, so that we could be sure that we would be well received by the village, at least "publicly". The first such meeting also indicated who was to be responsible for our visit to the village. Normally, the person from the village committee who always receives outsiders or higher officials is the one who is in power. Mr. Ma Wenxi warmly welcomed us. I informed him our research plan in Moon Village. He arranged three villagers who could lead us the way, and he arranged a family who would prepare lunch for us.

On the second day of our research in the village, a young man approached me when I was eating watermelon after lunch on the side of the village path. We started chatting. He told me that he was the Village Party Secretary: Ma Shaolin<sup>4</sup>. At this moment, I realised that it was always the Village Head rather than Village Secretary who had played the role of host. He invited me to his house. On the way to his house, we met a group of farmers who were standing around the irrigation canal. Seeing that we were approaching, most of them quickly went away. This was to my surprise. Normally, my experience when visiting the countryside was that, though farmers might not come close in the beginning, eventually they would and they certainly would not go away quickly, since they were always curious to know what outsiders were doing there.

By the time we approached the irrigation canal, there were only two farmers left. I asked them what they were doing there. One of them answered: "The water flow was too small last time when I paid for irrigating my field. I

<sup>4</sup> Ma Shaolin is the eldest son of Mr. Ma Zhengxuan, the village secretary in the place of origin, who organised farmers' demand of resettlement land. (See 6.1 Farmers' Agency - A force to encounter). For detailed story about Mr. Ma Shaolin, see, *The Story of Ma Shaolin*, Section 6.2: The Function of Kinship.

heard that irrigation water might come again today. So I would like to get some more water for my field." I asked: "Does this happen often?" Mr. Ma Shaolin answered instead of the farmer, saying to me: "No, not often. The case is that farmers do not clean their field channel to enable an easier water flow into the field." I looked back to the farmer for confirmation. He put his shovel on his shoulder and went away.

Mr. Ma and I had to continue on our way to his house. I found out that he had a big house and a big home yard, much bigger than the average size for other villagers. We had a long talk in his home where I got to know some information about the origin of the resettlement project, about his place of origin and his life in the resettlement area.

After my meeting with the Village Party Secretary, the Village Head did not wait for us anymore on the side of the village path every morning as we entered the village by car. However, this did not affect our field investigations because, by then, we had basically found out where to go. Later, one day, I saw the Village Head driving a motorcycle at high speed on the outskirts of the village. I waved him down and he approached. I then asked where he had been. He told me that he had been busy settling a conflict between two neighbours. One family has a plum tree in its home yard. Apparently, the 10-year-old boy from the neighbouring family picked up some plums. But just before running away, he was caught by the owner, who beat him about the head. That was yesterday. This morning the boy was in a serious condition, so together with the parents he sent the boy off to the county hospital. He returned from hospital to report to the township official about the case and had a discussion with the plum owner. Now, he was going to the hospital again. He was about to ask about our research, but I let him go quickly because I can see anxiety on his face.

### *Discussion*

The information presented in the above section has raised issues of power configurations between religious groups, individual manoeuvres against existing sites of power, the dynamics of power and authority, and so forth. The data that I was able to obtain opens up a discussion of, rather than provides a detailed lay out of, the power configuration in any given context.

Hindess summarizes discourse on the conceptions of power in modern western society as follows:

*'Two conceptions of power have dominated Western political thought in the modern period. One, which has been especially prominent in recent academic discussion, is the idea of power as a simple quantitative phenomenon. Power, in this sense, is nothing more than a kind of generalized capacity to act. The second, more complex, understanding is that of power as involving not only a capacity but also a right to act, with both capacity and right being seen to rest on the consent of those over whom the power is exercised' (1996:1)*

The capacity of power can only be possibly quantified when power is exercised so that the argument is that *'the wishes of those with more power will normally prevail over the wishes of those with less'* (ibid: 2). In this way Hindess believes that Weber's conception of power falls under power as simply capacity, as Weber identifies power with *'the chance of a man or a number of men to realize their own will even against the resistance of others who are participating in the action'* (Weber, 1978:926).

Power as a right to act refers to 'power as legitimate capacity'. Hindess goes on to argue that *'[t]he importance of this understanding of power is particularly clear ... in discussions of the power that is thought to be exercised by the ruler of a state or by its (central) government.'* This conception of power as a right to act has a close link with the political system of a country. Under a democratic system, *'the sovereign (or government) is conceived of as issuing commands which the subjects – by virtue of the consent which they are presumed to have given to the sovereign's rule – are expected to treat as having the character of binding obligations. While the consent of its subjects, then, is thought to provide the sovereign with the right to govern, the attendant obligations on those subjects are supposed to provide the sovereign with the capacity to do so'* (Hindess, 1996:12).

In contrast, Long (2001:242) defines power by emphasizing its dynamic features. This conception of power, I believe, is more relevant for the analysis of the social dynamics of rural communities.

*'Power configurations are depicted in terms of the idea of interlocking actors' projects made up of heterogeneous sets of social relations imbued with values, meanings and notions of authority and control, domination and subordination, and sustained by specific patterns of resource distribution and competition (i.e., power construction). Power cannot simply be possessed or accumulated. Nor can it be precisely measured in terms of quantity or quality. It emerges out of social processes and is better considered a 'product' rather than a 'given'. Having power does not entail that others are without it: there is no zero-sum game. However, power may become reified in social life; that is, people often think of it as a unitary coercive force wielded by 'the ruling class', 'agents of the state' or 'the establishment'.*

The dynamics of power configurations imply that power is not equivalent to official authorized authority. The latter can be relatively static for a period of time. However, power configurations are changing all the time. Power leveraging and balancing is taking place as interactions among the different actors moves on. Official authorised authority can be only one element in the constitution of power configurations.

Long (2001:71-72) argues that the notion of power configurations is a key ingredient of social and organisational interfaces: *'Power is the outcome of struggles over meanings and strategic relationships. Like knowledge, power is not simply possessed, accumulated and unproblematically exercised (Foucault, in Gordon 1980:78-108). Power implies much more than how hierarchies and hegemonic control demarcate social positions and opportunities, and restrict access to resources. It is the outcome of complex struggles and negotiations over authority, status, reputation and resources, and necessitates the enrolment of networks of actors and constituencies (Latour, 1994, Callon and Law, 1995).....Creating room for manoeuvre implies a degree of consent, a degree of negotiation and thus a degree of*

*power, as manifested in the possibility of exerting some control, prerogative, authority and capacity for action, be it frontstage or backstage, for flickering moments or for more sustained periods (Villarreal, 1992:256)*

Power relations are never static. Those who are in power always try to control and those who are not in power often try to get out from under it, which is a natural dynamic in any power relations, and one that leads to a changing power configuration. The Sha Gou Group tried to keep its control over the Chen Jia Gou Group who tried to get rid of their control. This led to conflicts between the two groups and ended up with a new power relationship in the separation of the two groups. The decisive factor for Mr. Ma to move was to get away from the stranglehold of the old power relations. In the resettlement area, everyone was busy trying to build a new life, and together they are building a new community, where new power configurations will emerge. Segments of old power constructions may still influence these new configurations in the new community but only in a limited way. Ma Yongzheng no longer lived under the shadow of past events after he moved, even though some people in the village knew about his story.

It is very hard for outsiders to understand the power configuration and processes ongoing in any local community. Insiders live within the power dynamic in the course of their everyday lives so that they are able to figure out what situations are about and how to deal with them. Local people are always careful in answering questions from outsiders because they have to be cautious not to offend those in power. Being sensitised to the fact that all the resettlers are Muslim, I paid great attention to how religion played a role in influencing people's ideas and decision-making in the resettlement process. I often asked interviewees: "What did your religious leader say to you about the resettlement?" Answers often were: "We did not talk much about resettlement in religious practices." I did not give up, then further asked: "Does your religion play any role in your day-to-day life besides that of going to the mosque?" The answer was: "Our leaders told us to work hard for a better life, do not quarrel with your neighbours etc." I gave up asking further questions because I realized that the understanding of religious implication could not be reached through a simple question and answer exercise. Power can only be possibly embodied or manifested when power is exercised, especially in competition or conflict. I asked Ma Yongzheng in relation to the conflicts between his group and the other one that had caused the death of so many people, whether there were any essential differences between the two groups?" Mr. Ma said: "Oh, it is difficult to explain. The major difference is that my group (the Sha Gou Group) forbids drinking and smoking, but the Chen Jia Gou Group allows drinking and smoking." Of course such seemingly simple religious practices often have deeper meanings and values and affect social interaction in everyday life and of course such differences were probably not

the only divisive elements between the two groups. Whatever the real source of the differences, still the religious conflict taking place in the early 1990s in Xiapu township manifested the power that religious groups can have in provoking conflicts and in controlling people's behaviour.

Being Village Party Secretary, Mr. Ma Shaolin should, according to his official status, be the most authoritative figure in the village. Furthermore, he is the son of the Village Party Secretary in his village of origin, so he may have authoritative support from his father and his father's kinsmen. Yet, '[p]ower is not simply possessed, accumulated and unproblematically exercised' (Foucault, in Gordon 1980:78-108) Mr. Ma Shaolin's official position does not necessarily grant him power. I observed that the officials at the township level did not regard Mr. Ma Shaolin as the first figure to host outsiders. On our arrival at the village, the research team was introduced to Mr. Ma WenXi, the Village Head not to Mr. Ma Shaolin, the Village Secretary. Being asked to receive outsiders and higher officials imply recognition from a higher authority. Having official status does not mean that one has the power to exert control. We should not here understand control in military terms, that is, that for each order from a 'superior', the 'inferior' must react with obedience. In day-to-day life, especially in the countryside, exerting control always take place in an informal manner. Even if sometimes farmers may be called to participate in official meetings, such organised formality has nothing to do with how power is exercised. This is why an interface analysis is extremely useful in revealing the nature of power configurations. Feigning ignorance or using tactics of avoidance are typical farmers' resistance to authority. Mr. Ma Shaolin could not exercise power if his fellow villagers avoided meeting him or ignored his appearances, which is precisely what I observed.

Authority is granted by the superior, but power is gained from within and given by the so-called 'inferior' subordinates but may also be reinforced by the superior him or herself. If we view power as the outcome of struggles over meanings and strategic relationships, then Mr. Ma Wenxi seems more powerful than Mr. Ma Shaolin, even though he is officially supposed to be secondary to Mr. Ma Shaolin. The prestige and leverage that local leaders have depend crucially on how much farmers can count on them in solving day-to-day problems and incidents or conflicts. Power of a local leader is nourished by his/her willingness to become involved in and show good capabilities in problem and conflict solving. I guess that this is how Mr. Ma Wenxi developed his power when I saw him busy solving conflicts between two neighbours, and his standing when helping the sick child.

The social dynamic of poverty reduction at the micro-level is that the allocation of poverty reduction resources is often not directed by the degree of poverty but by power configuration. One clear phenomenon in most, if not all societies and communities, is that those in power are not the poor. When there

are opportunities for a better living, those in power will always have better access to them than those who are not. When resources or opportunities for poverty reduction appear to be opportunities for a better living, those who are in power use their power and social networks to benefit from them themselves rather than first giving opportunities to the poorer in the same communities. This is why many poverty alleviation projects have ended up supporting the better off rather than the poorer.

Resettlement projects were often claimed as being for the purpose of poverty reduction so that they could get support from the poverty reduction resources offered by central and local governments. However, in the implementation process, these projects were implemented under an ideology of economic growth. The direct impact of this is that the economic capacity of individual farmers becomes the dominant determinant of resettlement. Under such circumstance, power structures no longer necessarily determine access to the opportunity. This allows those with economic capacity but placed unfavourably in the existing power structure to take advantage of the opportunity. However, such possible positive impacts will only favour those with economic capacity, rather than those under deprivation from both poverty and the power structure. In fact, economic power and political power always reinforce each other and form an alliance. This is why poverty reduction projects often fail to reach the poorer and the poorest.

## **Part II: Women in Resettlement**

Part I of this chapter explored why the same land means different things to the better off as against the poorer. Various sociological concepts were introduced to analyze how social and economic factors work together so that the majority of the resettlers were from the better off rather than the poorer farmer households. In Part II I aim to explain why and how the same land means something different to women than to men. Chapter four illustrated how women and men were affected differently in terms of their involvement in agricultural production after resettlement. Such different gender impacts imply that women and men are likely to have different views on resettlement. This section of the chapter then illustrates how women's views barely figure in the resettlement process because their influence in decision-making at household level appears to be insignificant. However, my focus on decision-making at household level does not imply that at the policy level farmers, whether male or female, have any major impact on decision making.

## **6.6 Why women are a silent group in resettlement – Capability or right?**

The following cases show that women had less say than men at the household level in the decision-making processes of resettlement. The first case explores this issue of the lack participation in decision making through a narrative provided by the wife of a returnee settler. The second case shows how the wife and daughters were largely excluded from the husband and father's decision to move to the settlement area; nor were they involve in his decision to return.

### *The Story of Li Jianhua, A returnee*

Li Jiahua now lives in Xiapu Village of Xiapu Township in Xiji County of Ningxia. She is 25 years old and has primary level education. She married in 1994. Her husband is 27 years old. They have three children, one boy and two girls. She told the following story:

"I was married in 1994. By then my husband had already bought a piece of land in Moon Village. It cost him 280 yuan. I went to see our land in the resettlement area before we moved. I was happy to find that we would cultivate irrigated land. I was also happy to find out that my workload would be reduced because the area of land would be much smaller than we cultivated in Xiapu. My husband was a donkey trader before we moved to Moon Village and he continued this business after we returned. We moved in 1995. We stayed there for 5 years until we returned in 2000. There were several reasons for us to move back. My husband was not very happy to stay there because he could not continue his donkey trading business. We also found that the production inputs were too expensive even though production output was high. My husband finally decided to sell the land when he found out that the price of land in Moon village had become so high that he could earn a great profit from selling it. He sold our house (40 square meters) and sold the 8 mu of land for 15,000 yuan (about 1,830 US\$). This means that in 5 years we earned 54 times as much we paid for it from the increase in land prices in Moon Village. Then, back in Xiapu, he purchased a big house for us to live in, a small house and shed for continuing his donkey business and a large piece of land for farming. I felt regret at returning. Although we now live in a much bigger house than in Moon Village, I have to do both fieldwork and housework, including caring for my three children because my husband is now off donkey trading. He is seldom at home so that he cannot share any of the workload with me. When we were in Moon Village I did not feel as tired as now because we had much less land and my husband and I always shared the fieldwork. I found that it is easier to manage irrigated land than dry land."

I asked her who decided to come back. She said: "My husband was very eager to come back, and I agreed." I asked her whether she would rather move there again. She said: "I would be extremely happy if we moved back, but there



is little chance to move back because the land price is increasing". I further asked: "What would your husband say if you had not agreed with him on moving back?" My question surprised her. She thought a little, then said: "My husband never expects disagreement from me, so I seldom disagree with him. My husband cannot do his donkey business without me." Then I asked her to compare life in the two places. The following table summarizes her comparison:

**Table 6-3/Table 4-7: Ma Jianhua's comparison of life in Moon Village and Xiapu Village**

	Moon Village (resettlement area)	Xiapu Village (place of origin)
Workload	Not as heavy as in Xiapu	Overloaded
Economic situation	Higher income, higher Expenditure	Lower income, lower Expenditure
Water	Very convenient	It takes an hour to get a bucket of water. It is inconvenient because it has to be collected from a well in the yard of another household
Electricity	Stable	Not stable
Cooking oil	It costs cash	From own field
Expenditure on gifts	Less expenditure on gifts. (100 yuan /year, about 11 US\$)	More expenditure on gifts. (400 yuan/ year) (about 50 US\$)

*The Story of Ma Chunhua and her family*

Ma Chunhua is the eldest daughter of her family. Her father is Ma Zhengzhi, who is 48 years old and illiterate. Her mother is 46 years old and also illiterate. There are three children in the family, she is 19 years old and illiterate the same as her 17 year-old sister. Her brother is 20 years old and has just graduated from college. Ma Chunhua told us:

"My father makes all the decisions in our family, we, including my mother, are only informed afterwards. The center of his life is my brother so that all the investment he has made is all for the future of his son. My sister and I had no chance to go to school at all but my brother studied up to college level. I had no knowledge of how and why my father got the land and then sold it. All I know is that my father sold the land to my cousin in 1995. My father told my mother about having sold the land only after he had done it, and my mother told me later. I liked the resettlement area so much when I visited there in 1996 to work as an agricultural labourer. In the resettlement area, there are many opportunities to go out and find wage labour. My mother always told me that women could not decide their own fate. She is somehow right, because I am illiterate only because I am a girl. Now, the only possibility to change my life is

through marriage. I refused recently again my father's proposal of my marriage to a mountain man. I want to marriage someone in the irrigation area."

Ma Zhengzhi told us:

"I participated in the 1990 farmers' gathering so that I was given the right to a piece of land in the resettlement area. I was given an official allocation in 1994 and in that year I prepared to build a house and so transported many materials there to the site. What I found there was no irrigation water and hardly any houses had been constructed at that time. I felt no hope when I saw the desert around me. In the end, I came back with all the construction materials and decided not to move. I have only one son so that the house and land we have here should be fine enough for him to make a good living. I sold the piece of land in the resettlement area to my nephew, Ma Shouye, for 700 yuan in 1997. We did not go through any legal procedure and we signed no contract either. We trust each other because we are relatives. The local authority recognizes such arrangements as long as we two have no dispute. I did not have any discussion with my wife when I sold the land. My eldest daughter made some noise after she heard the news from my wife, but I did not care because she will marry out anyway."

#### *Why husbands make the decisions*

In the survey conducted in Ningxia, we asked who made the decision to move, or not to move, and why. The interviewer started the question by asking who makes most of the decisions in the family, husband or wife, and then asked the reasons for that. In the data analysis, the interviewed households were categorized into three: husband made most of the decisions, wife made most of the decisions, and husband and wife make decisions together. The following tables summarize the results. The number in Tables 6-4, 6-5 and 6-6 is the accumulated votes. Once a reason was mentioned, the reason wins one vote. Interviewees can list more than one reason, so that the sum of the votes has nothing to do with the total number of interviewees. The number of votes equals the weight given by interviewees to the different reasons. We obtained 56 responses, among which about one third were from female interviewees.

**Table 6-4: Who makes household decisions (interviews in Xiapu Village of Ningxia)**

	Households where husbands make decisions	Households where husbands and wives jointly make decisions	Households where wives make decisions
Number (N=56)	45	8	3
Percentage	80.3%	14.3%	5.4%

Table 6-4 shows that it is mainly the husband or the husband and wife together who make decisions in most of the households. There are very few households where wives make decisions alone.

**Table 6-5: Why husbands make decisions in the households where husbands made most of the decisions**

(N=45)

Ranking	Reasons	Number of Votes
1	Tradition	20
2	Men have seen more so they know more and have more ideas	15
3	Men have better education	8
4	Men do more [have experience]so they can make more decisions	6
5	Women are dependent so that they do not want to take charge	6

Table 6-5 shows that the most important reasons given for husbands making decisions are that, firstly, traditional gender relations define men as the key decision-makers, thus women are given less chance; secondly, men are more knowledgeable because they have more opportunities to be so because their social experiences are broader. Thirdly, men receive better education and are therefore more likely to be literate and thus are considered more capable of making decisions. It would seem them that women's lesser role in decision-making is fundamentally due to the deprivation of their right to develop their decision-making capacities. In the first place, so-called 'traditional' gender relations deny women the opportunity to be decision-makers, which limits their capacity in this regard. They thus have less chance to develop and be recognized. Personal experiences are important in generating personal knowledge and ideas, and women appear less knowledgeable about decision-making practices and are also seldom willing to push forward their own ideas. The reason for this is not that they are naturally less capable of generating ideas, but that they have little chance to gain the necessary experience and know-how. Furthermore arents prefer to invest in their sons' rather than their daughters' education, and so the right of girls to formal education is never on an equal footing with boys.

**Table 6-6: Why women made decisions the households where wives made most of the decisions**

(N=3)

Ranking	Reasons	Number of Votes
1	Husbands do not like to be in charge	2
2	The husband died	1

**Table6-7: Why husband and wife make decisions together**

(N=8)

Ranking	Reasons	Number of Votes
1	Husband and wife should respect each other so that the family can be in harmony	5
2	Decision made together develop confident feelings	2
3	Husband and wife form one family, they should discuss and reach consensus.	2

Table 6-6 shows that the principal reason why some women made decisions is due to the withdrawal or absence of the husband. Women can certainly make decisions, but they only gain the full right to do so when men give up their right. Nevertheless, we must acknowledge as a general point that, whatever the circumstances, women still retain some part to play in household affairs and decisions. The story told by Ma Jianhua is full of 'we' and 'our'. This indicates that she considered that she and her husband had been jointly involved in this venture. Her husband wanted to go back and she tells us that 'she agreed'. Table 6-4 also indicates there were 10 (if one discounts the one whose husband died) out of 55 households where women made decisions or made them with their husbands. The matter is thus somewhat more complicated than the survey results suggest. It seems likely that there is a gap between what women and men say and how they act and there is the question of the context in which the interviews are conducted, that is whether or not both men and women are present.

The other methodological question to bear in mind when evaluating the results of these interviews - is that the question about 'who makes decisions, husband or wife', is likely to be a leading question and therefore could have influenced the answers. One would expect the wife within a Muslim household to play the game of saving face for the husband by giving him the manly role, even if in fact she makes joint decisions with him.

### *Discussion*

Researchers and practitioners in gender studies and practice are often questioned about the justification for being concerned about women and gender issues. Such an inquiry implies ignorance of the importance of existing gender inequality in society. To answer the question, at a theoretical level, one must investigate the causes of women's inequality, and at a practical level, policy frameworks to promote gender equality need to be formulated and discussed.

Feminist theories help to understand the roots of women's oppression and gender inequality. Gimenez (1998:1) summarizes feminist theoretical debates as follows:

*'It was possible, in the heady days of the Women's Liberation Movement, to identify four main currents within feminist thought; Liberal (concerned with attaining economic and political equality within the context of capitalism); Radical (focused on men and patriarchy as the main causes of the oppression of women); Socialist (critical of capitalism and Marxism, so much so that avoidance of Marxism's alleged reductionisms resulted in dual systems theories postulating various forms of interaction between capitalism and patriarchy); and Marxist Feminism (a theoretical position held by relatively few feminists in the U.S - myself included - which sought to develop the potential of Marxist theory to understand the capitalist sources of the oppression of women).'*

Radical, Socialist and Marxist feminisms tackle either the patriarchal or capitalist system or both of them in seeking the roots of women's oppression and the ways to emancipate women. However, Liberal feminism advocates women's self-advancement for making it possible for women to develop the capacity to compete with men in society. Radical, Socialist and Marxist feminisms raise structural problems in society, but not Liberal feminism. The key critique of Liberal feminism is that it does not tackle the fundamental causes of gender inequality; instead it focuses on individual women's struggles against unequal social arrangements. Gender equality cannot be reached without a fundamental change in the unequal gender relations embedded in existing social structures. Structural change takes time and it is unlikely to take place rapidly without revolution. However, it is hoped that with an increasing recognition of the voices of weaker groups in society under the democratic movement in China, and in the world more generally, women's voices may become increasingly heard. In this research, I have raised the question of what makes women a silent group in the resettlement process – is it capability or the lack of a right to speak? This draws attention to the root/structural problems of gender inequality rather than doubting women's capabilities. Where capacities are limited it is usually a consequence of entrenched patterns of gender inequality.

Gender relations are fundamentally power relations. The notion of 'two faces of power' – the public and the private – provides an analytical angle for understanding how women's rights and interests are neglected in existing power structures of society. The public face of power implies that *'Possession of power can be identified with confidence only in cases of overt conflict ... since those who prevail ... in fact, have more power than their opponents'* (Hindess, 1996:4). The private face of power can, for example, *'be seen in the covert exclusion of the interests of particular individuals or groups from consideration in legislative assemblies ... and other arenas in which decisions affecting the life of the community are taken. ... There are also instances of the exercise of power in which its victims fail even to recognize that their real interests are at risk, and consequently make no attempt to defend those interests'* (ibid:4-5). Women's interest in resettlement has not become a public interest. Such silence in the public domain does not mean that women have no interests or that their interests have been

taken into consideration. The private face of power gives the reason for this silence. Such silence means two things: one is that women's interests are excluded from public concerns due to unequal gender structures in society; the other is that women themselves fail to recognize their interests and make no attempt to defend their interests.

This leads to two main conclusions:

- (1) One should not stereotype gender relations. Instead one should identify the dynamics of gender relationships in the process of interaction among different actors. Male domination in family and society is a common phenomenon in rural China. However, forms of male domination and women's room for manoeuvre differ from one family to another and from one community to another.
- (2) The subordination of women does not mean that women are powerless within the family and society. But women have to fight much harder than men in the struggle over meanings, control and access.

During my interview with Ms. Li Jianhua, I was very impressed by her ability and smartness. Her husband was always absent from home, so she had to take care of three small children, be responsible for the farm work, look after the donkeys waiting to be sold, and undertaken many other daily tasks, such as fetching water and cooking. I was amazed by her quick response to every one of my questions and the logical way she organized her answers. She did not miss answering any of my small questions despite the continual interruptions from her children. The family would collapse if Ms. Li Jianhua quitted doing any of her key tasks. So I assume that Ms. Li Jianhua has strong bargaining power vis-à-vis her husband so long as she uses it or knows how best to use it. A technical problem with researching gender relations within a family is that the discussions, negotiations, conflicts and compromises between husband and wife, or among family members, are unlikely to be exposed to outsiders. As for the case of Ms. Ma Chunhua, when she recounted her future fated marriage, one could only but feel sympathy for her for the very limited space she has to fight in.

The story of Li Jianhua and Ma Chunhua illustrate that women and men have different views about and perhaps conflicting interests over the question of resettlement. However, in the latter's case the women's views were not reflected in the decisions that the man made apparently without consulting them. One widely accepted argument about why men make decisions rather than women is that women have lower ability so that they cannot make the right decisions. However, as I have argued it is the other way around, because women are deprived of the right to make decisions their capabilities are suppressed and unable to develop.

Household decision-making is a complicated process, which can only be properly understood by a close look at basic day-to-day social dynamics and problematic situations. The data presented in the previous tables are in fact far too simple to capture and understand this process fully. A simple dichotomy between 'having' and 'not having' (Villarreal, 2001: 6) is an oversimplification and therefore problematic. Women who are deprived of their rights should not be simply understood as women having no rights or women having no agency with which to create their own space. Furthermore, we have to be careful not to confirm the labeling and naming put on women, such as 'ignorant', 'backward', 'vulnerable', 'poorly educated' and so forth, because *'labeling and naming imply processes of control and regulation, wherein positions of status are created, granted and occupied'* (Villarreal, 2001:4).

To talk about women's rights in resettlement schemes entails three dimensions. First we should be aware of gender differentiated impacts. Women and men are affected differently in the resettlement process. An illustration of this is the change in the gender division of labor after resettlement. Second, we need to consider the nature of gender differentiated needs and interests. This is the case for Li Jiahua and her husband who clearly have different preferences as to where to live. Li Jiahua would have preferred to stay in the resettlement area because her workload was much lighter there than in the place of origin. However, her husband did not want to stay because he could not continue his donkey trading business. Third, to tackle the root causes of gender inequality involves consideration of land allocation and land entitlement in the resettlement areas.

The central gender-specific problem in the current land tenure system in China is that women's individual land rights are subsumed under the name of the household. The Household Contract System adopted in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Under this system, arable land was and still is allocated to each rural household based on the number of household members, including men, women and children. So, even though the entitlement of land is given to the household, the right of each household member is recognized and contributes to the total land area given to a household. Changes in household composition resulting from death, marriage of sons and daughters and new births are taken into account periodically when land adjustments are carried out at village level. However, since the mid-1990s, land adjustment has been discouraged by central government due to the stability of land use rights. This trend will affect women greatly because it is mostly the woman who moves to the man's household after marriage in rural areas. Current studies provide some evidence to support the case that more women than men in rural areas have no land. A field study in 22 villages of 17 provinces found that 5 % of women as against 2 % of men were landless. However, among 163 married women interviewed, 32 % said they had no land. It also emerged that 80 % of those who were married after 1995 had no

land (Lin, 2001). Furthermore, entitlement to land in the name of the household head means in practice that land is at the disposal of men since they are the ones usually registered as head of household. Furthermore, men's decisions are socially legitimized at household and community level in this generally patriarchal society. To tackle gender inequality over land issues requires not only a gender-equal legal framework, but also a change in attitudes to gender relations and an awareness of the differentiated property rights<sup>5</sup> among both men and women. The provision of a gender-equal legal framework is a precondition to raising gender concerns over land entitlement in resettlement schemes. Yet such a legal framework is still wanting.

This chapter has used social dynamics as an umbrella concept to embrace the flux of a complex reality. The use of orientating concepts drawn from the actor-oriented approach, such as agency, kinship, networks, knowledge and power configurations were offered as a way of coming to grips with these dynamics. The departure point for this actor-oriented perspective has been micro-level processes. However this should not imply that its contribution to macro-level analysis is negligible. On the contrary, the understanding of macro policy and practice must in the final analysis be evaluated at the everyday, micro-end of the policy chain.

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<sup>5</sup> As Peter Ho (2001a:394) indicates: '[T]o date there are not many conflicts [over the land issue], because farmers are not well imbued with the idea of "property". But problems are sure to arise in the future.'



## Conclusion

The research findings from the two resettlement projects show that the resettled population has greatly benefited from resettlement. Those who resettled in Ningxia have benefited economically in that they now have higher net cash incomes. They have also improved the value of their productive fixed assets over the years in the resettlement area. Resettlers now enjoy much better food security than those who remained behind and they have access to better water sources and to irrigated land, while those remaining still only have access to dryland. Resettlers have much better access to markets in terms of distance. Furthermore they have access to telecommunications and their children enjoy much better educational facilities. Resettlers to the site in Yunnan had only moved about one year prior to the research began, so it was still too early to assess the outcomes of their move at household level. The benefits at community level, however, were already evident. Resettlers are much closer to markets and can therefore go more often. They have access to telecommunications, and school facilities are much improved.

My assessment as to who are the beneficiaries of resettlement extends to two levels, the village and the household. The villages selected for the resettlement project were amongst the relatively better off villages within the overall areas of origin. At household level, the majority of those who eventually resettled are the better off farmers, while the poor population from the villages of origin makes up a very small percentage of the total resettled. Xiapu Administrative Village in Ningxia ranks amongst the two best off villages of the seven villages in Xiapu Township. Among the total population resettled in the research site in Xiapu sub-village, the poor population amounts to only 7 percent.

In Manggang Administrative Village, Yunnan, income levels of farmers before resettlement were the highest of the nine administrative villages of Nanla Township. Here the share of the poorer population reaches 14 percent of the total population resettled in the research site in Shangwantang, in Shangwantang and Huoshaozhai sub-villages.

Hence, we can conclude that it is the markedly better off farmers from relatively better off villages who have moved and generally benefited from resettlement projects within the scope of this research. This finding may not be surprising. It is, however, the first piece of empirical research conducted in China that focuses on exactly who have been the beneficiaries of government-organised voluntary resettlement projects aimed at poverty reduction. Resettlement is increasingly recognised as an effective instrument for poverty

reduction in China. The justification provided for this policy is based on the benefits that the resettled population has evidently derived.

Nevertheless, I argue that it is misleading to base the policy of resettlement for reasons of poverty reduction solely on how the resettled population has benefited. The first question to ask of a poverty reduction project is whether or not it is the poorer households that have benefited. The conclusion of this research is that both resettlement projects failed to meet this criterion, even though the resettled population has indeed greatly benefited.

The study explored three dimensions: the socio-economic outcomes of resettlement projects, the social dynamics of the resettlement process, and an analysis of the resettlement policy. In these respects, it represents innovative research on resettlement in China, both in terms of its level and angle of analysis, as well as in terms of the concepts used.

The finding that planned intervention, especially aimed at poverty reduction, failed to reach its professed goals is perhaps not an unexpected result. But research on this topic is essential for two reasons. First, poverty reduction is still a central task of many developing countries, including China, and absorbs a significant slice of available resources, and second, research that provides new perspectives may hopefully help to improve the effectiveness of interventions aimed at reducing poverty.

The outcomes of the two resettlement schemes researched are, on the one hand, the product of the ambivalence of policy and, on the other hand, the result of ignorance about the precise social dynamics at community level.

The ambivalence of policy processes is due to several factors: (1) the discontinuities between central government policy formulation and local policy interpretation and implementation, (2) misleading development belief systems on the part of government institutions and officials, and (3) the dichotomy between policy statements and implementation. The ignorance of the social dynamics at community level in the resettlement process relates to the fact that government-organised voluntary resettlement projects are carried out under a planned intervention approach driven by ideologies and development beliefs that fail to correspond with local social realities.

### **Ambivalence of Policy Processes**

#### *Discontinuity between centrally and locally driven policies*

The newly issued central government poverty reduction policy document, 'China's General Guideline for Rural Poverty Alleviation and Development in 2001', states that 'voluntary resettlement should be promoted in a steady manner'. The text further emphasises (1) 'Target groups are those very limited segments of the population living in extremely poor conditions and in a harsh environment lacking minimal natural resources', (2) 'Resettlement projects

should be implemented with a view to returning land to forest and grass', and (3) 'Resettlement can only be implemented on a voluntary basis.'

We can interpret central government policy as follows. The starting point for central government policy is in the places of origin. Yet, resettlement is not an option for the bulk of the poor population but only for the poorest segments of the population living in the most difficult places.

At local government level, there is no clear policy statement referring to resettlement. Hence we can trace the policy rationale only through related documents and interviews with key officials. The overall development objectives for the resettlement areas as set by the authorities of Ningxia Province and Xiji County<sup>1</sup> are to develop the resettlement areas into demonstration zones: (1) for 'resettlement for poverty alleviation' generally, (2) for modern agriculture, (3) for industrialised agriculture, and (4) for home yard production, whereby cash income is generated through high value production around the home. However, there is no indication at local level how resettlement could contribute directly to the development of the places of origin.

The Provincial authorities of Yunnan appear fully convinced that resettlement is the most effective way for poverty reduction and development. The following rationale was given<sup>2</sup>: (1) Resettlement is the most rapid way to reduce poverty. (2) It promotes economic and industrial development and enhances the value added to production. (3) It reduces population pressure in the places of origin, protects natural resources and the environment, particularly in the North-East and the South-West of Yunnan. (4) It helps to rapidly promote modern concepts amongst farmers, and finally (5) It corresponds to the central government development strategy of promoting the development of small and medium size towns.

My interpretation of the local government rationale for supporting resettlement is as follows: (1) Resettlement is an instrument for promoting regional economic development, for it can promote modern agriculture, industrial development and urbanisation in the resettlement areas. (2) The positive impact on the places of origin is assumed to take place automatically with the reduction of population pressure after resettlement, obviating the need to tend to the development of the places of origin.

Recalling the interpretation of the central government policy statement, the discontinuity between central policy and the rationale of local policy and its implementation becomes clear. The perception of target groups differs. The

<sup>1</sup> Source of information: Interview of Mr. Pu Zhenru on August 9, 2001, the director of Mingning Development Zone of Yongning County of Ningxia Province.

<sup>2</sup> Source of information: interview of Mr. Yang Bin, the deputy director of Resettlement Division of Poverty Alleviation Office of Yunnan.

central government defines its target group as the poorest population living in the most difficult places. But for the local government, the focus is on those who are able to contribute to the economic development of the resettlement areas. The perception of the target areas also differs. For central government, it is the development of the places of origin via the dual approach of reducing population pressure and investing in the turning of marginal land into forests and grassland. For local governments, the priority lies in the development of the resettlement areas by investing in infrastructure and the introduction of fresh labour resources through resettlement.

The Poverty Alleviation Office of the State Council is responsible for poverty alleviation programs both in terms of financial management and policy formulation at central government level. For resettlement projects with central government participation, the latter will provide up to one third of the total financial requirement. The Provincial and County governments are required to provide the remaining two thirds. The message, however, from local government is that local government itself is not in a position in fact to make any contribution of their own due to a lack of resources. Although local government is required to submit its proposals for approval to the central government, it will in fact follow its own financial plans and objectives when it comes to implementation. Hence, in the discontinuity between central and local governments, local government is the winning party.

#### *Misleading Development Belief Systems*

Economic growth and modernisation models drive the development belief systems of policy-makers and planners to favour resettlement projects. The ideological underpinnings of such belief systems are manifold. There is a belief in the trickle-down effect and a denial of the importance of local knowledge. Both are used to justify the specific rationale for the policy processes of resettlement. The trickle-down approach is used to explain why, in the view of local government, the development of the places of origin will take place automatically as soon as population pressure becomes less. By denying local knowledge, local government brushes aside all knowledge that has enabled the poor to survive and live for generations in a harsh environment. Hence the places of origin have, in their view, no development potential, and thus do not warrant any extra attention as to development needs of their own.

The widely accepted assumption about resettlement as an effective instrument for reducing the poverty in the places of origin thus hinges on, first, the reduction of population pressure. This, it is argued, will leave the population remaining behind with more living space, more arable land and thus much improved food security. And, secondly, it is maintained that pressure will be further reduced on natural resources, and as the demand for

grain decreases, will facilitate the implementation of returning land to forestry. My research findings demonstrate conclusively that such a linear view of social change does not tally with what is actually taking place. In the case of Ningxia, the reduced population in the wake of resettlement did not create more living space for all those left behind, only for the relatives of resettlers. In Xiapu Village of Ningxia, no clear policy was laid down on how to handle the land. Resettlers left their arable land to their relatives so that they could also maintain a right to keep using the land under informal family arrangements<sup>3</sup>.

In Manggang village, Yunnan, one year after resettlement had started, no clear policy had been formulated either. Again, in the case of Ningxia, no increase of forest area occurred between 1994, the year when resettlement started, and 2000 when the government-launched a special 'return land to forestry' programme<sup>4</sup>. Hence, the assumed trickle-down effects in the places of origin failed to materialize.

The modernisation approach assumes the dichotomy of traditional/backward and modern/advanced societies, which further implies a power structure of 'superior-inferior' and 'centre-periphery'. A denial of the validity of the local knowledge present in rural communities and among poor farmers is the product of such types of power structure. Widely accepted views/labels affixed to poor farmers in poor places include the following: Poor farmers are not responsive because they are reluctant to change. They are ignorant because they fail to appreciate the importance of modern knowledge and the value of education. They are considered shortsighted because they destroy the natural environment for short-term practical needs/gains. Hence, no attention tends to be given to the development of poor places that are considered bereft of any development potential according to the standards of modern society. I would, however, like to suggest a different view when looking at poor farmers and poor communities.

Firstly, the mixture of macro-level investment and micro-level development initiatives leads to the mistaken perception that poor farmers are passive and powerless in initiating development. Hence it is largely believed that development initiatives are generated from outside, because investment in large infrastructure, including electricity, roads and telecommunications, can only be decided at a higher level and come via outside support. Furthermore, technological innovation is dependent on external inputs. Public infrastructure investment and technological innovation is always realised through public resources and is not made conditional on a local lack of development initiative. Hence, investment linked to resettlement, and made available at the macro level only, cannot and should not be used to support the perception that those who

<sup>3</sup> For detailed information, see section 3.1 of Chapter IV: Access to Land and Food Security.

<sup>4</sup> For detailed information, see section 3.1.2.3 of Chapter III: Xiapu Village

benefit do so because of their superior willingness/ability to make development happen, while those who do not are undeserving on account of their presumed lack of ability and initiative.

Secondly, poor farmers are in fact active development agents, especially considering the minimal outside support they receive as compared to farmers in better off and semi-urban areas. Taking the example of Manggang Administrative Village, Yunnan, farmers in that village received virtually no outside support until the resettlement projects started in 1999.<sup>5</sup> For generations they had to make a living without any external assistance, coping with social, economic and ecological changes all the time. The population remaining in the village has to continue doing so. Thus, in the practical dynamics of everyday life, farmers' agency not only initiates but also drives development. Farmers initiated the resettlement project in the case of Ningxia, and farmers are decisive actors in the failure or success of any effort in afforestation.<sup>6</sup>

Thirdly, the low effective, mostly unsustainable, outside support that generally ends in failure should not be blamed on the perceived backwardness and ignorance of poor farmers. Rather it reflects the lack of appreciation and recognition of the significance of local knowledge by elite experts and outsiders. Local people are indeed the most knowledgeable about their surroundings and they are deeply interested in improving their lives. Hence, if they appear passive, ignorant or unresponsive, the indications are that this is linked to the type and manner of outside intervention. Take the example of the reforestation project in Xiapu Village, Ningxia. Viewing this without any of local knowledge might lead to the accusation that local farmers are responsible for the failure of the WFP reforestation projects (World Food Program of the United Nations). In 1982, about 2000 mu (133 ha) were planted with trees under the standard WFP 'food for work' scheme. When the project ended in 1986 and with it the food subsidies, all the trees were gradually cut down in order to make up for the deficit in grain production. It is widely believed that farmers need to be educated to recognise that tree planting can improve their ecological environment and that an improved ecological environment is essential for a sustainable livelihood. But, in fact, farmers do have a clear and accurate view of the impact of forestry on their ecological environment<sup>7</sup>. In 2000, the government stepped in to support a "return land to forest and grass" scheme, under which an area of more than 2,000 mu were planted with trees - two thirds for ecological purposes and one third for fruit, and 630 mu of grassland were planted. In the field discussion with the village secretary about what might

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<sup>5</sup> For detailed information, see section 3.2.4 of Chapter III: a brief historical profile of Manggang Administrative Village

<sup>6</sup> For detailed information and argument, see section 1 of Chapter V

<sup>7</sup> See table 3-6 of Chapter III: SWOT analysis of "Return Land to Forestry and Grass" by the farmers in Xiapu Village

happen when government subsidies stopped, Ma Zhengxuan thought that the fruit trees and grassland might have a chance to survive, but that the trees for ecological purposes might be cut down again because they bring no grain or cash to village households.

We can reasonably understand farmers' attitudes and behaviour only if we appreciate farmers' local knowledge and experience, generated from within their life worlds. Here, the notion of local knowledge is not a narrowly defined in opposition to scientific knowledge. Instead the point concerns the recognition of the social, economic and cultural components of local communities. Only by recognising and understanding better farmers' local knowledge and skills, can we interpret farmers' attitudes and behaviour accurately and possibly provide them with appropriate support. This is essential to the success of resettlement projects and to the goal of promoting poverty reduction in general.

#### *The Dichotomy of Policy Statement and Policy Implementation*

To justify investment in resettlement, poverty reduction is always claimed as the major objective. However, the pay-off of poverty reduction efforts is generally low and therefore does little to advance either the standing of the responsible institution or the careers of the officials concerned. This has led to the dichotomy of policy statement and implementation. As a result, the pursuit of other interests displaces the objective of poverty reduction. The Mangkaba resettlement site was chosen by the Province as a provincial demonstration site for such resettlement projects. In China, once a demonstration site has been established many visitors will begin to stream in, especially high level officials. Local officials would therefore always try their best to set up a site in a manner that visibly demonstrates their achievements. In this case the officials identified as one of the most important indicators for good demonstration effects, the appearance of the resettlement village. Accordingly, resettlers were not allowed to build straw and wood houses, but were required to build new houses with stone foundations and walls of brick to a height of at least 80cm. As a result, the poorer farmers from the villages of origin were unable to afford to build a standard house, which became one of the key reasons preventing them from moving.<sup>8</sup>

#### **Ignorance of Community Social Dynamics in the Resettlement Processes**

Government-organised voluntary resettlement projects carry the ideologies and development beliefs typical of a planned intervention approach, which fail to

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<sup>8</sup> For detailed information and discussion, look at section 3 of Chapter V

recognise and match the social dynamics of rural communities. To outsiders, rural communities are like 'black boxes'. The dynamics of these 'boxes' are the workings of local social networks and organising practices associated with collective endeavour and conflict generation and resolution, local power configurations, and a rich repertoire of memories of the past based on community and individual experience. The deployment of certain central concepts in this thesis such as agency, trust built upon bonds of kinship and friendship, social networks, knowledge and power configurations constitute a concerted effort to unpack these 'black boxes'. Due to ignorance of the dynamics of local communities, planned interventions - based as they are on predetermined standards, criteria, categories, regulations and timing - often fail to reach their objectives; and perhaps even worse, they get no closer to understanding the fundamentals of social and cultural life and their potentials for creating novel forms of enterprise.

#### *Heterogeneity and Social Dynamics*

Agrarian change is complex and from the very beginning requires working with the concept of heterogeneity (Long, 2001:44), and in the process responding to the dynamics of different social forms. People may argue about whether it is possible, given the complexities involved, to take heterogeneity into full consideration in any project. Firstly, it is not easy to obtain knowledge of local heterogeneity and difficult to develop a project framework that takes it into account. Take for example the setting up of criteria. It is said, they need to be 'neat and clean'. In the case of Yunnan, seven criteria were identified for the selection of resettlers. However, in reality none of the seven criteria guided the selection procedure. One of the seven concerned income level, specified as having a net income of less than 560 yuan, or about US\$68. Income level is the most widely used standard or criterion in development projects but in my view it is problematic as an indicator in complex rural communities where sources of income are diverse and often irregular. Hence it is next to impossible to get to know the net income of each individual household. In contrast, urban households receive relatively regular, fixed wages and, unlike rural smallholders, meet most of their 'subsistence' requirements through purchasing foodstuffs and other goods. I have not come across a single resettlement or development project that has in fact targeted the beneficiary group by applying a defined income level as the indicator, although many project documents make such a claim.

My research findings show that those who actually moved did so on account of the social and economic dynamics pertaining in their communities. In the initial stage of resettlement in Ningxia, kinship relations played a very important role. Among the 60 pioneer resettlers to Moon Village, Ningxia, most were related as brothers, cousins, uncles and in-laws, hence the predominance



of the family name Ma. Kinship is the basis for mutual trust and support, and extends to sharing labour, money and mutual support in potential conflict situations with the authorities. Furthermore kinship affords safety throughout the difficult initial stage of resettlement when the future of the entire scheme itself is still uncertain.<sup>9</sup> Throughout the process of resettlement, social networks continue to play a very important role. In the case of Yunnan, none of the resettlers could by themselves afford to cover the cost related to resettlement, especially of house construction. The social network became the key source of financial support for the resettlers. Those who were not able to mobilise their social networks failed to move. My case studies show that social networks work differently for the better off and the poorer segments of the community. A better-off family finds it easier to mobilise a network for financial and other support, while the poor have difficulty maintaining effective social networks.<sup>10</sup>

Respecting and working with the concept of heterogeneity does not, however, mean that an understanding of the local complexities is beyond reasonable reach. On the contrary, it is the key to understanding the local situation and to according respect to the views of farmers. In the field survey I used 'household sorting', a participatory rural appraisal tool,<sup>11</sup> in order to identify the relative level of a farmers' livelihood within a given community. It transpired that farmers from different communities, even just neighbouring sub-villages, often used different indicators to define their livelihood situations. For example, in Shang Wan Tang sub-village, Yunnan, farmers used savings, food and clothing as indicators (Table 4-2). In the neighbouring sub-village of Huo Shao Zhai, farmers used paddy field holdings and the number of buffaloes as indicators (Table 4-3). In any case farmers themselves are the ones with the best knowledge of their communities and working with the notion of heterogeneity provides the entry to tapping this source of knowledge, and going to the core of local situations. Standardised and simplified indicators generally remain relegated to paper.

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<sup>9</sup> For detailed information and discussion, see section 2 of Chapter V: The function of kinship – shared risk produces a safer feeling.

<sup>10</sup> For detailed information and discussion, see section 3 of chapter V: Social network – it works differently for different people.

<sup>11</sup> See section 4 of Chapter II: Research Design and Research Methods/Tools

*Time Span*<sup>12</sup>

Planned intervention seen both in terms of ideology and practice must go beyond the time definitions inherent in the conventional policy model (Long, 2001:32). One might argue that the definition of a time framework is central to project design, budgeting and the planning of inputs. Yet, the time framework adopted on paper often only serves the purpose of bureaucratic reporting, and bears little relation to the pace of development on the ground.

In the case of Ningxia, the resettlement project office required the second group of farmers who registered and qualified for resettling to move immediately after land allocation was completed in early 1994.<sup>13</sup> However, the great majority of farmers failed to respond to this official request. In order to reinforce the request the management office increased the pressure by threatening to rescind the right of resettlement unless farmers had built a reasonable house in the resettlement area by the summer of 1994. With fear of losing the right of resettlement many farmers went to the site to build their houses, but they did not move their families even after completing the house construction. In the end, most farmers came to live in the new area some three years later, in 1997. For a planned intervention there is a clear beginning, demarcated by the definition of goals and means, and a final cut-off point, the 'end' of the project as defined in the typical evaluation report. During project implementation in Ningxia, the resettlement management office had a clear concept of timing indicating when the first, second and the third group of resettlers should settle. But, in reality, "people process their own experience of 'project' and 'intervention'" (ibid:32). In Moon Village, Ningxia, resettlers were due to settle in 1994. However, in reality, most resettlement activity took place in 1997, and resettlers have continued to move in gradually, year by year, to the present. When I visited Moon village in the summer of 2001, there were still empty plots in between maize fields. I was informed that the plots had been allocated, but that the farmers who held user rights had not yet moved in. Hence, on the ground the 'project' continues to evolve long after its official end or, as we say, 'its sell-by date'.

Farmers act in accordance with their personal knowledge and experience. With different levels of knowledge about the resettlement area, they decide on the pace of response to the resettlement framework of timing. Some farmers respond quickly. But this does not mean they are working to the same time scale of the planned intervention. On the contrary, they are processing and

<sup>12</sup> In ADB involuntary resettlement policy, a similar concept was introduced phrased as "a social preparation phase". The policy stated: "Where adversely affected people are particularly vulnerable, resettlement and compensation decisions should be preceded by a social preparation phase to build up the capacity of the vulnerable people to deal with the issues."

<sup>13</sup> For detailed timeline of the development of the resettlement area, please see the Brief Profile of the Development of the Resettlement Area in Chapter VI

transforming government intervention so it fits with the exigencies of their own lifeworlds. In the case of Ningxia, some farmers decided to move because they knew that wage labour opportunities existed in the resettlement area that offered them a promising future in the resettlement area. Poorer farmers, however, are frequently much slower in responding to the emerging opportunities than the better off. This is not only caused by their different economic capacity, but also by their different perception of the situation. Moreover, the superior economic situation of the better off allows them more mobility than is the case for poorer farmers and therefore they may acquire a broader experience and knowledge.

### **Rising Power of Society in Negotiating Government Policy**

The tradition of planned intervention puts trust in the state's dominant role in the allocation and management of resources and believes in the state's authority, mandate and capacity for implementation in social and economic planning. Such a tradition is still dominant in China's policy process. A pluralist view of the state – a popular liberal image – is not directly relevant to the predominantly central planning system of China. Nevertheless, it is undeniable that there are pressures in China from various sectors of civil society to engage in negotiation with government over specific policies. There is also a clear move by government and the party to decentralise administratively and to encourage greater regional and local autonomy.

The perspective of state-society synergy discussed in chapter two offers a positive view of the development of state-society relations. However, such synergy relies on the existence of a strong state and a well-balanced alliance between the state and private/civil interests. Strictly speaking, this model may not be relevant to situations where one or either of the parties is weak or underdeveloped. In China, the development of civil society is weak and thus Chinese researchers face the difficulty of identifying what in other contexts is described as 'civil society'. However, this does not mean that there exists no space for claim making and for negotiating with the state. Indeed there is growing evidence that in many multifarious ways 'citizens' (also a difficult concept to pin down in the Chinese context since there are many words for this type of political-cum-cultural 'belongingness', see Goldman and Perry, 2002) can advance their socio-political projects. In short there are a host of other kinds of social power besides that of the state or party. This is illustrated by the struggles that took place in the formation of the resettlement in Ningxia.

The story about the origins of the Minning resettlement project in Ningxia shows how farmers lobbied to have the area recognised legally as a resettlement

zone<sup>14</sup>. From this case we can see how a farmer leader, supported by the mass of farmers, engages with government to get approval for what is essentially a poor farmers' project. The Minning resettlement area was originally not an officially recognised resettlement area. Seeking development opportunities, farmers from a dryland area, under the leadership of a village secretary, succeeded in shaping a government resolution to officially recognise the area and thus to include it in government plans for the construction of a new irrigation infrastructure. Most people, especially the Chinese, are accustomed to thinking that government is the most powerful body in shaping their actions. However, in this case, we may conclude that, while government had the *authority* which could be turned into the power to shape people's actions, it was a network of agricultural labourers who working on the nearby state farm and officials who succeeded in pushing the state into acknowledging their claims to land and their status as settlers. That is, this network of actors created enough strategic agency to win the battle (cf. Long, 2001:19, 240).

The other case that illustrates the rise of social power concerns the issue of land sales within the resettlement area in Ningxia<sup>15</sup>. The irrigated land in the resettlement area has become very valuable, especially after several years of investment by both government and farmers. According to my field interviews, the price of land in the Minning resettlement area has increased about 50 times since 1990. Land is being sold and purchased even though smallholder arable land in China is not yet privatised. Governments at different levels have formulated policies to stop such trade in land. However, I was told in the field survey that the Resettlement Office was unable to halt the process because resistance was too great. It was estimated that more than 30% of the resettlers had purchased their land.

The implications of the two cases are complex. We may interpret the situation as one where the government is now giving more room to farmers' interests and voice, which represents a positive movement towards a more 'open' state. Or we may interpret it as showing how the increasing economic power of individual farmers enables them to acquire space for "invisible" negotiation (invisible in terms of having no trace in official documentation). However, another aspect of this is the negative effect all this has on the poorer households, since it is the socially and economically advantaged groups who manage to wield such powers of leverage. Also my research clearly documents how it is predominantly the better-off families who mobilise support from their existing networks in order to make the move to the resettlement area. Thus interpersonal social ties are, at least in this regard, more productive for the better off and are often quickly depleted among the poor.

<sup>14</sup> For the detailed story, see chapter six: 6.1 Farmers' Agency – A force to press their interests.

<sup>15</sup> For the detailed story, see chapter six: Discussion of section 6.1.

These issues concerning the differential power relations evolving in rural China raise more questions than they can provide answers. There is in fact a great deal of detailed empirical research yet to be carried out if we are to come grips with the development of state-society synergies in the Chinese context.

### **Implications for policy practice**

Resettlement under the current policy and implementation model is not an appropriate approach for alleviating the poverty of the poorest sectors of the population. Firstly, the development belief systems dominated by the economic growth model and modernisation approach tend to divert planned interventions away from the goals of poverty reduction towards the pursuit of economic growth. Secondly, the dynamics of local communities tend to consistently favour the better-off groups whenever opportunities emerge, even when on the surface they appear to hold promise for both the better-off and poorer groups of farmers.

Being powerless to change the development belief systems in the short-term, one might hope that the poorer might obtain some benefits from what the better off do not need. But this would depend on charity. A pragmatic way forward would simply be to make better use of funds earmarked for poverty reduction and thus to draw a clear distinction between projects aiming at poverty reduction and at economic development. Ideological and methodological distinctions between economic growth and poverty reduction may be defined as follows:

- (1) Economic growth and poverty reduction follow different laws. Economic growth should follow the laws of the market economy, while poverty reduction must make special policy provision for the poorer segments that, as a rule, find themselves vulnerable and easily exploited in a free market economy.
- (2) Economic growth and poverty reduction follow a different pace. The linear approach can be applied to economic development, whereby the cost/benefit analysis of inputs/outputs and the expectation of quick returns are paramount. However, due to the complexity of the causes of poverty and its linkage with institutional arrangements and power configurations, it is hard to predict the pace of any poverty reduction project, which as a rule tends to be slow.
- (3) Economic growth and poverty reduction have to be measured differently. The measurement of economic growth is purely based on economic achievements, with income as the single most important indicator. In contrast, the measurement of poverty reduction is more complex, and,

while addressing the root causes of poverty, frequently eludes purely quantitative indicators.

The rationale for such distinctions is based firstly on the recognition of social and economic stratification within poor populations, and secondly, on the need to tackle the different segments of the poor in different ways. My research findings and analysis show that the impact of planned intervention varies for different segments of the poor in relation to their position in the social and economic pyramid. The terms 'the better-off' and 'the poorer' are used throughout and catch the two extremes of such stratification. Vague in themselves when taken out of context, the categorisations and indicators used for defining social and economic stratification or relative levels of livelihood in my research have been established on the basis of group discussions with farmers in the research communities. The recognition and the identification of the different levels of livelihood of the poor thus become a pre-condition for any action to assist the poorer groups.

If projects aimed at poverty reduction are to benefit the poorer, the following two practical proposals may be considered: (1) Projects should offer something that the better off do not want but that the poorer need, such as micro-credit schemes. Clearly both the better off and the poorer are in need of credit. However, in a couple of micro-credit projects<sup>16</sup> that I have personally visited, the majority of the poorer did become involved and benefited, while the better-off became disinterested because the loans were too small and the requirement for borrowers to meet once a week was too cumbersome. (2) Projects should make sure that the poorer are not left out when they offer something that both the better off and the poorer want. In community-based projects, such as those aimed at returning land to forestry and pasture, and in drinking water supply schemes, special efforts should be made to inform the poorer, involve them and give them at least equal access. Such affirmative action should be designed and implemented in order to ensure that the poorer are not left out.

This line of argument is not meant to ignore the linkage between economic growth and poverty reduction. However, as my research has shown, the distinction between the two processes is essential for approaching the goal of poverty reduction. The distinction does not imply that the poorer are never part of the overall stream of economic development. Indeed the aim of affirmative policy and action is geared to shielding the poorer from the negative impacts that economic growth models tend to entail.

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<sup>16</sup> The evaluations of micro-credit schemes are mixed. I here do not want to open up the discussion on micro-credit schemes here, but to use it as example to raise up possibilities.

Considering now the issue of resettlement projects, we can formulate the following proposals and concerns:

- (1) Resettlement projects, especially large scale ones involving huge infrastructural investment, should be largely regarded as economic development projects. From this it follows that:
  - Resources earmarked for poverty reduction should not be used, or investments justified in terms of poverty issues.
  - A socio-economic assessment should be conducted in order that relevant social and economic policies can be formulated.
  - A cost/benefit analysis of the investment and its likely economic returns must be based on sound baseline economic studies.
  - An environmental impact assessment should also be conducted.
  - Monitoring mechanisms should be well designed and implemented.
- (2) Resettlement projects aiming at poverty reduction or having components of poverty reduction should consider the following dimensions:
  - The units of places of origin should be small enough to allow for the proper targeting of the poorer communities.
  - Clear and site-specific selection criteria of places of origin should be formulated and implemented.
  - A dual approach should be adopted whereby equal emphasis is paid to places of origin as to resettlement sites.
  - Investment in places of origin is often considered economically inefficient and therefore not promoted. Yet, precisely because the response of farmers to resettlement is often slow, it becomes necessary to do so in order to assist those who remain or who cannot mobilise sufficient resources to make the move. Thus a fair level of investment must also be considered for places of origin as well as for resettlement areas.
  - Investment contributions by prospective resettlers should be as low as possible; for instance, housing standards should not be set.
  - The time framework for the resettlement process should reflect the poorer farmers' own pace of change. Concomitantly, difficulties with the completion of the social and physical infrastructure are likely to arise when the pace of resettlement is too slow. Therefore special provision is needed to address this risk.
  - Throughout the resettlement process, farmers should be encouraged to participate fully in processes of decision-making, implementation and monitoring; and of course male and female farmers should be eligible.
  - A policy assessment should be conducted in order to formulate an appropriate policy framework for meeting project goals.
  - A monitoring mechanism should be formulated and implemented.

While the above proposals and considerations arise out of the arguments presented in this thesis, they must necessarily remain sketchy and indicative. They can only delineate roughly the terrain explored in the main body of the thesis. Yet they certainly warrant more systematic research and could, with more serious attention, result in the design and practice of more beneficial modes of government intervention.



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## Summary

The primary concern of this research is the justice of using government resources for poverty reduction, in other words investigating whether or not such investment has served its claimed purpose. My central argument is that government organized resettlement projects have mobilized many resources and some have brought potential prosperity to the resettled farmers. However, they have not sufficiently benefited the government claimed target groups, namely the poorer populations of the places of origin. Many of the beneficiaries are not the poorer members of the population but come instead from the more affluent of those places.

This central argument is elaborated in three dimensions: the socio-economic dimension (Chapter IV), the development sociology dimension (Chapter V), and the policy dimension (the focus of Chapter VI). These three dimensions are not seen as parallel analyses but are used in a complementary way. Government policy is seen as an important pre-condition for large-scale resettlement. Socio-economic factors are evaluated to illustrate the outcome of resettlement projects. Sociological debates about development are explored to interpret the processes that have brought about this outcome. The socio-economic analysis provides evidence of who has benefited and in what ways. My argument in regard to development sociology is that given the dynamics of resettlement, better-off farmers will take economic advantage, utilize their knowledge and use their well-established social networks to benefit directly from the resettlement while poorer farmers, who are supposed to be the first to benefit, get left out. The argument in the policy dimension is that when modernization theory and the economic growth model dominate the rationale of policy formulation and implementation, a poverty reduction policy will not serve its aim.

This thesis consists of seven chapters. The first chapter introduces the issues of resettlement by outlining why I chose the research topic, the relevance and significance of the research in China, and the position of the form of resettlement I studied in relation to the different forms of population movement. Chapter II discusses the development of the research methodology for responding to the research hypothesis and research questions identified. The thesis adopts an actor-oriented approach as the basic theoretical orientation and combines ethnographic and participatory research (PRA) methods with a questionnaire survey. Chapter III introduces the research areas. It emphasises community level information and farmers' reflections on their own living places. Chapter IV analyses the structural outcomes of the resettlement projects. It gives data on how the resettlers have benefited from resettlement. Chapter V examines the social dynamics at community and household levels and their impact on the outcome of resettlement while Chapter VI provides information about achievements in the resettlement

areas and explores policy dimensions in order to show the roles played by specific policies in generating resettlement outcomes. Critiques are made about the rationale and consequences of the policies. Finally, in Chapter VII I pull together the findings and arguments made throughout the thesis and draw conclusions in terms of understanding why the goal of poverty reduction is not met as claimed.

My research is basically qualitative research, though it uses a quantitative method - a questionnaire - to conduct the sample survey, the results of which basically serve the purpose of fact finding. It uses the case study, which I understand to be a general summary of all qualitative research methods. In this sense, my whole research project is a case study. I justify the use of the case study by Mitchell's argument that:

*'the process of inference from case studies is only logical or causal and cannot be statistical and that extrapolability from any one case study to like situations in general is based only on logical inference. We infer that the features present in the case study will be related in a wider population not because the case is representative but because our analysis is unassailable.'* (Mitchell, 1983: 200)

Chapter four evaluates and compares the outcomes of the two resettlement projects chosen for study, giving specific attention to socio-economic factors. My analysis focuses on who has benefited and in what ways.

The research findings from two resettlement projects show that the resettled population has greatly benefited from resettlement. Those who resettled in Ningxia benefited economically in that they now have higher net cash incomes. The value of their productive fixed assets over the years in the resettlement area has also increased. Resettlers now enjoy much better food security than those who remained behind and they have access to better water sources and to irrigated land. Resettlers have much better access to markets in terms of distance. Furthermore resettlers have access to telecommunications and their children enjoy much better educational facilities. The resettlers to the site in Yunnan had only moved about one year prior to the research, so it was still too early to assess the outcomes of their move at household level. The benefits at community level, however, were already evident. Like the resettlers in Ningxia they are much closer to markets and can therefore go more often and they likewise have access to telecommunications and better and school facilities.

My assessment as to who the beneficiaries of resettlement are extends to two levels, the village and the household. The villages selected for the resettlement project are amongst the relatively better off villages within the overall areas of origin. At household level, the majority of those who eventually re-settled are the better-off farmers, while the poor population from the villages of origin constitutes

only a very small percentage of the re-settled total. The Administrative Village of Xiapu in Ningxia is one of the two best-off villages of the seven such villages in Xiapu Township. Among the total population resettled in the research site in Xiapu sub-village or hamlet, the poor population constitutes only 7 percent.

In Manggang Administrative Village of Yunnan, the income levels of farmers before resettlement were the highest of the nine Administrative Villages of Nanla Township. Here the share of the poorer population reaches 14 percent of the total number resettled in the research site in Shangwantang, in Shangwantang and Huoshaozhai sub-villages.

Chapter 5 identifies the social factors that have contributed to the outcome of resettlement and examines how economic factors operate within existing social dynamics. My argument is that in the process of resettlement the better-off farmers are better placed to take economic advantage, manoeuvre within local power configurations, utilize their knowledge, mobilize their well-established social networks, and thus benefit directly. In this situation, it is the poorer farmers – the supposed beneficiaries – who are generally left out. Economic factors, then, are important but they do not offer a complete and satisfactory explanation for these outcomes. Indeed, economic benefit is frequently the result of other social factors.

This chapter uses 'social dynamics' as an umbrella concept to embrace the flux of a complex reality. An actor-oriented approach and the use of orientating concepts such as agency, kinship, networks, knowledge and power configurations were offered as a way of coming to grips with these dynamics. The departure point for this actor-oriented perspective has been micro-level processes. However, this should not imply that its contribution to macro-level analysis is negligible. On the contrary, the understanding of macro policy must in the final analysis be evaluated at the end of the policy implementation chain.

Chapter 6 falls into two parts. Part I is a detailed description of policies and policy implementation. It covers information at national and regional/provincial level, and at the level of the research sites. The information is drawn from government documents, secondary data and interviews with government officials. Part II builds upon the empirical findings and analysis of these two case studies in order to offer a research-based assessment of Chinese resettlement policy.

The outcome of the resettlement projects researched are the joint products of the ambivalence of policy processes on the one hand, and an ignorance of the social dynamics at community level in the resettlement process on the other. The ambivalence of policy processes refers to (1) the discontinuity between central government policy formulation and local policy formulation and implementation, (2) misleading development belief systems (Long, 2001:46) on the part of

government institutions and officials, and (3) the dichotomy between policy statement and policy implementation. The ignorance of social dynamics at community level in the resettlement process relates to the fact that government-organised voluntary resettlement projects are carried out under a planned intervention approach driven by ideologies and development beliefs that fail to correspond with the social dynamics of rural communities. Any pragmatic way forward to making better use of scarce poverty reduction resources, assuming that it is not possible to change development belief systems in the short-term while hoping that the poorer may obtain benefit from what the better-off do not need, would first and foremost need to distinguish between projects aiming at poverty reduction and those aimed at economic development.

The rationale for such distinctions is based firstly on the recognition of social and economic stratification within poor populations, and secondly, on the need to tackle the different segments of the poor in different ways. My research findings and analysis show that the impact of planned intervention varies for different segments of the poor in relation to their position in the social and economic pyramid. The terms 'the better-off' and 'the poorer' are used throughout and catch the two extremes of such stratification. Vague in themselves when taken out of context, the categorisations and indicators used for defining social and economic stratification or relative livelihood levels of my research have been established on the basis of group discussions with farmers in the research communities. The recognition and the identification of the different livelihood levels of the poor thus become a pre-condition for any action to assist the poorer groups.

If projects aimed at poverty reduction are to benefit the poorer, the following two practical proposals may be considered: (1) Projects should offer something that the better off do not want but that the poorer need, such as micro-credit schemes. Clearly both the better off and the poorer are in need of credit. However, in a couple of micro-credit projects<sup>1</sup> that I personally visited, the majority of the poorer got involved and benefited, while the better-off were disinterested because the loans were too small and the requirement for borrowers to meet once a week was too cumbersome. (2) Projects should make sure that the poorer are not left out when they offer something that both the better off and the poorer want. In community-based projects, such as those aimed at returning land to forestry and pasture, and in drinking water supply schemes, special efforts should be made to inform the poorer, involve them and give them at least equal access. Such

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<sup>1</sup> The evaluations of micro-credit schemes are mixed. I do not want to open up the discussion on micro-credit schemes here, but to raise it as example of a possibility.

affirmative action should be designed and implemented in order to ensure that the poorer are not left out.

This line of argument is not meant to ignore the linkage between economic growth and poverty reduction. However, as my research has shown, the distinction between the two processes is essential for approaching the goal of poverty reduction for the poorer members of communities. It does not imply that the poorer are never part of the overall stream of economic development. Indeed the aim of affirmative policy and action is geared to shielding the poorer from the negative impacts that economic growth models tend to entail.

## Samenvatting

De voornaamste belang van dit onderzoek is de billijkheid van het gebruik van overheidsmiddelen voor armoedebestrijding, in andere woorden om te onderzoeken of zulke investeringen hun doel hebben gediend. Mijn kernargument is dat door de overheid georganiseerde hervestigingprojecten vele bronnen gemobiliseerd hebben, en sommige de mogelijkheid van voorspoed aan de hervestigde boeren hebben gebracht. Zij hebben echter de doelgroep van de overheid, namelijk de armere bevolking van de oorsprongsplaatsen, niet voldoende gebaat. Velen van de begunstigden zijn niet de armere leden van de bevolking, maar de meer welvarenden van deze plaatsen.

Het kernargument van mijn proefschrift is in drie dimensies uitgewerkt: De *socio-economische dimensie* (het brandpunt van hoofdstuk vier). Socio-economische factoren worden geëvalueerd om de uitslag van de hervestigingprojecten te bepalen. De socio-economische analyse verschaft getuigenis van wie er heeft gebaat en op welke wijzen. De gegevens voor de socio-economische analyse komen van zowel het vraagonderzoek als het participatieve onderzoek.

De beleidsdimensie (het brandpunt van hoofdstuk vijf). Overheidsbeleid wordt gezien als een belangrijke voorwaarde voor grootschalige hervestiging. Het argument in de beleidsdimensie is dat beleid voor de bestrijding van armoede zijn doelen niet zal bereiken wanneer de moderniseringstheorie en het economisch groeimodel de logica van de beleidsformulering- en uitvoering beheersen. Dit hoofdstuk presenteert eerst in detail de officiële versie van het hervestigingsbeleid. Verderop in de discussie toont het onderzoek de hiaten tussen de bedoelingen en de huidige uitkomsten van het hervestigingproces. Op dit punt toont de beleidsanalyse het belang van het 'ontmythologiseren van geplande tussenkomst'.

De dimensie van de ontwikkelingssociologie (het brandpunt van hoofdstuk zes). Sociologische debatten over ontwikkeling worden onderzocht om de processen te verklaren die tot deze uitslag hebben geleid. Mijn argument met betrekking tot de ontwikkelingssociologie is dat, gegeven de dynamiek van hervestiging, beter gestelde boeren economisch voordeel grijpen en hun kennis en gevestigde sociale netwerken gebruiken om rechtstreeks nut uit de hervestiging te halen, terwijl armere boeren, die geacht worden de eerste begunstigden te zijn, buitengesloten worden. Het gebruik van een *interface* perspectief en van de kernbegrippen van de *actor* gerichte benadering stelt mij in staat om te verklaren wat er precies is gebeurd in het hervestigingproces, en waarom een ontwikkelingsproject niet enkel het uitvoeren van overheidsbeleid betreft.

Dit proefschrift bestaat uit zeven hoofdstukken. Het eerste hoofdstuk beoogt de kwesties van hervestiging ter tafel te brengen door mijn interesse in dit onderwerp, de bijdrage van eerder onderzoek tot dit thema, en het belang van dit onderzoek voor China - zowel historisch als hedendaags - aan te geven.

Hoofdstuk twee beoogt een analytisch uitzicht op geplande tussenkomst te ontwikkelen. Daarin bekritiseer ik het economische groeimodel en de moderniserings-benadering, en bouw ik een analytisch kader gebaseerd op nieuwe kijkwijzen op relaties tussen staat en maatschappij, gebruik makend van *actor* gerichte analyse, de participatieve benadering, en gedachten over synergie tussen staat en maatschappij. Hoofdstuk drie stelt de onderzoeksgebieden voor. De nadruk ligt op informatie op en vanuit gemeenschapsniveau en op boerengedachten over hun eigen leefomgeving. Hoofdstuk vier ontleedt de structurele gevolgen van de hervestigingprojecten, en verschaft gegevens over hoe de hervestigden baat hadden bij de hervestiging. Hoofdstuk vijf biedt informatie over prestaties in de gebieden van hervestiging, en onderzoekt verschillende beleidsdimensies om aan te geven welke rollen bepaalde beleidsmaatregelen hebben gespeeld bij het bereiken van de uitslagen van hervestiging. De basis en de gevolgen van het beleid worden bekritiseerd. Het zesde hoofdstuk van het proefschrift onderzoekt de sociale dynamiek op gemeenschap- en huishoudenniveau en hun invloed op de uitslag van hervestiging. In hoofdstuk zeven tenslotte breng ik mijn bevindingen en argumenten uit de hele proefschrift bij elkaar, en trek ik conclusies om te begrijpen waarom het doel van armoedebestrijding niet is gehaald zoals wordt beweerd.

Mijn onderzoek is in de grond een kwalitatief onderzoek, hoewel het een kwantitatieve methode gebruikt – een vraagonderzoek- om een steekproef-onderzoek uit te voeren, waarvan de uitkomsten in de grond dienen om feiten te vinden. Het onderzoek gebruikt de gevalsstudie, welke ik beschouw als de grondslag van alle kwalitatieve onderzoeksmethoden. In deze zin is mijn hele onderzoeksproject een gevalsstudie. Ik verantwoord het gebruik van de gevalsstudie door Mitchell's argument dat:

*'het proces van gevolgtrekking uit gevalsstudies is slechts logisch of oorzakelijk en kan niet statistisch zijn, en (...) de mogelijkheid om uit welke gevalsstudie dan ook naar vergelijkbare situaties is in het algemeen te extrapoleren slechts gegrond op logische gevolgtrekking. Wij leiden af dat de kenmerken die aanwezig zijn in de gevalsstudie verband houden in een bredere bevolking omdat onze analyse onweerlegbaar is, niet omdat het geval representatief zou zijn.'* (Mitchell 1983: 200)

De belangrijkste voor dit onderzoek gebruikte methoden zijn een vraagonderzoek en geselecteerde technieken ontleend aan *participatory rural appraisal* (PRA). Een *interface* perspectief en geslachtszaken lopen door de hele analyse en discussie van veldgegevens. Een *interface* analyse sluit methodologisch in dat zij onderzoekers leidt naar waar en hoe inzichten uit sociale gebeurtenissen en -processen te winnen.



Hoofdstuk vier evalueert en vergelijkt de uitkomsten van de twee hervestigingprojecten die zijn gekozen voor onderzoek, met specifieke aandacht voor sociaal-economische factoren. Mijn analyse concentreert zich op wie er baat had en op welke wijzen.

De bevindingen van het onderzoek in twee hervestigingprojecten tonen dat de hervestigde bevolking veel baat had bij de hervestiging. Zij die in Ningxia hervestigden gingen er economisch op vooruit, zij hebben nu hogere netto geldinkomsten. Ook de waarde van hun vaste productiegoederen is over de jaren gegroeid. De hervestigden verheugen zich in meer voedselzekerheid dan de achterblijvers en hebben toegang tot betere waterbronnen en tot bevooid land. De hervestigden wonen dicht bij de markt. Bovendien hebben de hervestigden toegang tot telecommunicatie, en hun kinderen verheugen zich in veel betere onderwijsvoorzieningen. Zij die in Yunnan hervestigden zijn pas een jaar voor het onderzoek verhuisd, het was dus nog te vroeg om de uitkomsten van hun verhuizing op huishoudenniveau te schatten. De baten op gemeenschapsniveau echter waren reeds duidelijk. Net zoals de hervestigden in Ningxia wonen zij dicht bij markten en kunnen daar dus vaker naartoe gaan, en zij hebben ook toegang tot telecommunicatie en betere onderwijsvoorzieningen.

Mijn beoordeling wie de begunstigden waren van de hervestiging gaat uit naar twee niveaus, het dorp en het huishouden. De voor het hervestigingproject uitgekozen dorpen behoren tot de naar verhouding beter gestelde dorpen in het totale oorsprongsgebied. Op huishoudenniveau zijn de meeste van degenen die uiteindelijk hervestigden de beter gesitueerde boeren, terwijl de arme bevolking uit de oorsprongsdorpen slechts een zeer klein deel uitmaakt van de hervestigden. Het Administratieve Dorp Xiapu in Ningxia is een van de twee best gestelde dorpen van de zeven administratieve dorpen in de Gemeente Xiapu. De gehele in de onderzoekslocatie in het dorpsdeel of de wijk Xiapu hervestigde bevolking bestaat slechts voor 7 percent uit armen.

In het Administratieve dorp Manggang in Yunnan waren de inkomensniveaus van de boeren voor de hervestiging de hoogste van de negen Administratieve Dorpen van de Gemeente Nanla. Hier maakt het aandeel van de armere bevolking 14 percent uit van alle hervestigden in de onderzoekslocatie in Shangwantang, in de dorpsdelen Shangwantang en Huoshaozhai.

Hoofdstuk vijf valt in twee delen uiteen. Deel I is een gedetailleerde beschrijving van beleid en beleidsuitvoering. Het beslaat informatie op nationaal en regionaal/provinciaal niveau en op het niveau van de onderzoekslocaties. Deze informatie is verkregen uit overheidsdocumenten, secundaire data, en interviews met overheidsambtenaren. Deel II bouwt voort op de empirische bevindingen en

de analyse van de twee gevalsstudies, om een op onderzoek gebaseerde inschatting van Chinees hervestigingbeleid te bieden. De beleidsanalyse van dit onderzoek beoogt om geplande interventie te 'ontmythologiseren'. Om dit te bereiken moeten wij letten op een aantal zaken: (1) Geplande ontwikkeling is samengesteld uit 'meervoudige werkelijkheden'; (2) Wij moeten onderscheiden tussen theoretische en beleidsmodellen. (3) Geplande tussenkomst wordt zelden ondersteund door afdoende analyse aan het benedeneinde van het tussenkomstproces. (4) *'Overheidsbeleid is niet zo consistent en vaak niet eenvoudig te identificeren'* (Long 2001:47).

Hoofdstuk zes identificeert de sociale factoren die bijdroegen tot de uitkomst van de hervestiging, en onderzoekt hoe economische factoren werken binnen de bestaande sociale dynamiek. Mijn argument is dat in het hervestigingproces de beter gestelde boeren beter gesitueerd zijn om economisch voordeel te behalen, binnen de lokale machtsconfiguraties te manoeuvreren, hun kennis te gebruiken, hun goed gevestigde sociale netwerken te mobiliseren, en dus onmiddellijk te baten. In deze situatie worden de armere boeren – de veronderstelde begunstigden – over het algemeen buitengesloten. Economische factoren zijn dus belangrijk, maar zij bieden geen volledige en bevredigende verklaring voor deze uitslagen. Economische baten zijn vaak het resultaat van andere sociale factoren.

Dit hoofdstuk gebruikt 'sociale dynamiek' als overkoepelend begrip om de voortdurende verandering van een complexe werkelijkheid te omvatten. Het volgt *interface* analyse en kernbegrippen van een *actor* gerichte benadering. Het gebruik van oriënterende begrippen zoals *agency* (werking), verwantschap, netwerken, kennis en machtsconfiguraties worden aangeboden om grip te krijgen op deze dynamiek. Het startpunt voor dit *actor* gerichte uitzicht waren processen op microniveau. Maar dit zou niet moeten inhouden dat zijn bijdrage aan een analyse op macroniveau verwaarloosbaar is. In tegendeel, het begrip van macrobeleid moet in de eindanalyse, aan het einde van de uitvoeringsketen van het beleid, beoordeeld worden.

De uitslag van de onderzochte hervestigingprojecten is het gezamenlijke product van de ambivalentie van beleidsprocessen aan de ene kant en de onbekendheid met de sociale dynamiek op gemeenschapsniveau aan de andere kant. De ambivalentie van beleidsprocessen heeft betrekking op (1) het gebrek aan samenhang tussen beleidsformulering door de centrale overheid, lokale beleidsformulering, en uitvoering, (2) misleidende ontwikkelingsgeloof systemen (Long 2001: 46) bij overheidsinstellingen en –ambtenaren, en (3) de tweedeling tussen beleidsverklaring en beleidsuitvoering. De onbekendheid met de sociale dynamiek in het hervestigingproces op gemeenschapsniveau houdt verband met

het feit dat door de overheid georganiseerde vrijwillige hervestigingprojecten uitgevoerd worden onder een benadering van geplande tussenkomst die wordt aangestuurd door ideologieën en overtuigingen ten aanzien van ontwikkeling welke niet overeenkomen met de sociale dynamiek van plattelands-gemeenschappen. Ervan uitgaande dat het niet mogelijk is om ontwikkelingsgeloof systemen op korte termijn te veranderen en ondertussen te hopen dat de armere mensen misschien baten van wat de beter gestelden niet nodig hebben, zou een pragmatische weg om schaarse middelen voor armoedebestrijding beter te gebruiken eerst en vooral moeten onderscheiden tussen projecten met het doel van armoedebestrijding en projecten die doelen op economische ontwikkeling.

De grond voor zulke onderscheidingen is ten eerste gebaseerd op de erkenning van sociale en economische stratificatie in arme bevolkingsgroepen, en ten tweede op de noodzaak om verschillende segmenten van de armen op verschillende wijze aan te pakken. Mijn onderzoeksbevindingen en analyse tonen dat de uitwerking van geplande tussenkomst verschilt voor verscheidene segmenten van de armen in verhouding tot hun positie in de sociaal-economische piramide. De begrippen 'de beter gestelden' en 'de armere mensen' worden overal gebruikt en vangen de twee uiteinden van deze stratificatie. Hoewel zij vaag zijn wanneer zij uit hun verband worden gerukt, zijn de categorisering en de aanwijzers die zijn gebruikt om sociale en economische stratificatie of relatieve bestaansniveaus van mijn onderzoek te definiëren, gegrondvest op groepsdiscussies met boeren in de onderzochte gemeenschappen. De herkenning en de identificatie van de verschillende bestaansniveaus van de armen worden dus een voorwaarde voor elke actie om de armere bevolkingsgroepen te helpen.

Wanneer projecten met het doel van armoedebestrijding de armere mensen moeten baten, kunnen de volgende twee praktische voorstellen worden overwogen: (1) Projecten moeten iets aanbieden dat de beter gestelden niet willen hebben, zoals microkrediet projecten. Het is duidelijk dat zowel de beter gestelden en de armere mensen krediet nodig hebben. Echter, in een aantal microkrediet projecten<sup>1</sup> die ik persoonlijk heb bezocht raakte het grootste deel van de armen betrokken en baten zij, terwijl de beter gestelden niet geïnteresseerd waren omdat de leningen te klein waren en de eis aan leners om wekelijks bij elkaar te komen te hinderlijk was. (2) Projecten moeten zeker stellen dat de armere mensen niet buitengesloten worden wanneer zij iets aanbieden dat zowel de beter gestelden en

<sup>1</sup> Microkrediet projecten zijn gemengd beoordeeld. I wil hier geen discussie over microkrediet projecten openen, maar het als een voorbeeld van een mogelijkheid inbrengen.

de armere mensen willen hebben. In projecten die in een gemeenschap zijn gegrond, zoals projecten met het doel om land weer tot bos en weide te laten worden, en in drinkwatervoorziening projecten, moet speciale inspanning worden geleverd om de armere mensen in te lichten, te betrekken, en hen op zijn minst gelijkwaardige toegang te geven. Zulke bevestigende handelingen moeten worden ontworpen en uitgevoerd om te verzekeren dat de armere mensen niet buitengesloten worden.

Het is niet de bedoeling van deze argumentatie om het verband tussen economische groei en vermindering van armoede te verwaarlozen. Echter, zoals mijn onderzoek heeft aangetoond is het verschil tussen deze twee processen essentieel om het doel van armoedebestrijding onder de armere leden van gemeenschappen te benaderen. Het houdt niet in dat de armere mensen nooit deel hebben aan de algemene stroom van economische ontwikkeling. Het doel van bevestigend beleid en handelen is inderdaad ingesteld op het beschermen van de armere mensen tegen de negatieve effecten die economische groei modellen gewoonlijk meebrengen.

## Curriculum Vitae

LIN Zhibin was born on November 15, 1968 in the Jilin Province, China. In 1986, she joined the China Agricultural University, where she graduated with a BSc in Plant Biochemistry and Physiology. She then started work in the Centre for Integrated Agricultural Development (CIAD) at the China Agricultural University. In 1993, she proceeded to study at the Institute of Social Studies (ISS), the Netherlands. After earning a Master's degree in Development Studies in 1994, she returned to China to continue with her work in CIAD. In 1997, she began work on her PhD study under the auspices of the Department of Rural Development Sociology of Wageningen University in the Netherlands. She is currently associate professor at the College of Rural Development, China Agricultural University in Beijing. Her areas of expertise include gender and development, and rural development research and practices.

### Education

2003	PhD degree defense, Wageningen University, Rural Development Sociology Group, the Netherlands
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### Academic Appointments and Employment Record

2001 – present	Associate Professor, College of Rural Development, China Agricultural University
1999 – 2002	Gender Advisor for the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) in China
2000 – 2002	Director of the Research Centre for Gender and Rural Development, College of Rural Development (CORD), China Agricultural University
1991 – 2000	Lecturer, Center for Integrated Agricultural Development (CIAD)/College of Rural Development (CORD), China Agricultural University
1990 – 1991	Assistant lecturer, China Agricultural University

### Recent Publications

- (2001) 'Gender equality in China's Land Tenure System'. *Journal of Agricultural Observation*, October.
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