Resettlement & Climate Change Vulnerability

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Outline

1. Resettlement in China
2. Methodology & case study
3. Livelihoods in a changing climate – resettled vs non-resettled
4. Implications for resettlement practice
Resettlement in China

- Three Gorges Dam: 1.31m
- South-North Water Transfer: 340,000
- Environmental resettlement: desertification, land degradation, sedentarisation (? million)
- Poverty resettlement: 10m 2016-2020
- Urbanisation resettlement: 100m 2016-2020
- Future resettlements for climate change adaptation?
## Average annual resettled population in 5-year periods

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shanxi (山西)</td>
<td>17,000</td>
<td>42,000</td>
<td>46,000</td>
<td>69,900</td>
<td>90,400</td>
<td>1.33m</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shaanxi (陕西)</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>90,000</td>
<td>114,000</td>
<td>237,000</td>
<td>470,000</td>
<td>4.8m</td>
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Sources: Compiled from M Wang interview with Shanxi Poverty Alleviation Office 2014; People’s Daily (2001); Shaanxi Daily (2006); Sanqin City Newspaper (2016); Shaanxi Provincial Government (2015); China.org.cn (2016)
Methodology

• What drives vulnerability to climate change in rural China and is it socially differentiated?

• Sustainable livelihoods approach – household assets, livelihood activities, coping strategies (drought), broader political-economic processes

• Qualitative study

• Small sample
Livelihoods in a changing climate

• Lack of water infrastructure a problem for all households
• No major differences in social capital, human capital, physical capital
• What differentiates resettled and non-resettled households?
Financial capital (income)

- Resettlement restricts income: resettled households reliant on remittances and labouring
- Resettlement = debt
- Affects ability to cope with water stress
Natural capital (land)

- Very low land allocations
- Constrains long-term financial security

5 mu = 1/3 hectare
Implications for resettlement practice

1. In a changing climate, resettlements risks being maladaptive (i.e. risks increasing vulnerability)

2. Climate change vulnerability needs to be factored into resettlement planning:
   • The basics are there
   • More emphasis needed on relationship between livelihoods and climatic risk (i.e. livelihood security)
Further reading

- Wilmsen, B., Webber, M. 2015 ‘What can we learn from the practice of development-forced displacement and resettlement for organised resettlements in response to climate change?’ *GeoForum*, 58