Relocation under the Three Gorges Project:
Explaining Policy Implementation in Rural China

by
Shi Weiwei

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28 August 2008
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This is to certify that I have examined the above MPhil thesis and have found that it is complete and satisfactory in all respects, and that any and all revisions required by the thesis examination committee have been made.

Supervisor: Prof. David Zweig

Head: Prof. Raymond Wong

Division of Social Science
28 August 2008
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Abstract

This thesis examines the implementation of unpopular policies in contemporary China by empirically analyzing resettlement work in the Three Gorges area. Millions of people had to move due to the mega Dam project. From the beginning, resettlers opposed to the policy against their interest. They utilized various ways to resist resettlement work. The forms of migrant resistance ranged from peaceful petition to violent protest. But the effort was in vain. By manipulating press reports, by creating model villages of resettlement, by utilizing informal relative network, by reorganizing local town government into troop-like organizations, by employing charisma, and by coercion and concession, the local state temporarily resettled people
Chapter 1
Introduction

News 1
People Displaced by Dam on Yangtze River to Protest Against corruption
A large protest rally is planned for Friday (Dec. 8) in Zigui, Hubei province, by people
relocated for the Three Gorges Dam who accuse officials of embezzling resettlement
compensation money. Some residents claim officials siphoned off the money to fund their
children's overseas education.

News 2
The Second Stage of Resettlement Work in the Three Gorges Project Gets finished:
120,000 People Are Relocated Distantly
Xinhua news agency Sep. 2, 2002
The last group of distant resettlers successfully arrived to Shanghai. It indicates that the task of
distant resettlement assigned by the central government has been successfully fulfilled;
120,000 peasants moved away. In 1999, in order to protect the environment of the Three
Gorges reservoir and ensure the people there to have a better life, the State Department decided
to move 120,000 rural resettlers to other provinces. The central government relocated 70,000
peasants to Shandong, Shanghai, Jiangsu, Guangdong, Zhejiang, Jiangxi, Anhui, Hunan,
Sichuan, Fujian, and Hubei; 40,000 were relocated to the non-reservoir area of Chong Qing
and Hubei; the rest 10,000 peasants were relocated distantly on the basis of migrants’ willing.
According to the reports from the committee of the Three Gorges Dam Project, those resettled
people are in harmony with the new surrounding and their living conditions get improved.

The above news delineates two different pictures of the resettlement work in China. From the
first news we learn that the relocation work is a hard task due to the fierce peasant resistance and
officials’ corruption. Many domestic reports also emphasize that Chinese Communist Party was
paralyzed at the grass-root and thus it was losing its control in rural China (Guo 2001). Strangely, it seems that the “paralyzed” local state can implement such unpopular policies as compulsory resettlement, as evidenced by the second news. So, a question arises: How can Chinese state implement unpopular polices in spite of peasant resistance? It is the core question of this thesis.

Empirically, this study will focus on the resettlement work related to the Three Gorges Dam project. In 1992, China’s National People Congress officially approved the mega project. According to the report of Xinhua news agency in March 1, 2007, Chinese government would resettle 1.35 million people in the project; more than half million are peasants. Many resettlers, especially peasants, opposed to the policy against their interest. The resettlement work provides us a good opportunity to examine the implementation of unpopular policies in contemporary China.

1.2 Literature Review

Previous studies on rural politics in modern China cover many topics, including Great leaps, decollectivization, radicalism, birth control, village election and peasant resistance etc. (Colburn 1990; Perry and Selden 2000; Zweig 2000; Ying 2001; Bernstein and Lu 2002; Bianco 2001; Unger 2002; Li 2001; Sun 2000). This study will probe the politics of policy implementation in rural China, focusing on the resettlement accompanied with the Three Gorges Project. The following will review the literature on the two themes: the implementation of unpopular policies and research on resettlement. Considering that land expropriation plays an important role in the process of relocation, I will also review literature on property right on land in China.

1.2.1 The Implementation of Unpopular Policies in China

New policies are the impetus of social development. Open door policy, decentralization, and household responsibility system all exert great influence on China’s social and economic development. The process of policy implementation is complicated and usually receives different reactions from the public: some people agree and some oppose. There are also unpopular policies encountering wide resistance.

Among those unpopular policies, China’s single-child policy is particularly difficult to implement in the countryside and generates fierce resistance. In order to implement population
control policy, the state adopts such measures as mass campaign, persuasion and coercion. In 1979, mobilization campaigns for “voluntary” sterilizations, abortions, and adoption of contraceptive measures were widespread (White 2000: 315). Chinese local officials often take extreme measures such as heavy fines, compulsory sterilization, forced abortion, and even confiscation of furniture and destruction of houses to deter from unpermitted pregnancies and punish couples who have “illegal” babies (Yang 2003:135). The policy generates fierce resistance that took such forms as flight to give birth to a second or higher child, female infanticide and, at times, murder of cadres or their family members who had imposed forced abortions or sterilizations (Perry 2000: 5). If one wants to analyze the implementation of unpopular policies in China, he must not ignore the role of local cadres and peasant resistance.

The Role of Local Cadres
Local cadres are the actor of policy implementation, in charge of mobilization, policy explanation and problem solving. All officials have multiple goals such as power, money, prestige, convenience, security, personal loyalty, pride in proficient performance of work, desire to serve the public interest, and commitment to a specific program of action (Down 1967). From Down’s analysis we can get two ideal types of officials. One is the purely self-interested officials. They consider power, money, prestige, convenience, and security as nearly all-important in their value structures. The other type is purely public-interested officials. They are motivated almost entirely by goals that benefit the society as a whole rather than themselves. In China, cadres serve as a bridge between the central state and the peasants. So, three factors influence local cadres’ response to unpopular policies: the external pressure from the central state, the cadres’ interest, and the pressure from peasants. We can imagine that there are at least three types of cadre options when implementing unpopular policies: 1) listen to the state; 2) listen to their own interest; 3) defend peasant interest. We will discuss these types one by one.

1) Cadre Compliance with the State
Local cadres are often under dual pressure, especially when they implement contentious and fatal policies. On the one hand, bureaucratic superiors, for their own interests, insist on local cadres’ policy compliance. Local cadres have to behave actively to get more appreciation of the superiors. On the other hand, local cadres, especially village cadres (Cun Ganbu), also need to
live in a world of face-to-face relations with peasant neighbors. If the peasants were unwilling to accept the policies, local cadres would face a great challenge. As Zweig (1989:92) suggests, “Under these institutional and personal pressures, a local cadre had to be Janus-faced: the efficient bureaucrat and the compassionate local leader.”

When the external pressure from the higher authority is high, local cadres have little choice but to obey the state’s order. We will see this point in Chapter Three.

However, being an efficient bureaucrat does not necessarily mean complete compliance. Local cadres have some strategies to change the policies subtly. One of the strategies is “to feign compliance by only appearing to carry out the policy or by only appearing to carry out the policy or by carrying out only non-contentious parts of it without implementing the real content” (Zweig 1989: 92). Another strategy is consultation and negotiation with the higher-level officials. Although local cadres mainly play a passive role in policy implementation, there are still spaces for them to bargain with the high levels, especially when different bureaucratic and territorial units are involved (Lampton 1987).

2) Cadres’ Interest and Corruption

In the process of policy implementation, cadres also try to pursue their own interests. Sometime they corrupt. Corruption is not uncommon in China. From the perspective of Gong Ting, where there is policy, there is corruption, because China’s corruption represents the unintended consequences of intended policies (Gong 1994). Lü also thinks that corruption is an inherent weakness in the Chinese political system. According to him, there are two kinds of corruption: non-structural and structural corruption. The former can be found in all societies and examples of it can be clearly defined as “illegal” and “criminal”—mainly in the form of graft: embezzlement, extortion, bribery, and so on. Structural corruption, on the other hand, arises from certain political and economic structures (Lü 2000: 236). The prevention of non-structural corruption may not require structural changes, but the prevention and elimination of structural corruption do entail structural reforms.

It seems that corruption is closely related to resettlement. The resettlers in Upper Krishna “believe that it is rife with corruption, with officials, lawyers, and even NGOs taking a portion of the compensation for themselves—usually 10 to 40 percent—in exchange for assistance in processing claims”( Picciotto, Wicklin & Rice 2001: 35). In the Three Gorges Dam project,
corruption is also a main theme of petitions and conflicts. The central government also noticed this problem. In 1999, Premier Zhu Rongji reprimanded officials for corruption and misuse of relocation funding in the resettlement operation. He also said that anti-corruption efforts would intervene to rectify "seriously troubled" economic and social order (Saywell 1999: 38). But Zhu’s warn did not work. In October 11, 2004, Fazhi Daily reported that in Chongqing municipality, there were 343 corruption cases related to migration. These corrupt officials embezzled thousands of millions RMB. The widespread corruption usually becomes a roadblock to policy implementation.

3) Defending Peasant Interest

In theory, local cadres, especially village cadres, are the representatives of local communities, and thus they should defend the villagers’ interest. In practice, however, local cadres often ignore the villagers’ interests. Zweig suggests, “most local actors reacted to radical policies from their own self-interest and tried vigorously to adjust each policy’s impact to their own advantage” (Zweig 1989: 97). Cai also proposes that there is no guarantee that village cadres are able or willing to defend the interests of villagers. Under certain conditions, “even if village cadres are willing to defend the interests of their village, they may not be able to do so” (Cai 2003: 664). Local cadres remain weak, comparing with the strong state. If they endeavor too much to strive for villagers’ interests, their will face censure and pressure from higher-level officials thus losing their own interests. In most cases, cadres spend a lot of time and energy to deal with peasant resistance, rather than defend peasant interest. We will discuss this issue in detail next.

Peasant Resistance in China

1) Different Forms of Peasant Resistance

There are many forms of resistance in contemporary China, ranging from peaceful forms of resistance to violent protest (Colburn 1990; Perry and Selden 2000). Previous studies indicate that Chinese peasants usually make use of five categories of weapon to protest unpopular policy: weak weapons, cultural weapons, institutional weapons, weapons of the elite and collective actions/violent protest.
James Scott finds that “everyday forms of resistance” or “weapons of the weak” are much more common than revolts and other violent collective actions in state-controlled systems where few other forms of opposition are permitted. People who employ everyday forms of resistance aim at tacit and de facto gains, trying to avoid calling attention. Bianco (2001) identifies several “weak weapons” adopted by Chinese peasants: cutting the level of agricultural product; fraud, deception, and tax evasion; theft; vandalism and sabotage; revenge; and symbolic aggression.

Societal forces can protect or enhance their interests through cultural weapons, such as mianzi, renqing and guanxi. Walder (1986) found that workers could pursue personalized relationships with some officials who were often based on petty corruption, although they are economically and politically dependent on a state which monopolizes resources. The clientelist network between local agents of the state and citizens in public work units was established and these social networks help workers to pursue interests. Some recent studies analyze how Chinese people utilize guanxi, renqing, and mianzi to enhance their interests (Yang 1994; Wank 1996; Gold, Cuthrie and Wank 2002). For example, Mayfair Yang’s study of guanxi describes the strategies of etiquette and the ideological processes by which guanxi operates (Yang, 1994); David Wank describes how business strategies and market competition are patterned by guanxi in the emerging market economy (Wank, 1996).

When studying resistance in Russia, Field finds that Russian peasants tended to fight against "faithless" officials, mobilize others, and protect themselves in the name of Tsar (Field, 1976). Similar situation occurred in contemporary China, too. With regard to the popular resistance in Chinese countryside, Zweig’s formulation merits quotation:

Elections for village leaders, the introduction of contract law and an increased role for the courts in solving villager-cadre conflicts under the Administrative Litigation Law, petitions to higher level officials (Shang fang gao zhuang), as well as a much more aggressive role for journalists and television, have helped villagers express their grievances, influence local economic decisions, and seek redress for unfair cadre behavior (Zweig, 2000).

To defend their limited interest, shrewd resisters used institutional weapons, including local election, petitions to higher authorities, and seeking help from the media. In Chapter 3, we will
see that peasants sometimes utilized conflicts among bureaucratic institutions, rather than institutions per se, to protect themselves. These smart peasants were familiar with the operations of the state, knowing its weaknesses and the boundary of resistance. They employed the rhetoric and commitments of the powerful to curb political or economic power, operated near the boundary of an authorized channel, and hinged on locating and exploiting divisions among the powerful. O’Brien labels this kind of resistance as “rightful resistance”. And he says,

“Rightful resisters assert their claims largely through approved channels and use a regime’s policies and legitimating myths to justify their defiance. Rightful resisters know full well that instruments of domination which facilitate control can be turned to new purposes; they have an inspirational view of government measures and elite values and recognize that the very symbols embraced by those in power can be a source of entitlement, inclusion, and empowerment.” (O’Brien 1996: 33).

Collective action is also a possible choice for peasant to resist unpopular policy. Zweig finds that villagers who recognize the weakness of the institutional weapons usually turn to collective actions and “combine legal recourse with collective acts of civil disobedience to seek solutions to their grievances” (Zweig 2000:136). When peasants feel despaired, they have to adopt violent means to resist, or in Chinese “causing trouble” (naoshi). Sometimes, this strategy can successfully catch the higher authorities’ attention and finally resolve the problem. As a Chinese saying points out, “if you make big trouble, your request will be dramatically satisfied; if you make small trouble, your request will be partly satisfied; if you do not make any trouble, your request will not be ignored”(danao dajiejue, xiaonao xiaoqiejue, bunao bujiejue). But the cost of collective action is high; more often than not, those who lead collective action would be arrested and put into prison.

2) Political Trust and Peasant Resistance

It is hard to ignore the role of political trust in policy implementation. Study indicates that people who trust the government are more likely to comply with laws, support government policies, and follow political leadership without needing to be coerced (Warren, 1999). These people tends to have less engagement in mobilized modes of participation (Seligson, 1980). The
above studies indicate that people with high level of trust in government tend to comply more and resist less in policy implementation. In contract, low trust helps to create a political environment in which it is more difficult for leaders to succeed (Hetherington, 1998) and reduces support for government action to address a range of domestic policy concerns (Chanley, Rudolph, and Rahn, 2000). These people are more likely to have more engagement in participation in riots (Paige, 1971) and in other political activities aimed against the existing system (Muller, Jukan, and Seligson, 1982). It indicates that people with low level of trust in government tend to comply less and resist more in policy implementation.

Li Lianjiang’s study reveals that political trust in Chinese society has three different levels (Li, 2004). Some outspoken villagers seem to have no trust in the regime, apparently believing that all levels of government are corrupt. In contract some villagers appear to be happy with both the Center and local governments. More villagers, however, do not believe the Chinese state to be a monolithic entity with a single face. They instead “disaggregate” the state into a trustworthy Center and untrustworthy grassroots authorities or, more broadly, into trustworthy “higher levels” and untrustworthy lower “lower levels” (Li 2004: 231). Some other students also find similar remarks from the villagers, “Central policies are very good, but they are all distorted when they reach lower levels” (Cao 2000; Lu 1997; Li and O’Brien 1996). This study gives us some insights to understand the peasants’ resistance: basically their resistance is against the lower level government and cadres instead of the Center.

How can villagers distrust local government but trust the Center when they most certainly know that local government are appointed by the Center? Interview data from Li’s study (Li 2004: 237-238) supply one possible answer: many villagers distinguish between the intent and capacity of the Center. When they say they believe in the Center, what they mean is that they trust its good intentions. But they may well doubt that the Center can enforce its preferences. Many villagers do not believe that the Center is able to reliably find out what goes on in the countryside. Just as Tong reported in his study: one villager said “if central decision makers knew the real situation in the countryside, they would be too frightened to sleep. They must have absolutely no idea about how central policies are actually being carried out at local levels.’’ (Tong, 1999: 34). This also explains one of villagers’ motivations of petitioning: they would like to tell the Center what happens in the rural area. As Li’s study reveals that “belief in the
Center’s good intentions may heighten a sense of urgency to stop local officials misimplementation of central policies” (Li 2004: 241). Another possible result is that belief in the Center’s good intentions offers a possible way to resolve the problem of misimplemented policy.

The Cadres’ Strategies to Cope with Resistance

Cadres developed various strategies to deal with peasant resistance. These strategies include delaying villagers’ request, soft persuasion, coercion, and material incentives. It seems to be strange that delaying villagers’ request could be a strategy, but it is true in China. According to Ying (2001), institutional delay is an important mechanism for officials to tell the most important case from the sea of villager requests. Because there are so many petitions from villagers, local officials do not know which is urgent and important. Through the delay, the less important petition will naturally disappear, while those who keep on petitioning come into the eyes of cadres.

The second is soft persuasion. Some Chinese scholars find that soft persuasion is widely used in the policy implementation process. Sun and Guo (2000) notice that smart cadres are good at making use of the feeling (qing) and the reason (li) to persuade peasants. Several techniques which are used in soft persuasion include the tactics of language to makes peasants be in a passive situation, and utilizing their private networks to achieve the central state’s directives. The same situation also happens in the Three Gorges project where the local state officially asks cadres to motivate their peasant relatives to migrate. Obviously, this measure can not only facilitate the implementation of immigration policy, but also cut the possible alliance of peasants and their cadre relatives.

The third is material means. Ying (2001) finds that local officials usually satisfy the peasants’ needs in order to dissipate their resistance. What is the subtlest, however, is the way, time and degree of such satisfaction. In the following chapters, we will see that cadres tended to change the policy subtly to partly satisfy the resettlers’ request, especially when they tried to persuade peasants to resettle distantly.

The fourth is the coercion which is discussed by many scholars (Ying 2001; Sun and Guo 2000). Ying (2000) finds that coercive means is one of the most powerful w, although the cadres rarely use it. Cadres just threaten that if peasants do not obey the central state’s directives, they
will suffer, for the state’s will is too strong to resist. Coercion is the easiest way to achieve the state’s will, but it also does harm to social stability.

Possible results of Peasant Resistance and Cadres’ Strategies
After reviewing relevant literature, we can get a table of the possible situation of policy implementation in China, with the left side the categories of weapons used by society and the top side being the type of incentives that the cadres employ.

Table 1: Possible results of Peasant Resistance and Cadres’ Strategies

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As the above box shows, 16 consequences are possible in the process of implementation. Some are rather peaceful, such as outcome 2 and outcome 6, and others mean violence (e.g. outcome 16); some (e.g. outcome 9) are common and others (e.g. 13) rarely emerge. So, what will lead peaceful resistance to a violent one? Will rightful resistances lead to unintended political modernization, such as the emergence of more competitive village election or a stronger local People's Congress? To what extent can the state implement unpopular policies through using soft methods of gangqing or mianzi? This study will probe these questions.
1.2.2 Research on Resettlement

Because this thesis empirically explores the resettlement related to the Three Gorges Project, it is necessary to review the literature in this field. Previous studies find that the following factors that may affect the resettlement.

*Poor Planning*

The requirements for pre-project resettlement planning testify to the complexity of reservoir resettlement. Many factors should be considered such as site search, database of affected people, facility construction (house building, educational and health services etc.), new knowledge training (new agricultural technology, language etc.), and non-farm enterprise investments.

In Upper Krishna project of India, the state lacked preconditions for successful resettlement. Political will, a legal framework, institutional capacity, adequate budget, comprehensive planning were all absent. Violations of government commitments resulted in successive project suspensions (Picciotto, Wicklin & Rice 2001: 26). Land compensation was the central contentious issue, but in Thailand Pak Mun project “the number of land-losing households was not known until September 1991, less than one year into project work” (Picciotto, Wicklin & Rice 2001:70). Later the issue of compensation for lost fishing income arose; once again, the lack of baseline data made analyzing and challenging resettler claims difficult (Picciotto, Wicklin & Rice, 2001). This led to high costs of compensation fees.

Even good intentions without adequate planning can lead to tremendous waste, without the intended benefits. Considering the most of the displacees were unwilling to move far away, the Brazilian implementing agency chose the nearby farming land with dry, sandy soils as migration place. Both the agency and the Bank paid little attention to planning risk-reduction strategies. The result is that “the highest resettlement costs in World Bank history, yet most farmers still lack irrigation, technical know-how, and marketing channels to use their new land productively” (Picciotto, Wicklin & Rice 2001: 97).

Sometimes planning needs rearrangement because the situations may change after the original plan. If the government lacks of flexibility to adapt diversified condition, there will be confrontation. The Indonesia government expected most of displaces from the Kedung Ombo dam project in Central Jave would join the transmigration program. However, when the time came, most of the families refused to move for various reasons such as inadequate land
compensation, government’s refusal of higher compensation and no plan assisting displacees learn new cropping technologies etc ((Picciotto, Wicklin & Rice, 2001). Instead of improving the compensation planning, the government used coercive measures to move people out of the reservoir area, which unavoidably caused settler resistance.

Implementation
Good planning is essential for successful resettlement, but the best-laid plans often go awry in implementing resettlement. In the course of implementation, more people get involved, making coordination and communication among government, different agencies and settlers complex. At the same time, new problems may appear at any moment.

Fair and on-time compensation is one of the components of adequate implementation. In Upper Krishna Dam project of India, “people were not compensated at replacement costs, so they were unable to replace their income-producing assets, mainly land, and had to turn to other sources of income. Delays in receiving compensation, as well as being paid in installments, further aggravated the problem” (Picciotto, Wicklin & Rice 2001: 38). Poorly coordinated relocation process and flawed income restoration irritated the people, leading to open confrontation.

Implementation process offers a good opportunity for the government to rectify the faultiness in planning. Pak Mun Dam project in Thailand shows that how the government’s efforts of remedying the mistakes in planning have contributed to the success of resettlement. The government’s willingness to negotiate with the resettlers and increase compensation helped relocation proceeding smoothly and avoided resettlers’ conflicts with the government (Picciotto, Wicklin & Rice 2001).

Not all the requests for raising the compensation are reasonable. Lee, in his comprehensive 1993 review China Involuntary Resettlement, declares that “for some projects where land requisition and resettlement were involved, the local residents were asking for too much” (Lee 1993: 37). He points out the best way to solve this problem is legislation so as to every party have something to follow.

As Thailand’s Pak Mun illustrates, flexible adaptation is the key to success. The Department of Fishery worked out well by developing the reservoir fishery and creatively introducing shrimp. In Shuikou and Yantan dam project, the authorities also showed flexibility
in the second phase of development activities. Chinese government’s commitment to income recovery by providing the town and village enterprises and other nonfarm occupation contributed to the resettlers’ better living conditions and satisfaction. The process of resettlement implementation is a process of reschedule and adjustment. If the government is with a positive reflexive attitude, the problems can be discovered early.

*Migrant Participation*

According to the World Bank, in many reservoir resettlements, resettlers’ participation was low in the process of either planning or implementation, which increases the possibility of dissatisfaction.

In India, people were inadequately consulted, and resettlement decisions did not conform to their needs or desires. This led to much greater resettler dissatisfaction than necessary (Picciotto, Wicklin & Rice 2001: 38). In Thailand, communication with the villagers was poor during the first years of dam construction, leaving much misunderstanding and distrust about the impact of the dam (Picciotto, Wicklin & Rice 2001: 59).

In Shuikou and Yantan project, World Bank’s report shows that local government and villager involvement was satisfactory. The government consulted the town and local leaders in choosing the preferred sites of new towns and villages. Then local governments engaged in detailed discussion with each family to determine a plan specific to each and make an appropriate allocation of village developmental funds (Picciotto, Wicklin & Rice 2001). “Resettler participation extended to some macro-level decisions about relocation. Families and their local officials met to discuss proposed sites for the new villages and the merits of combining with other villages and town” (Picciotto, Wicklin & Rice 2001: 52). The full participation of local government and resettlers help the final success of the relocation.

The government planning, implementation and the resettlers’ participation are a continuum process rather than isolated events. Planning provides a general guideline; implementation carries out the policy and participation helps the accomplishment of the resettlement smoothly. Planning should be revised if there are questions in implementation or there are different opinions from the resettlers or other organizations. At the same time, full participation of local government and villagers in planning and implementation help the success of resettlement.
1.2.3 Research on Property Rights on Land in China

Property rights in China have “moved decisively away from traditional state ownership” in the past decades (Oi and Walder 1999:22). Property rights on land are unclear in China (Zweig 1999; Ho 2001). In accordance with the Revised Land Administration Law, the farmers’ collective (nongmin jiti) holds the right of ownership, whereas the collective economic organization (jiti jingji zuzhi), the villagers’ committee (cunmin weiyuanhui), and the villagers’ group are entitled to the right of management and administration. Yet, it is unclear whether these three institutions also represent the ownership of the farmers’ collective (Ho 2003: 406).

When studying the zone fever, Zweig finds that villagers are keen to have some rights to compensation, and the state has decided to pay them for relocation. “But, administrative authority still dominates, and suburban officials and their rural constituencies are unable to prevent these land confiscations” (Zweig 1999: 19). In Ho’s analysis, this institutional indeterminacy is partly the result of efforts by the central leadership to create leeway for reacting to societal developments. Therefore, Ho uses the term ‘deliberate institutional ambiguity’ to describe China’s land right system (Ho 2001). Sometimes, however, officials might use such ambiguity to serve for their own interests. Cai finds that “the state tends to be predatory in land use in the sense that it may usurp land for its self-serving purposes” (Cai 2003: 608).

It is obvious that the vague land ownership structure has negative impact. First, peasants’ basic economic or political interests have been threatened or ignored because of the vagueness of land ownership. Due to the unclear property structure and a low legal awareness, villagers are uncertain about the rights they enjoy to land property. “The contract is often but a ‘paper agreement’ because collectives can appropriate and redistribute leased land whenever deemed necessary” (Ho 2001:397). Without the full rights of their lands, peasants can hardly defend their own rights.

Zweig’s study reveals that even suburban officials and their rural constituencies are unable to prevent land confiscations under the domination of administrative authority (Zweig 1999). He suggests, “villagers and district governments surrounding cities might demand better prices, but when municipal party officials who outranked suburban officials pressed the case, resistance was futile” (Zweig 1999:15). Guo’s research on land expropriation indicates that the
assignment of property rights by law and the institutional relations between local governments (county and township) and village collective jointly facilitated the land expropriation (Guo 2001: 423). If property rights on land are clear, administrative authority cannot ignore the peasants’ right and dominate land expropriation.

Second, leaving ownership ambiguous could give rise to social conflicts. Unclear property rights on land have created many opportunities for the trampling of villagers’ and collectives’ legitimate rights by the local and central state (Ho 2003: 95). Ho (2001) presents three kinds of situations of conflicts due to unclear property rights on land in China: confrontation between state institutions, conflicts generated by the confrontation between rural collectives, and disputes arising from the confrontation between the state and the collective.

Without the guarantee of clear property rights on land, peasants are in the weak status in protecting their interests. Exclusion of peasants’ participation in land expropriation makes them hard to defend their interests, which creates social conflict. Guo’s (2001) research examines how land expropriation, under the context of vague property rights, contributed to the conflicts between the villagers and local officials. The study of non-agricultural use of land in rural areas also reveals that “[r]ural China has been riddled with conflicts in the reform period, largely a result of the repeated and numerous encroachments upon peasants’ interests” (Cai 2003:679).

Corruption of states officials and local cadres, one of the important factors contributing to conflicts in rural China, occurs more easily in the structure of ambiguous property rights. In accordance with the Revised Land Administration Law, the farmers’ collective (nongmin jiti) holds the right of ownership; hence, some departments confuse the undefined collective (nongmin jiti) with peasants’ collective organizations (nongmin jiti zuzhi) for the sake of their own interests. As the representative of collective, villagers’ committees (cunmin weiyuanhui) control the real ownership of land and the individual peasants lose the rights of participation and management. The system structure provides convenience for the villagers’ committees or villagers’ group (cunmin xiaozu) to corrupt or operate the black box (heixiang caozuo), especially when the lands of the village are of high golden content (hanjin liang) (Hong 2004).

Third, in the process of land expropriation, some peasants are forced to retire from farming without other means of employment, poverty can emerge. According to the survey of 42 villages in Huzhou, Zhejiang province, the collective farmland decreased forty one percent in 2001 compared with 1992. There were 11,200 peasants, who needed arranging jobs because of
land expropriation. However, only 806 people were assisted to get jobs by the government. Other than those who found jobs by themselves, 5,900 peasants were still out of work in 2001 (Hong 2004). As the basic income source of their life, lands still play important roles in peasants’ life.

Peasants are usually in a weak status in labor market due to their poor education, and work skills. If the unemployment continues for a long time, they will fall into poverty. The income gap between the unemployed peasants who lose their lands and urban residents becomes bigger and bigger (Hong 2004). Without social security and medical insurance due to the limitation of current systems, peasants’ life is much tougher.

There is still a long way to go for property rights on land in China. Owing eight hundred million peasants, China’s government must pay attention to the problems. It is time to face and solve this issue.

1.3 Methodology
This study is based primarily on the analysis of field data I collected during two academic trips in December 2003 and August 2004 in Chang Town, Wushan County from which thousands of peasants have to migrate.

In the east edge of Chongqing municipality, Chang is an old town with a history of 1700 years, the acreage of 188.8 sq. km, and the population of 47,619 people. It includes the rural area and the market town area. According to the investigation of the Yangze River Committee, 26 villages are involved in the submerging. The inundated houses cover 427,285 sq. meters and the total population related to resettlement was more than 17,000.

Methods adopted in this research mainly consist of in-depth interviewing, observation and documentary analysis.

1.3.1 In-Depth Interviewing
I chose Chang Town to do the fieldwork because I have many relatives there, ranging from officials who enforced the resettlement work to peasants who have had to migrate. Therefore, the interviewees include local officials and peasants. I adopted the snowball method to access to interviewees. My relatives were the first group interviewed. Through their introduction, I extended the interviews to other people. Totally, I interviewed more than 30 people. Especially,
I paid more attention to interviewing the local resistance elites who have a deep understanding of the resistance and the main leaders of Chang Town.

1.3.2 Participant Observation
With the help of local elites, I attended the peasants’ meetings where they discussed how to organize collective behavior to press or bargain with the state, and to protect themselves. I observed their petitions to the county government with about 160 peasants and observed how the officials dealt with the rally. Such participant observation not only enabled me to gain some empathy for the peasants’ ideas, strategies and practices, but also offered me opportunities to observe the strategies employed by the officials.

1.3.3 Documentary analysis
The academic trip also enabled me to collect written materials, including some official documents in the migration bureau\(^1\), covering from policymaking to policy implementation. These documents include geographical and historical information of those inundated towns, directions from the central government or Chongqing municipality, the township government’s and Wushan County’s report to higher-level authorities, and some collection of documents related to migration works from 1991 to 2002\(^2\). These official documents offer me opportunities to examine the resettlement work from the perspective of the state. Fortunately, I also got a working diary by a cadre, which not only helps me understand his ideas and practices when implementing the policy, but also is very helpful for me to grasp the cadres’ understandings of resettlement work in general. I can get the diary because the cadre is my relatives. Finally, one resettler, who was deeply involved in revealing the corruption of officials, provided a large number of petition letters and materials he collected. These materials are very valuable because they enable me to understand the peasants’ attitudes and feelings. Because the internet has become an increasingly rich source of data, I downloaded many stories and news reports relative to my research. All of the above materials permit me to understand the resettlement work from different perspectives.

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\(^1\) My official visit to the County Migration Bureaus was not welcomed. Finally I got the documents from a friend’s relatives. He was an official in Migration Bureaus and would retire soon.

\(^2\) These documents are not official publications. They are collections of the historical files mentioned above to keep as the record in the Migration Bureau.
1.4 Overview of the Chapters

This thesis consists of three substantive chapters, an introductory chapter and a concluding chapter. Chapter 1, the current chapter, briefly reviews existing studies on policy implementation in China and sets out the substantive issues to be addressed in this thesis and methodology. It also sketches an outline of this thesis.

Chapter 2 includes two parts. The first part introduces the background of the Three Gorges Dam Project. The second part examines how the state tried to persuade peasants to move mainly by soft ways, especially by positive propaganda in the initial stage of the resettlement. Model villages (mofan cun) and model local cadres (mofan ganbu) were established and propagandized. By analyzing the case of Yang Village, a model village of resettlement in the Chang Town of Wushan County, this chapter discusses peasants’ responses to the state’s mobilization, and the problem of falsification and corruption that emerged later in the model village.

Chapter 3 analyzes the second stage of relocation—distant resettlement (waiqian) where the state forced peasants to move outside their hometown on a large scale. Facing fierce resistance, the state employed both soft persuasion and coercion to persuade peasants to move. This chapter focuses on the interaction between local cadres and peasants.

Chapter 4 examines the role of charisma in the implementation of unpopular policies. In 2003, two main leaders of Chang Town were arrested due to corruption. The budget of resettlement project ran over because of various reasons such as fake resettlers (jia yimin) etc. Nevertheless, the resettlement had to go on. How did the local cadres regain their prestige and continue implementing the policies? This chapter provides detailed analysis on the strategies employed by the new party secretary of Chang. I find that charisma and military ways exert great impact on the policy implementation.

Chapter 5, the conclusion, pulls together the findings and assesses their significance. Many factors contribute to the implementation of unpopular policy in current China, including official propaganda, mobilizing cadres by military ways, mobilizing peasants by means of informal relative network, charismatic mobilization, coercion and concession, and the flexibility of local state.
Chapter 2
Making Model Villages

When probing policy implementation, theorists point out that two relationships are crucial: the relationship between policy context and policy content, and that between policies and unintended consequences (Grindle 1980; Zweig 1985, 1987). In this chapter, I will examine the above two relationships through the case study of peasant resettlement in Yang village.

Faced with the criticisms of the Three Gorges project, the Chinese government launched a publicity campaign in late 1991 to report the project’s feasibility and long-term benefits, and prove that the local populace supported the project. In this context, some “model villages of resettlements” (Yimin mofan cun) were established and propagated. Yang village was one of such model villages. The making of model villages, however, failed to facilitate the resettlement as government previously imagined. On the contrary, it contributed to the local leaders’ corruption and thus peasant resistance, as what happened in Yang village.

This chapter has four parts. Part 1 delineates the historical background of the Three Gorges project and the debate around the project. Part 2 discusses how Yang village was established as a model in this general context. Part 3 explores the failure of Yang village as a model. The final part offers some theoretical discussion.

2.1 The Three Gorges Project: Background and Criticisms

Before spreading its wings through the alluvial plains and winding a path to its mouth in the Shanghai estuary, the Yangtze cascades through the Three Gorges—the Xiling, Wu, and Qutang Gorges. These steep-walled canyons have given unequaled adventure to travelers and inspiration to generations of poets and painters. The spectacular gorges with their mysterious rock formations resembling a pantheon of deities and mythical beasts have given rise to folklore and legends passed on by peasants, mandarins, and emperors for millennia. Since the early 20th century, these immense gorges have become ideal places to establish mega dams which will create what the Chinese refer to as a “lake with the gorges” (gaoxia pinghu).

Sun Yat-sen proposed such a dam in 1919, as part of his industrial plan for China's development. In Oct 1932, KMT government construction committee organized one team to
prospect for Yangtze River and wrote the first report on the Three Gorges Project. But the implementation was a mere scrap of paper. When PRC was founded in 1949, Mao resurrected the project. CCP established Water Conservancy Committee in Wuhan in February 1950. The preparation of the Three Gorges Project, however, made little progress due to political movements.

In order to increase the supply of affordable electricity, Chinese government decided to build the Three Gorges Dam in the early 1980s. The original design of the water level of the dam was 150 meters. However, Chongqing government submitted a report in 1984 and expressed different opinions on 150-meter water level. They thought that the backwater could not reach Chongqing, which may cause cumulated bedload and change Chongqing into a “dead port”. They suggested raising the water level to 180 meters so that the water was deep enough for the ten-thousand-ton ships to arrive Chongqing. In June 1986, the central government decided to argue the feasibility of the Three Gorges Dam, organizing a discussion group, which included 412 experts from various academies, universities and research institutes etc.

The project sparked a fiery and unprecedented public debate over its feasibility in the late 1980s. The proponents insist that the project will be useful in flood control and hydropower generation. In addition, it will boost the growing economy, reduce air pollution, and lessen the impact China’s energy production has on the earth’s ozone layer. Although the Project will exert negative effect on the environment and ecological system, the proponents argue that, “most of the negative effect can be greatly reduced by taking suitable counter-measures. The environmental issues will not affect the feasibility of the project” (Jing 2001: 70).

The project also attracted criticisms because of the ecological dangers, technical challenges, economic calculations, human rights issues it poses, and even vulnerability to terrorism. Opponents, led by the famed journalist Dai Qing, released their criticisms of the project’s feasibility studies, arguing that many of these studies’ conclusions were biased through governmental meddling and the influence of commercial interests. Not only the project will have negative effects on environment, but also it will force 1.4 million people to move, submerging ancient farmland, temples, wildlife habitats, and archaeological treasures dating back 10,000 years. Much of the unique scenic splendor of the Yangtze River, which has been an integral part of Chinese life and mythology, will be lost forever. In short, from the opponents’
perspective, the project is an “ill-conceived mega-project” that will bring disaster to Chinese people (Jing 2001:70-71).

In order to deflect criticisms of the project, the Chinese government launched a publicity campaign in late 1991. In this campaign, the state asked every newspaper, radio and television station in China to begin ‘guiding public opinion’ by running favorable reports about the project. Books and pamphlets about the project’s feasibility and long-term benefits hurriedly got published. One such book was written in ten days by two New China News Agency reporters and was released soon after the Politburo Standing Committee approved the project.

The debate of the Three Gorges Project arose not only in society, but also among the attendees of National People’s Congress. Jin’s (2000) book The Record of Millions of Resettlers in the Three Gorges (Sanxia Baiwan Yimin Da Jishi) described the scene of passing the proposal in detail. The proposal was discussed in the fifth meetings of seventh National People’s Congress in the afternoon of April 3, 1992. Unlike other proposals passing without any trouble, the proposal of the Three Gorges Project received strong opposition by some representatives. Although the proposal passed eventually, 177 representatives said no to it, and 664 abstained (Jin 2000: 24).

Regardless of criticisms, Chinese state launched the mega project in 1992. The dam site is at Sandouping, Yichang County, Hubei Province. At the normal pool level (the highest water level of the reservoir) of 175 meters above sea level, the total length of the reservoir will be about 660 kilometers, with a total surface area of 1084 square kilometers (TGPDC 1996).

The 17-year project includes in three phases. During the first phase (1993-1997), the project team constructed the first-stage cofferdam, the longitudinal concrete cofferdam, the temporary ship lock and ship lift on the left bank, and the permanent ship lock and powerhouses. The team also excavated the diversion channel on the right bank.

In the second phase (1998-2003), the project team constructed the second-stage cofferdams, the spillway, the left bank intake and the powerhouse. The team also installed some generators, finished the permanent ship lock and ship lift, and built the third-stage cofferdams in the diversion channel. The sluice gates at the spillway were closed on June 1, 2003. By June 10, the reservoir was 135 meters deep (443 ft deep), and the permanent ship lock began tried operations on June 16. In August, the first two generators in the left-bank powerhouse were put into commission.
In the third phase 3 (2004-2009), the project team will construct the right bank intake and powerhouse, and install all turbo-generators. Meanwhile, resettlement program of the Three Gorges reservoir area goes on concurrently and will be completed by 2009. If completed on schedule (2009), it will be the largest dam ever built in terms both of its hydropower in need of resettlement; over 1.4 million people will move.

2.2 Resettlement of People
One challenge of the TGP is to resettle people. The reservoir forces more than one million people to leave the land of their ancestors. According to the official survey in 1992, the Three Gorges reservoir is expected to inundate 259,000 ha (640,000 ac) of farmland and orchards and require 846,200 residents to relocate. Given population growth rates, at least 1.13 million people will move when the project is completed in 2009.

Involuntary resettlement related to dam building is not new to Chinese government. During the period of the 1950s and 1960s, more dams were built than ever before in China’s history and about 7.8 million people were moved to make way for these water control work (Picciotto, Wicklin & Rice 2001). Particularly in the Great Leap Forward (1958-1960), several major dams, such as Xin’anjiang (1957-60) in Zhejiang Province and Sanmenxia (1957-62) on the Yellow River were built and work was begun on Danjiangkou (1958-73) on the Hanjiang River. These projects were not the largest in the world in terms of size of dam and electricity generated, but each displaced more than 300,000 people (Liu 1990; Xu 1995; Cernea 1997). By contrast, the Itaipu dam, the world’s largest hydropower station, completed in 1982 by Brazil and Paraguay jointly, displaced 50,000 people while some 120,000 people made way for the Aswan High Dam built in 1970 (Pearce 1992, 155; Goldsmith and Hildyard 1984, 17).

For a long time, government and project authorities regard population displacement as an extremely important component of project construction but did not regard population resettlement in a similar way. Almost all resettlement schemes were characterized by hasty relocation and accompanied by political mobilization, low compensation and militarized actions (Li 2001:198). In the Danjiangkou Reservoir on the Hanjiang River, in the first phase of project construction, 100,000 people in both Hubei and Henan provinces had to be displaced during a

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3 Hereafter TGP refers to Three Gorges Project.
period of two years, but no planning, no housing, and no farmland were provided for the settlers (Li 2001).

All the resettlement officials did was to issue instructions and give some money to the displaced people in moneybags. They paid little attention to the maintenance of the livelihood of the settlers. Two-thirds of the 100,000 people returned to the reservoir area spontaneously because of inadequate resettlement conditions and lack of compensation for assets lost. Without exception, relocates displaced by other dams suffered from the double burden of inadequate compensation and resettlement on less productive land either uphill near the dam, some with relatives and friends in other parts of the county. (Li 2001:198).

According to Li and Waley (2001), state policy of reservoir resettlement from 1950 to 1962, was characterized by low compensation, semi-political mobilization and semi-coercion. From 1963 to 1980, various consequences of reservoir relocation became known and personal tragedies occurred, and the Cultural Revolution worsened the relocation problem. Not until the early 1980s did the government and relocation authorities start to take a serious look at the problems of reservoir resettlement and attempted to deal with so-called ‘inherited issues’ (Li and Waley 2001:198). With the launch of the Three Gorges Dam on the Yangtze River, the government has been pursuing a new approach to undertaking the world’s largest social engineering project.

To avoid serious problems, the Chinese government established a policy that the Three Gorges resettlement program should not merely involve compensation but rather actively promote economic development in the area, maintain the living standards of relocated residents, and provide opportunities for them to improve their future living. The Chinese government attaches much importance to the resettlement in the Three Gorges. The state requires that the multiphase resettlement program must operate in parallel with construction efforts. Although peasants resist the relocation fiercely, Chinese government claims that 724,000 people had already moved by the end of May 2003. One of main theme of this thesis is to probe how the state could achieve this. As the following will analyze, making model village is an important way employed by the state to mobilize peasants.
2.3 Making Models

Facing the various challenges of resettlement, the central state had to create some positive voices to carry out the policy. One strategy is to establish models (shuli bangyang). Chinese Communist Party has a long tradition of setting models. In order to mobilize people to attend political movements, the state has established various models or good examples in the past decades. For example, in the 1960s, the central encouraged to learn the experience of Daqing in the field of industry and follow the experience of Dazhai in the field of agriculture (gongye xue Daqing, nongye xue Dazhai). “Iron people” (Tieren) Wang Jinxi in Daqing and the “iron girl” (Tieguniang) in Dazai were well-known “good examples” (hao bangyang) of the country. Lei Feng was another model at the time. “Establishing such prototypes in the early stages of mobilization ensured that policies were tested and mass opinions were gauged before they were popularized (Zweig 1989:39).”

In post-Mao era, although the large-scale social movement rarely happened, the state does not cease propagandizing “good examples”, such as Zhang Haidi in the 1980s, Kong Fansheng in the 1990s and currently Fang Yonggang. In the process of decollectivization, Deng Xiaoping and his allies also created new models to facilitate the reform; perhaps the most famous are Xiaogang Village in Anhui Province and Guanghan County in Sichuan Province (Zweig 1989:184). In the 1980s, Daqiu Village rose from Tianjin to become an industrial powerhouse, the “richest village” in China. The rise of Daqiu “reflected all the elements of the decade after 1978 in which villages gained autonomy, economics replaced ideology as the highest guiding policy (Gilley 2001:146).” Like always, these models attracted national attention and the state organized visits to these models to learn from their experience. In doing so, the state hoped to create and maintain a helpful environment to implement policies. Till today, establishing “advanced representatives”(xianjin dianxing) is still one important ways for the central to mobilize the mass. The officials believe that “the force of models is enormous”(Bangyang de liliang shi wuqiong de).

Considering that Chinese Communist Party is used to making models to mobilizing the mass, we are not surprised at the propaganda of “advanced representatives” of migrants in the TGP. The state-controlled the media played an important role in the process of making models. The officials publicly claimed that positive propaganda was the basic rules of resettlement
propagation. For instance, Lang Cheng, an official at Chongqing Migration Bureau, stressed that:

“Not only does resettlement work influence the success of project, but also influence China’s international reputation and image. For a long time, the construction of the Three Gorges Project and resettlement work is domestic hotspot as well as international focus. Doubt and censure may appear all the time. Insisting on positive propaganda is not only the requirement of accelerating the construction and reservoir resettlement, but the needs for maintaining good international reputation and deprecating the attack of western antagonistic forces. In these years based on the rules of ‘giving priority of positive sides, facts and our needs,’ governments at different levels have done a lot of work to enforce positive propaganda of resettlement work, and gained some experience.”

He continued:

“Selecting emphasis of propaganda is the main request of propagandizing work. Propagandizing the Three Gorges Dam Project has great influence. Therefore, we need to select the emphasis of propaganda according to the general disposal of resettlement work such as the developmental resettlement (kaifaxing yimin), implementation of resettlement rules, surveillance of resettlement fund, the protection of reservoir environments and the emergence of advanced resettlement examples etc. With the deepening of resettlement propaganda, the government creates good public atmosphere.”

To carry out the policy of positive propaganda, the journalists should find some positive events and the officials at different levels even need to create some models either of local officials or of some settlers. Those models are regarded as one of the official’s political achievement, which provides them good opportunities to get promotions. This is also one of the reasons that in China why the officials are so enthusiasm for “achievement projects” (zhengji gongcheng) or “prestige projects” (mianzi gongcheng). There is no exception in the resettlement of the TGP.

4 From http://www.waterscience.net.cn/Journal/Three_Gorges/200110/03.html
In the prevailing atmosphere of making models, Yang village and Zheng Changsheng were selected.

2.4 The Image of Yang Village in Official Reports

Located in the deep of the Little Three Gorges, Yang village is about twenty miles away from Da Chang Town, Wu Shan County. There are 341 households, 1203 people and 1076 mu farmland in Yang village. 634 people need relocating, and 374 mu farmlands and 170,000 square meters houses would be submerged in the TGP. According to the schedule of resettlement, Yang village can wait to move till 2008. But the village finished relocation in 1999, according to the local state’s propaganda. It became a model widely reported by the media.

When I went to Yang village to do field work in 2003, I was first impressed by the new houses orderly located in the middle of the mountains. These apartments were built for the resettled villagers, all in white. In the wall of a house, I found a slogan “the able governing the village” (nengren zhicun). Because I have read some reports on Yang village, I was not surprised at the slogan. Here, “the able” referred to Zheng Changsheng, the Party secretary of Yang village. A large number of reports propagandized him as “advanced representatives” of migrants. If you Google his name, you will get 57 reports propagandizing his achievement in the migration work. Let us have a first look at the portrait of Zheng in the state-controlled newspapers.

Because half of the population in Yang village had to move due to the TGP, the villagers and local cadres felt that it was a heavy task. Faced with the difficulties, the leaders of Wushan County tried to mobilize several village cadres as the “leading wild goose” 5 to shoulder the task. When Chinese communist party seized power in 1949, it is a routine for the state to mobilize the society by establishing some good examples. However, this strategy did not work well in the villages of Wushan County at first. No village cadre wanted to accept the task because of the difficulty when the county-level cadres mobilized them.

Like all heroes who occur in danger, Zheng appeared when the village needed him. According to the report, Zheng was very excited and happy to learn the news. He thought that

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5 The Chinese for “leading wild goose” is lingtou yan. Every winter, the wild gooses (dayan) fly from the north to the south. Usually they fly in a team with the shape of a straight line or the shape of V. One strong and experienced wild goose leads to fly in the front to guide the direction. In Chinese, lingtou yan refers to those who are brave with pioneering spirit and responsible.
the TGP was providing a very rare opportunity for Yang villagers to get rich. As a result, he immediately accepted the task of resettlement, believing that “all depends on human efforts” (shizai renwei). As a result, he became the Party secretary of Yang village, in charge of resettlement.

The resettlement proved to be tough. Fortunately, Zheng was very intelligent and capable. With good eloquence, Zheng was persuasive when he did the resettlement work. In order to persuade villagers to move, he brought forward a set of “immigrant economics” (yimin jinjixue). We learn that:

In April 1996, Zheng compared the benefit of moving early with moving late to all the villagers. In Yang village, 116 households needed relocation, and their houses occupied 120 mu lands. If they would like to move early and change the lands of deserted houses into farmlands, their farmlands could increase 120 mu. They could farm the extra lands at least 10 years to 2008. Even the lands were estimated as the lowest income of 260 yuan per mu, the relocatees could earn 300,000 yuan during ten years. The villagers were enlightened by these words and soon the villagers formed the consensus of “moving early will become rich early”. Wushan County approved Yang village’s request of voluntary resettlement ten years ahead of the government’s schedule.

The above report purposely stressed three economic strategies adopted by Zheng Changshen: rearranging the lands; building new houses for migrants; and initiating collective enterprises. These soft strategies of so-called “migrant economic” (yimin jinjixue) worked well. Zheng and some cadres in the Party branch re-measured and regulated 2,800 block of lands up to the dam water level, and carried out the second land revolution since liberation to ensure that every migrant own 0.8 mu farmland. Then the local state built 134 new houses for the migrants, with the total area of 32,000 sq meters and 51 sq meters per person, compared with 27 sq meters per person before migration. Yang village grew 150 mu pear trees and set up brick factories, and

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grain and oil processing factories. Not only did those factories bring 60,000 yuan income for the village, but also solved more than 30 migrants’ employment problem. The report\(^7\) continues:

Zheng Changsheng also employed his migrant economics in managing migration funds, using the limited money to get more outputs. Yang village opened up wasteland for more than 300 *mu* with only 570,000 yuan, which saved more than 3,000,000 yuan on compensation fund of production resettlement.

The report vividly described the intelligence and wisdom of Zheng Changsheng. Another report portrayed Zheng as a man with love and filial piety. In order to build the new village, Zheng proposed to use the graveyard and move many graves. Because Chinese people attach much importance to ancestor worship and ancestors’ graves, many villagers opposed the proposal. Some villagers complained: “Building the Three Gorges Dam is a great invent for the nation. We are definitely support and we are willing to move. We have already lost our homestead, how could we dig our ancestors’ tombs? ” Others threatened that “I will smash his head if one dares to touch my ancestor’s tombs”. In addition, all villagers watched how Zheng dealt with his ancestors’ graves. Here is the following story provided by the report\(^8\):

One day, Zheng prepared a dinner, inviting his six brothers and sisters to his home. He said, “I hope you could support my work and let our ancestors to rest in peace with a better place.” But his youngest brother stood out to argue against him. “Elder Brother, you know, we have complied with your decision and supported your work for these years. As migrants, we obey the government’s arrangements. However, we cannot agree moving the tombs. Our ancestor just passed away for a few years and you want to break ground when they even did not settle down their spirits under the ground. We did not agree.”

As the eldest brother, Zheng could not find words to comfort his brothers and sisters. He raised the cup for a long time tremblyingly, and finally he put it down. He knew

\(^7\) From [http://unn.people.com.cn/GB/channel204/206/355/200107/18/82197.html](http://unn.people.com.cn/GB/channel204/206/355/200107/18/82197.html)

how deep his brothers and sisters loved their ancestors. Eventually, he knelt down before them and said with tears in eyes. “My brothers and sisters, my heart was the same as yours. Think about it, the Three Gorges Project will start immediately and our ancestors’ tombs need moving eventually. How could we let their tombs dunk in the water? That is undutiful! Further, if we did not move the tombs, how could the villagers resettle down? If they knew in heaven, they could not rest peacefully, right? I promise to pick up a good Fengshui place for our ancestors and others’. Please, I beg you, as the eldest brother!”

Zheng wiped off his tears and at the same time kowtowed to his brothers and sisters. What could they say? However, they cannot dig their parents’ tombs by themselves. Zheng hired some workers from other Counties, and then dug the tombs first. Finally, they moved their ancestors’ tombs to a new place.

According to the report, Zheng’s efforts finally moved all villagers and consequently they agreed to move. The next problem was to distribute the land for the construction of new houses (zhai jidi). Every household wanted to get a good place to build new houses. In order to deal with this problem, Zheng asked all related villagers to have a meeting. After discussion, the villagers decided to make use of lotteries to assign the land for house construction. They first gave each land a special number. Next, each household would select one representative to draw lots twice. The first lot would decide the order of drawing lots for the second time. The second lot would decide which land one got. Specially, when the villagers draw lots, Zheng brought out a pair of chopsticks and a sealed iron box with a small hole on the top. Zheng explained, “If you draw lots by hand, I am afraid that some people could feel the number. But chopsticks cannot feel, and we can trust them.” Through stressing these details, the report endows Mr. Zheng with honesty and intelligence.

In order to facilitate the resettlement, Zheng organized three groups in Yang village. They were capital supervision group (zijin jiandu xiaozu), goods compensation group (shiwu buchang xiaozu) and project management group (gongcheng guanli xiaozu). Led by Zheng, these function groups consisted of senior Party members, elder local cadres and some able

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peasants. Capital supervision group publicized the items of resettlement accounts once a month. The members of goods compensation group were four experienced villagers in their sixties. Although they were in old age, they worked very hard. Only on the item of reckoning the trees, they had counted 110,000 trees and discussed the price with the owners one by one. The hardworking cadres finally moved the villagers to cooperate with the officials. The state propagandized that everything went well later and Yang village finished the task of resettlement ten years before the schedule.

Due to the achievement, Zheng became an advanced representative of resettlement work. He had been entitled as “excellent Party Secretary” twice. In 1998, the state honored him as an advanced representative of Party construction works in rural grass-root organizations. Also in 1998, Zheng was promoted as the associate Party secretary of Chang Town. Those who are familiar with China’ politics know that it is very difficult for peasants to change their status. Zheng not only changed from a peasant to a cadre, but also became a leader of Chang Town. It was a great success for any peasant in China. In 2000, Zheng took part in the activity named “round speech of resettlement pioneers” which was organized by national migration bureau. Till today, Zheng is a star of resettlement in China and you can easily find his story in the internet.

2.5 Model Rebels
The official newspaper portrayed a peaceful picture of voluntary resettlement in Yang village. We know that resettlement in the Three Gorges area is involuntary. What a successful story if Yang villagers would voluntarily move! It is surely a good selling point for state-controlled newspaper to propagandize the migration work. In the field research, however, I got a very different version of the resettlement story in Yang village.

From the perspective of Yang villagers, Zheng is a rogue rather than a model. They told me that Mr. Zheng did not finish his primary school\(^{10}\). It is ridiculous that Zheng claimed that he has a college-level educational background; ironically, the state recognized Zhang’s claim. While official reports portrayed Zhang as a good man, the villagers regarded Zheng as a troublemaker. He was put into prison for two years because of fighting in his twenties. After he returned to the village from the prison, no one would like to make friends with him. He also violated the policy of family planning by having three children. His family, however, was

\(^{10}\) See interview 8.
influential in the village because Zheng Changsheng’s relatives were officials in Wushan County. With the help of his relatives, Zheng established a corn-processing factory (*liangshijiagongchang*) in the 1980s. Gradually Zheng became rich and a member of the village committee (*Cun weihui*).

When the resettlement work began, the leaders of Wushan County tried to mobilize Yang villagers to resettle first. As a shrewd man, the villagers told me, Zheng realized that it was a great opportunity to make money and get promoted. So he accepted the task. Zheng was very persuasive. An interviewee told me that^11^:

> We knew nothing when Zheng asked us to move. He told us that if we resettled earlier, we would get more compensation. The reason was simple: the state is very generous when making models; now our village held a good opportunity to become a model village. If we grasp the opportunity, all of us will become rich. But he never told us how much we can get, just saying that we would get more than the average. In addition, he promised that, when constructing the new village, we could make money by acting as workers. But Zheng cheated us. We only got ¥3900 per person, much lower than the state standard. In addition, we earned little during the contraction of our village. Zheng and his relatives benefited a lot from the resettlement, but we did not.

The resistance emerged at the beginning of resettlement. Some villagers found that Zheng subcontracted the construction projects in a high price to his relatives and friends. By this means, Zheng got kickbacks. Many villagers refused to sign their names on the contract of resettlement because they thought that the compensation fee (¥3900 per person) was too little. Zheng threatened that if they did not accept the compensation, they would not get even ¥1. Facing the threat, some villagers gave up. Others complained about this issue and wrote petition letter to the higher-level authorities to disclose his above behavior. However, they did not get any response.

As we see from table 1, facing coercion, although some applied weak weapons such as call Zheng’s name behind his back, most people chose to give up resistance. Some villagers chose

^11^ See interview 8.
institutional weapons such as petition under Zheng’s coercion. However, the delay strategies worked this time. Finally, it kept a status quo temporarily.

At the first phase of resettlement, those opposing Zheng did not organize, because most of villagers could benefit a little from the construction of the new village, and because they fought for the place of houses foundation respectively. When finishing building the new village, and when the state declared that Yang village finished the task of resettlement, the conflict between Zheng and villagers sharpened. Villagers began to investigate Zheng’s corruption during the resettlement. At first, they tried to make clear how much the central state compensated the migrants. Since Zheng had never publicized the use of resettlement funds, the villagers could not get any information from Zheng. Eventually, the villagers learned that each resettler should get about ¥30,000. The big difference ignited the villagers’ anger. They wanted to protect their own interest and get what they should get.

With the investigation going further, the opponents found that Zheng embezzled resettlement funds by means of fake resettlers (jia yimin). According to the interviewees, Zheng compensated 68 villagers who were not qualified as resettlers. Those villagers shared the government compensation money with Zheng. In addition, Zheng forged 116 counterfeit contracts. He forged other people’s signature to get the compensation, but the real settlers knew nothing about this. Zheng even made use of those who had been dead for long years. “We found that a couple of dead persons signed the contract with the government and agreed to move,” an interviewee commented that, “It is ridiculous, right? And you can see how audacious Zheng Changshen is (Danda baotian).”

In a petition letter titled “Some Facts on Zheng Changshen’s Corruption”, the villagers listed Zheng’s corruption in detail. First, Zheng juggled figures in the notaries migration contracts to deceive both the state and the migrants. Second, Zheng forged 68 migration contracts to steal migration money. Third, according to the regulation, Zheng should publicize items of village accounts since the launch of resettlement work in 1996. But he had never done it. The villagers had requested Zheng to publicize the migration account for dozens of times, but Zheng did not respond to them. The fourth, the total expense of installing the electricity system

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12 See interview 9
13 See interview 6
in the new village is less than fifty thousand RMB, but Zheng took more than one hundred thousand RMB from the migration funds. The fifth, Zheng’s elder sister and brother did not need to move, but Zheng gave both of them high compensation fees and allocated places to them to build new houses. Later, his sister and brother sold these places for benefits. The sixth, by embezzling migration money, Zheng bribed the main leaders in Wushan County and Chang Town. Finally, Zheng abused his power to control the migration construction projects; he and his relatives monopolized all migration projects in Yang village.

The villagers sent petition letters to the town level and County level government, but they did not get any response. The reason is simple: the state chose Zheng as an advanced representative of local cadre. If Zheng was corrupt, it meant that the state was wrong. However, it is hard for the state to admit their mistake. So, all disclosure letters were back to Zheng. The peasants’ resistance did not prevent Zheng’s promotion. As mentioned above, Zheng got many honorary titles from the government after 1994. In 1998, Zheng became the deputy secretary of Party Committee of Chang Town. All of these facts made the villagers feel more depressed. Because the higher authorities did not help them, the villagers had to use another way to fight against Zheng.

In June 21, 1999, more than one hundred villagers paraded to the government building of Chang Town. In order to show their strong willing to resisting for a long term, they wear coir raincoat (suoyi) and took straw mat (caoxi) with which they can sleep. They also held big cards with slogans such as “bureaucrats shielding one another, migrants being poor (guanguan xianghu, nongmin zhenku).” After getting the message that Yang villagers were parading, the cadres in Chang Town decided to avoid direct conflict. They left the government building. When Yang villagers arrived, they could find no one to receive their petition letter. “It is something like you hit cotton,” an interviewee said. Finally, they gave vent to their indignation in the kitchen of town government. The villagers ate up all foods available in the kitchen. In the end, they had no choice but retreated.

Although the villagers did not get any satisfied answers from the officials, the collective behavior exerted great pressure on Zheng. He secretly returned part of the compensation money to the villagers. In addition, due to the collective resistance, Wushan County sent a work team to

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14 It shows their determination to protest. If it rains, they will still protest with their raincoat. With their straw mats, they could sleep at night in the government building.

15 See interview 7
investigate the corruption. After the investigation, the vice Party secretary of Yang village and the accountant were dismissed, but Zheng was not punished. The villagers were disappointed at the result and continued to appeal to the higher authorities for help. The County government sent an investigation team once again to Yang village but the conclusion was the same: Zheng was incorrupt. The villagers were very angry at the conclusion. In a petition letter, the disappointed peasants complained that:

In Yanghe village, Zheng hid the truth from the masses and controlled the resettlement funds completely by himself. He used resettlement fund to gamble, to wench, and to bribe higher officials to get promotion.

It continues:

The work team of Wushan County came to Yang village twice. They spent more than ten days in doing the investigation. During this period, the villagers asked work team to publicize the accounts of resettlement work which had never been publicized for the past six years. However, the work team never did this. The work team only exerted pressure on those who wrote the petition letters, while they did not check local cadres’ mistakes and corruption. The higher officials did not keep the petition letters secret. It is obvious that bureaucrats shield one another (guanguan xianghu).

Because the work team did not gain the trust of Yang villagers, resistance continued. In 2000, Yang villagers organized another parade to Chang Town government building. Again, all officials left the building. Due to the lesson from the first time, they took out all foods in the kitchen. The peasants had to come back home. In order to prevent Yang villagers from repeatedly resisting, the Wushan County government decided to change Zheng’s work place. In 2001, Zheng was appointed as the chairman of congress in Zaoyang town. The government hoped such a change could release the conflict. Lasting for about two years, the fierce resistance finally quiet down in a degree.

Sometimes, delay is an effective way to cope with resistance. However, delay may also arouse more dissatisfactions, making the conflicts intensified, just as what happened in Yang
Village. Institutional delay makes the urgent request appeared but also may change the accumulated rancor into fire to burn. As table 1 shows, when weak weapons meets delay, usually the cadres can successfully implement the policy. When collective action meets delay, it may either quiet down or create further dissatisfaction.

2.6 Discussion and Conclusion

Under the Maoist regime, setting and propagandizing good models (Shuli Bangyang, Xuanchuan Bangyang) were widely practiced by the Chinese Communist Party to mobilize the mass. The emergence of a new model usually preludes a new state-led mass movement. The same logic was still visible in the middle 1990s. In order to mobilize immigrants to move, the state choose a couple of villages to work as “demonstration villages” (shifan cun) when the resettlement project was in the first phase.

Yang Village is one of these demonstration villages. With the effort of Zheng Changshen, the CCP secretary of Yang village, the village became a model village of resettlement. Zheng was mobilized to publicly support resettlement policies in return for political and economic rewards. From the perspective of the state, Yang village was very successful in moving peasants and the state-controlled the media reported that Yang village had finished the task of resettlement ten years before the deadline. By setting and propagandizing models, the state attempted to convince the peasants in neighborhood villages that the resettlement would benefit them. The peasants, however, witnessed another version of the story. From the perspective of resettlers of Yang village, it is only Zheng and his relatives became rich in the process of resettlement by means of corruption. To get the compensation they should get, the villagers protested in Chang Town government twice.

Peasants in Yang Village keep resisting. Their resistance publicly tells nearby villages that in the name of glory, Yang Village is a false model, unworthy of emulating. The state previously hoped the creation of models village would create the good examples to encourage peasants to implement the resettlement policy. But it failed. Creating models could hardly help the implementation of unpopular policies, especially when problems hide behind the models. In reverse, the creation of false model made other villages distrust the state and the resettlement policy.
Chapter 3
Coercive Resettlement and Peasant Resistance

This chapter will analyze peasant resistance and local cadres’ strategies in the process of distant resettlement (waiqian). It includes five parts. In the first part, we will see why the focus of migration work shifted from nearby relocation to distant resettlement. Part 2 will document how peasants in Shuanghe Village utilize various ways to resist the unpopular policy. Part 3 analyzes how the local government employs both soft persuasion and coercive ways to force peasants to move. Although the local government successfully forced peasants to move, the success did not last long. Many peasants returned their hometown very soon. In part 4, we will declare that adequate planning, enough compensation and future economic development exert great influence on the quality of migration.

3.1 The Adjustment of Resettlement Policy

The essential guideline for the population relocation in Three Gorges areas is to move people from the perspective of development, namely developmental resettlement (kaifaxing yimin). The state holds that the developmental migration transcends the compensation migration (buchangxing yimin). While the later emphasizes compensation and life relief, the former stresses development and industry subsidy. When applying the policy to rural relocation, developmental resettlement refers to “farming uncultivated lands, improving the quality of low-yield field, constructing high-yield farmland, cultivating high valued trees, developing the industry of forest, stork raising and fishery, and finally relocating migrants through various means, various industries, and various forms” (Huang, Tan and Yu, 1998: 9).

Guided by the above policy, from 1993 to 1999, the local government mainly focused on the nearby relocation (jiudi houkao). When the officials implemented this policy, however, they found that there were many problems related to nearby resettlement.

The first is that many peasants refused to move to the higher lands. Most of rich and fertile lands in the Three Gorges areas locate in the river valley, but the construction of the dam will inundate the good lands. When building their houses in higher lands, the migrants are lack of lands to farm and build houses. While peasants could previously make an easy living in the
fertile land, the severe living condition in higher lands would make their life much tougher. In order to oppose to move to the slopes where the soils are thin and infertile, several villagers in Yunyang County went to Beijing to appeal. Although they finally failed to access to powerful persons, their voices represented some peasants’ ideas (Li 2000: 219-21).

Another problem related to nearby relocation is the environmental deterioration in the reservoir area. The central government thought that although the total sum of migrants was big, but it is not a big issue when each county in the reservoir areas took a share in the task of migration. That is to say, each county can easily find enough lands to relocate these peasants. One of strategy to relocate migrants to nearby rural area is to make use of the uncultivated lands. Through the transformation of deserted hills into terrace and the cultivation of citrus fruits and high-valued crops, the government optimistically thought, all rural migrants could not only “move into new house” (bandechu) but also “become rich”(nengzhifu). Unfortunately, the migrants could not find enough fertile uncultivated lands to cultivate. The Three Gorges areas have been over-resided before the construction of the dam and the lands available for cultivation has been used. The rest lands locate in uphill slopes at higher elevation. They are too thin to cultivate, full of stones and sands. Farming these infertile barren lands had caused erosion on these slopes and environmental pollution.

Corruption made the migration work even harder. As we saw in the chapter 2, corrupt officials abused a large amount of relocation funds. Many peasants found that they could not get enough compensation due to corruption. All the above shows that the policy of nearby rural relocation had resulted in severe problems: peasants’ resistance, environmental deterioration and official corruption. These problems had gained attention from both the public and the government leaders, forcing the state to reconsider the policy of migration. It is time to modify the policy.

Evoked by the poor quality of relocation work, the central government adjusted the policy of migration work. On November 26, 1999, the central government issued a specific document to guide migration work in the Three Gorges area. Under the title of “Several Suggestions on Distant Resettlement in Rural Three Gorges Areas,” it declared that:

We must make use of various ways to relocate rural migrants, including local relocation, distant relocation, centralized relocation (jizhong anzhi), decentralized
relocation (*fengsan anzhi*), relocation by government, and relocation by migrants themselves. Especially, the state must strengthen the work of distant relocation, encouraging more peasants to move out of the Three Gorges area.

As it stresses, distant relocation became the focus of migration work. Consequently, the population of distant resettlement increased from the previously planned 83,000 to 125,000. The new rules also suggested that the beneficiary regions below the dam should be responsible for sharing the task of resettling the migrants. In detail, among 100,000 rural migrants in Chongqing Municipality, 9,000 were to be relocated to Sichuan, 7,000 to Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Shandong, Hubei, and Guangdong respectively, 5500 to Shanghai and Fujian respectively, 5000 to Anhui, Jiangxi and Hunan respectively.

This document became the guideline of later migration work. When the second stage of migration work ended in 2004, the state claimed that more than 175,000 moved. The following tells stories happened in a village in Chang Town.

### 3.2 Peasant Resistance and the Cadres’ Responses in Shuanghe Village

The Chinese term “Shuanghe” literally means “two rivers”. As the name suggests, Shuanghe Village mainly locates in a confluence basin where two rivers meet. Among 475 families residing in this village, more than 270 families had to be distantly moved to Anhui due to the Three Gorges Project. Nearly all of them were reluctant to migrate to other provinces. They would rather move to the higher places nearby. The villagers made use of all kinds of weapons to resist the distant migration. As we can imagine, the relocation work in Shuanghe Village was very tough. The villagers used various ways to protect their “lawful rights and interests” (*hefa quanyi*).

#### 3.2.1 Villagers Making Election a Vehicle of Mobilization

The CCP secretary of Shanghe village was Mr. Lu whose elder son served as the secretary of the Mayor of Washman County. Because his son was powerful, Mr. Lu took charge of everything in
Lu has an insatiable desire for money. We know all officials are corrupt, but some would spend a small sum of money to gain support. Lu has never done that, never. He once got a contract to build a highway toward the new town, but amazingly, he hired no one in Shuanghe Village to work for the project. What Shuanghe villagers wanted to get is a temporary job in his project, but they were disappointed. As the leader in Shuanghe Village, Lu just utilized the power to make money for himself. He did not care others.

The Three Gorges Dam Project offers many opportunities to gain material interests. Under this mega project, there are many architectural projects about repairing or rebuilding some base structures. Local cadres, such as the village Party secretaries, usually have more opportunities to get such beneficial works. Lu gained such opportunities, too. This could be a chance for him to gain money and reputation if he would like to share some material interests with the villagers. Unfortunately, Lu hired ecademic people to work for his projects. This made most villagers dislike him. “If Lu would like to help Shuanghe immigrants getting enough compensation from the government,” one interviewee complained, “it is something like sun rising from the west.”

When Shuanghe Village needed to reelect the village head (cunzhang) in 1998, some local elites decided to chose one who would strive for the whole village’s well-being. At the same time, Lu also recommended his younger brother for the position. This fact made the election very competitive. Before the election, several local elites had a secret meeting to discuss the possible candidate of village head. They thought that Mr. Jiang was quite qualified. First, Jiang’s elder brother was an important official in Wushan County government. This was a vital factor for these elites to choose Jiang because the villagers did not want to irritate the government. Rather, they were eager to build a good relationship with the government. The second factor is that Jiang was a young and able man. He also got several project subcontracts from the government. Unlike Lu who was reluctant to hire Shuanghe Villagers, Jiang hired

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16 See interview 5
17 See interview 4
workers from Shuanghe Village. It seemed that Jiang was a perfect candidate. Jiang also agreed to attend the election.

After deciding the candidate, the active villagers began to mobilize the peasants. Each was responsible for one or two village teams, having talks with each household. They stressed that Lu was not only corrupt but also indifferent to the whole village’s interests. In a petition letter, they wrote that:

When building the road to the new Chang Town, Lu embezzled more than one hundred thousand RMB. In 1998, Shuanghe Village was flooded and the Party gave ¥1,800 RMB to help the villagers. But Lu occupied the money all by himself; no villagers got one penny. He made use of his position as Party secretary of the village to become rich, ignoring the villagers’ life. Facing such a bad village cadre, the villagers cannot complain. Why? Because Lu’s elder son is an important official in Wushan County.

Since Lu would not fight for the whole villages’ interests, the opposition knew that the villagers need to elect a powerful village head who could speak as the village’s voice. Especially, when talking to peasants at home, the opposition stressed that Lu was immoral. For example, he kept a long adulterous relationship with several married women; he bullied the disabled villagers, etc. The opposition also told many vivid stories to support these statements. By this means, they portrayed Lu as a rascal.

The opposition’s strategies paid off. In April 1999, Shuanghe Villagers elected a new village head. As many villagers imagined, Mr. Jiang won the election. The villagers were so excited that they exploded firecrackers to celebrate the victory. But the struggle continued. Since Lu still was Party Secretary of Shuanghe Village, the opposition thought that he would not protect the villagers’ interests. In order to bring pressure to the government, the villagers refused to move unless the local state dismissed Lu from the position of village Party secretary. To facilitate the process of relocation, the town government finally satisfied Shuanghe Villagers’ requirement and dismissed Lu in January 2000. It seemed that the Shuanghe Villagers gained another victory. At this time, the villagers trusted both the Center and their new local leader. They employed institutional system to defend their interests, combining with the local election
law. It seemed that the later resettlement would be implemented successfully. However, the village had a still-unfolding story to tell, and it is not always a comfortable one to hear.

In 2000, the relocation work in Shuanghe Village was urgent. As planned, more than 1200 villagers in this village would move to Anhui province. Before the relocation began, officials in Chang Town asked Jiang to accompany them to investigate the receiving area in Anhui. When getting the message, some Shunhe villagers visited Jiang’s house and asked him to be strict when choosing the relocation site. Mr. Jiang also agreed that he would try his best to fight for the village’s benefit.

The promise, however, was frail. When arriving at Anhui, Jiang found that the receiving town was an area for floodwater discharge. It was inundated several days ago, as evidenced by the water line remained on the wall. Mr. Jiang was very disappointed and decided not to sign on the agreement of relocation. He secretly came back to hometown and disappeared for a few days. Failing to contact with Mr. Jiang, the government finally sent Jiang’s elder brother who held an important position in the County government to persuade Jiang. “If you do not sign your name on the statement,” his brother told Jiang, “it means that I can not complete the task assigned by the state and so I will be dismissed from the official position.” Considering his brother’s future, Jiang finally gave in. In addition, the local officials promised to pay Jiang thirty yuan if he helped the state to relocate one peasant. The promise of high pay enticed Jiang to concede. He represented all villagers to sign the agreement of migration. The next step for the local government to do was to sign the contract with each household.

The villagers hoped that Mr. Jiang could represent the collective interest, but he betrayed them. While willing to defend the interests of his village at first, he eventually was unable to do so. Faced with pressure from higher-level officials, Jiang had to choose between his own interests and the villagers’; and he chose to give up the latter.

The villagers were disappointed with Jiang and lost their trust in local government. Hetherington’s research reveals that low trust helps to create a political environment difficult for policy implementation (Hetherington, 1998). The same was true in Shuanghe village. It was difficult for Jiang to implement the resettlement policy after he lost the villager’s trust. What’s more, people with low trust in government are more likely to participate in riots (Paige, 1971) and other political activities aimed at the existing system (Muller, Jukan, and Seligson, 1982).

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18 See interview 3
Thus we find that the villagers employed various ways to resist the policy—asking for help from local People’s Congress, higher authority and media, just as the following story reveals.

3.2.2 Seeking Help from Local People Congress

Once the newly elected village head betrayed them, Shuanghe Villagers tried other ways to resist resettlement. Some peasants turned to local People Congress for help. When I first heard that they sought help from People Congress, I felt very surprised. China’s People’s Congress system was quite powerless. So, why did the peasants turn to the powerless institution? These peasants explained that because People Congress was less powerful, officials there had less access to corrupt. In order to gain more power and then benefit themselves, the officials were glad to intervene in conflicts between lower level governments and peasants. Conflicts among bureaucratic institutions provide peasants an opportunity to protect themselves. Through their imaginative and innovative strategies, villagers use conflicts among bureaucratic institutions, rather than the institutions per se, as one of their most powerful weapons.

Sometimes the above strategy is effective. But when the local government was under great pressure from the central government, the peasants’ effort was in vain. In Wushan County, officials in the local People’s congress were fully mobilized to do the migration work. In an “Investigation Report on Migration Work in Wushan County,” the local People Congress suggests that: “We should persuade and mobilize migrants, adopt firm measures to deal with nailed household (dingzihu), isolate trouble makers, repress those who violate law and educate the mass.” Resettlement work was regarded as so important that it could not simply be handled by specialized administrative agencies, such as the migrant bureau. It was a task which the key leaders of local state must take charge of. The urgency of resettlement work temporarily concealed the conflicts among Chinese political system; the whole bureaucracy was mobilized to repress peasant resistance; and the local People’s Congress could not protect peasants’ interests any longer.

3.2.3 Seeking Help from the Higher Authorities and the Media

When peasants failed to get help from the county-level government, they turned to the higher-level authorities and the media. Peasant resisters always claimed that they did not oppose to the policies of the central government; rather, they protested about local corrupt cadres.
In the fieldwork, I gathered a large number of petition letters. There are two main themes of petition: fake migrants and local officials’ corruption. Because the task of migration work was heavy, and because most peasants were reluctant to move, the cadres had to forge fake migrants to fill the assigned migration quota. “There are mainly two ways to make fake migrants”, Lu Ming⁹, a peasant elite in Chang told me. “One is to move out unqualified migrants, the other is to relocate migrants repeatedly.”

Since many peasants were reluctant to move out, the cadres tried to motivate those who lived uplands to migrate. Because the living condition in these areas is terrible, peasants were glad to move out. However, because they lived above 175 meters, they were not qualified as migrants. To make them qualified, cadres forged documents to illustrate that part of these peasants’ farmlands would be inundated. Some of these peasants got the compensation and moved out, but others took money and still stayed in their original houses.

Another way to make fake migrants is to relocate them repeatedly. In the first stage of migration, some peasants were compensated and moved to the nearby highland. In order to fulfill the task of distant relocation, the cadres in Chang Town permitted, or more exactly, encouraged, these peasants to move to other provinces. Accordingly, they would get compensation again.

In addition to fake migrants, corruption is another main theme of petition letters. Corruption has much to do with migration funds. The peasants always felt inadequately compensated for their losses because of the cadres’ corruption. Because the village cadres could get a sum of money from the compensation funds as bonus for moving villagers, peasants were very dissatisfied. We can get a sense from what happened in Tiaoshi Village, Wushan County.

Since the nearby land was too limited to house the migrants, Tiaoshi Villagers had to be relocated distantly. In 1997, Fu Daoming, a village cadre in Tiaoshi Village, and other three villagers went to Hubei Province to do the investigation for possible migration. In order to absorb migrants, Longquan town in Yichang city told Fu that they would like to return “the fee for production relocation” (shengchan anzhifei) to migrants. The fee is more than seven thousand RMB for each migrant. Banyue Town in Dangyang city also wanted to receive the migrant. Local officials told Fu that the introducer would get one thousand RMB for motivating one migrant. Motivated by money, Fu persuaded more than one hundred villagers to resettle in

⁹ See interview 2.
Banyue Town. When these villagers moved to the Banyue Town, however, they found that their migration contracts were illegal. As a result, they did not have the legal status of migrants and could not get migrant subsidies from the central government. Chen Jihua, a cadre in Banyue Town in charge of civil affairs, told the migrants that “migrant dealers” (yimin fanzi) cheated them. From his perspective, Fu made money from the migration. When migrants learned that they did not get enough compensation and that they could not get continuing subsidies, they wrote petition letters to the higher authorities and the media.

As Ying (2001) points out, although China has a formal institution to deal with people’s petition, the institution is weak. Few people can get their problems resolved this way. In addition, there is an intuitional delay in the bureaucratic system, an important mechanism for officials to tell the most important case from the sea of villagers’ requests. Because there are so many petitions from villagers, local officials do not know which is urgent and important. Through the delay, the less important petition will disappear, and those who keep on petitioning come into the eyes of cadres.

After China government launched the migration work in the Three Gorges area, the central government received thousands of petition letters every month. As a result, few peasants could get responses from the state. Many peasants turned to the media for help. When peasants in Tiaoshi Village sent their letter to newspapers, their petition caught the attention of Peng Zongwei, a reporter of Chinese Three Gorges Project News (Zhongguo sanxia gongcheng bao). After interviewing several villagers, Peng Zongwei wrote a report with the title “Sanxia migrant-dealer forsaking good for the sake of gold, hundred of cheated migrants complaining of suffering”\(^{20}\). The report was published as a front page story by Chinese Three Gorges Project News in July 16, 1999. The report placed great pressure on the Migration Bureau of Wushan County.

The officials in Wushan County were very angry at the report. They thought that the report was false. According to the officials, these villagers moved to Banyue Town legally. Considering that the report was inconsistent with the facts, the Migration Bureau decided to fight back. The bureau sued the newspaper and the reporter, Peng Zongwei. Finally, they won the lawsuit. Chinese Three Gorges Project News published an article and apologized to the Migration Bureau of Wushan County.

\(^{20}\) The Chinese name of this report is “sanxia yiminfanzi jianliwangyi, kuqu baiminyimin jiaokubudie”
The local governments in the Three Gorges area realized that the media could bring trouble to the migration work, so they tried to restrict interviews and research on migration work. An official document, *Instructions of the Propaganda of Three Gorges Migrants*, reported that:

Migration work in the Three Gorges area is a hot topic. In the past years, many newspapers and researchers came to the Three Gorges area, investigating and propagandizing migration work and economic development. However, some foreign reporters and investigators who were dissatisfied with the Three Gorges project secretly interviewed migrants. They did not get the permission from the government. Worse still, they wrote false reports, claiming that migration work violated human right. … To guarantee that the migration work go steadily, all migration bureaus must obey the following rules of propaganda.

First, when domestic reporters and researchers want to interview cadres and migrants, they must have the official certificate of reporters as well as the official introduction letter offered by migration bureaus.

Second, the domestic reporters introduced by higher level migration bureaus must have a written introduction letter offered by higher level authorities.

Third, when foreign reporters or researchers want to interview cadres and migrants, they must have the official introduction letter offered by the foreign affairs bureaus. In addition, the officials who offer the introduction letter must accompany them in the field.

Finally, without the permission of leaders, no one should provide documents and internal materials to researchers and reporters.

In doing so, the local government tried to control the media. But without the surveillance from the outside society, local officials would feel free to do what they wanted to do.

### 3.3 Interaction between Cadres and Peasants

#### 3.3.1 Work Teams and Soft Persuasion

We have analyzed the specific strategies adopted by local cadres to cope with the resistance. But migration work requires local governments to do more work than passively respond to peasant
resistance. They must actively mobilize peasants to move. Because the villagers were reluctant to move out, the state sent “work teams” (gongzuo dui) to Shuanghe Village. The components of work teams were local cadres temporarily transferred from different government departments. After the migration work was completed, they would be back to their previous departments.

When mobilizing peasants to move, the work team first employed soft persuasion. In the local cadres’ words, “using good words to do the persuasion work” (Haoyan xiangquan). Soft persuasion is common in the policy implementation in China. Acting as intermediaries between the state and peasants, local cadres are often under dual pressure, especially when they implement contentious and fatal policies. In order to keep a balance, local cadres have to employ some strategies to make peasants feel that the cadres are defending their interests and that the state is compromising to peasants. Compromise is the core of soft persuasion. In the practice, local cadres usually use the following strategies to do the persuasion work.

The first is to change the compensation criterion subtly. With regard to this point, we can get a sense from the following story. Huang is a cadre who once did migration work. According to him, it was important to calculate the loss and compensation of peasants. The work was time-consuming and complicated. The cadres must count the compensation of house constructions, farmlands, woodlands, etc. They had to consider the price index, too. It was a long formula for calculating the resettlement money. “The policy only prescribes how to calculate the number,” Huang said that, “but it does not require the decimal digits.” For example, the number of qualified migrants would multiply a fixed number, which was a large number. Everyone may tell the difference between 2.77*10,000 and 2.7*10,000. In this way, Huang did not violate the rules of calculation of the compensation money. However, the villagers indeed can get more money.

When persuading peasants, Huang would show them the difference of compensation according to the different ways of calculation, and convinced the peasants that they could benefit more from the calculation way utilized by him. He told the immigrants “because water will submerge the village, there’s no doubt that you should migrate. Migration is only a matter of time. I am willing to calculate in this way because I am on your side. If you do not move this time, other cadres may not do this for you next time. The result is that you have to move without

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21 See interview 1
the extra money.” Huang proudly told me that he successfully persuade several families to relocate distantly by employing this strategy.

The second way of appeasing peasants is to compensate their loss fully, although it violates the policy. According to the regulation, if peasants built houses after April 4, 1992, and if these houses were submerged, the state will not compensate the peasants. But if the peasants would like to be relocated distantly, the cadres would help them to change the date of building houses so that the peasants could get compensation. When peasants got full compensated for their losses, it would be much easier for local cadres to motivate them to move out.

The third way is to let some households to relocate one family member nearby. According to the policy, the unit of relocation is the household. Each household shares the same registered permanent residence (hukou) in China. When households move to other provinces, their previous hukou will change. In practice, many peasants wanted to keep at least one of their family member’s hukou in the Three Gorges area. The requirement is reasonable but against the policy. In spite of that, local cadres tried their best to satisfy the peasants in order to complete the task of distant relocation. In Shuanghe Village, it is common that one family member was relocated nearby at the cost of other members being relocated distantly.

As table 1 shows, when soft persuasion meets peasants’ passive resistance, usually local cadres succeed. The cases of Shuanghe Village proved this. In a sense, here the local cadres combined soft persuasion with material means. Local cadres may shift strategies according to the situation and may combine two strategies together in practice.

3.3.2 Mobilizing the Society by Utilizing Relative Networks

In addition to soft persuasion, the state employed informal relative networks to do the persuasion. Besides the work team of migration work, the state would select some specific cadres to do persuasion work on strong-willed opponents. If one is a government employee whose relatives strongly resisted being relocated, the state would send him to persuade his relatives. He could not go back to work unless his relatives agreed to move.

Jean Oi (1989) finds that the client system exists in socialist China. The pervasiveness of personal ties, patronage, and informal influence made it possible for the peasants to maximize interest and minimize risk. Peasants tried to build a patronage relationship with those who hold
positions in the communist bureaucracy. The easiest way to be a client is to make use of relative relationship.

Interestingly, the local state also officially utilized informal networks to mobilize society. In the era of collectivized agriculture, the state controlled all resources and peasants had to depend on the state’s allocation. Thus, it was easier for the government to mobilize peasants at the time. When the collectivization era ended, however, peasants made their living by themselves to a large degree and they gained little from the government directly. As a result, the government lacks efficient ways to influence peasants, because peasants currently have nothing to lose if they do not obey the state’s order. However, the state can control its employees, such as teachers, police officers, cadres, or more exactly, those people who are in the bureaucracy system. The state totally controls these people’s salaries, promotion, and prestige. If the government asks them to do something, they have to try their best to complete the task. Otherwise, these government employees would lose everything related to their job.

The local government’s monopolized control over the cadres’ opportunities and resources fosters its ability to influence the society. By means of mobilizing the cadres, and by utilizing the particular relationships of relative networks, the state extends its influence to the rural area through an indirect way. This strategy works to some degree. A teacher told me an interesting story. “I have been reported by the newspaper as an ‘advanced’ individual of relocation work because I successfully persuaded a ‘nail household’ (dingzihu) to move.” He continued, “Why can I be so able? It is because the ‘nail’ is my father. I am the sole son in my family and my father does not want to bring trouble to my future. My father agreed to move immediately when the government suspended my job. But I did not report it to the principal until one week later.” He smiled, “I had one week vacation with salary and got an honorable title. It is not bad.”

Not all persuasion worked so easily. Most cadres failed to persuade their relatives to move. An interviewee told me that:

My brother worked in the County government. The state sent him to do my persuasion work. Previously he rarely came back to the village, even in the Spring Festival. However, when the migration work began, he had come back home several

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22 See interview 10.
23 See interview 11
times. I knew his purpose. Every time when I saw him appear in the village, I tried to avoid meeting him. Finally, he caught me and asked me to move. I told him that my migration had nothing to do with him. I would not ask for help from him and he should not bother me, either. He could not persuade me and had to leave.

The above story shows that, when peasants were strongly unwilling to move, the relative networks’ influence on peasants was limited. But the main purpose of the strategy was to prevent peasants from allying with influential relatives in the government. The government knows well that the patronage based on relative networks would potentially block the implementation of policy. If the state officially utilizes the informal relative networks to do the migration work, it at least would warn the officials not to help their peasant relatives oppose the government.

3.3.3 Passive Resistance
With the deadline of migration coming, the local officials gave up soft persuasion and employed coercive means to carry out the policy. In 2001, Wushan County government sent a special work team to do migration work in Shuanghe Village. Led by a vice-head of Wushan County, the work team consisted of several police officers and main leaders of Chang Town. The main task of this work team was to force all peasants to sign the contract of distant resettlement.

Facing pressure from the state, the peasants in Shuanghe Village chose to resist the work team passively; they escaped to other places. If the work team could not catch the peasants, the cadres had no opportunity to do the persuasion work. To avoid meeting the cadres, the villagers paid close attention to the official’s movements. They even set one villager on watch 24 hours a day beside the only access to the village. When the work team got close to the village, the sentry would send messages to the villagers. After receiving the message, the villagers would leave their houses immediately and kept the doors closed. In the peasants’ words, the officials were somebody like bandits. Avoiding being seized by work teams became the main theme of Shuanghe Villagers’ life at the time. In a petition letter, the villagers wrote that:

The special work team swept Shuanghe Village day and night, treating the villagers as bandits and trying to catch those villagers living in the area beneath the altitude of
175 meters. Many villagers ran away from the village to avoid the work team. Some peasants stayed in remote mountains and forests, some temporarily hid themselves in graves and others lived in other places for long term. When learning that the special work team is coming, everyone was scared out of wits. The whole village was in turmoil and dismal. The chaos reminds us the confusion and disorder brought about by wars.

Three years later after the migration, when I did my fieldwork in Shuanghe Villager in 2004, many peasants still had a vivid memory of the experience. A woman told me that:

The officials were even worse than bandits. The latter would not raid your house frequently, but the former harassed us repeatedly. Each time when the cadres came to our village, the person on watch would warn us and we left and locked the doors immediately. Because the work team could not seize us in the daytime, they chose to go to the village at night, even at midnight. To avoid the capture by the work team, we did not sleep well in that period.

For some peasants, resettlement has become nothing less than a nightmare. In a petition letter, a peasant wrote that:

I am Chen XX, a peasant in Chang Town. Since I had chronic diseases and my son is a Mongoloid, I do not have to resettle faraway according the policy. However, the work team forced us to move to other provinces. At midnight of XXX XX, 2002, more than 40 officials crashed into my house. Although my wife was sleeping nakedly, they brought her out of the bed and took her to the police station. As traditional people, we attach great importance to morality, but the state broke into my house and took my wife naked. This event brought bad influence to my family. The cadres used this to force me to move. Is this in accordance with the central government’s policy? I want the government to give me a reply.

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24 See interview 12.
In 2004 when I came to the town to collect data, Chen was still waiting for the reply from the government.

As we find in table 1, when local cadres use coercion to cope with peasants’ weak weapons, most of the time local cadres succeed in implementing the policy. It is hard for peasants to be against the state’s strong will, as it showed in Shuanghe Village. Institutional weapons such as petition, can hardly defend the peasants interests facing with government’s delay and coercion.

3.3.4 Peasants: Suicide as a Way of Resistance

What impressed me most during my fieldwork was that some peasants resisted the unpopular policy of resettlement by means of committing suicide. When facing great pressure from the state, most villagers would finally give up resistance and sign the migration contract. There were exceptions. In Shuanghe Village, at least two female villagers tried to commit suicide by drinking pesticide; one survived, another died.

When propagandizing the hard work of Liu Jing’an, the former Party secretary of Chang Town, He Jianming (2003) documents a story that occurred in Shuanghe Village. In this village, a female peasant strongly refused to move. She took a bottle of pesticide all the time, claiming that she would drink the poison if the cadres continued to push her to migrate. All villagers wanted to know how the local cadres could mobilize a person who would rather die than move. If the cadres failed to persuade her to move, other villagers follow her and resist the migration. When the deadline of migration was coming, the local cadres were very vexatious.

Faced with the challenge, Liu, the Party secretary of Chang Town, decided to meet the female peasant in person. When the woman saw the officials came near to her house, however, she told them that they were not welcome. “Don’t come close to my house!” the woman said, “otherwise I will drink the pesticide.” She took out the bottle of pesticide. Liu and other officials had to stop and tried to calm her down the woman. But the woman felt desperate and drank the pesticide. The woman was sent to hospital immediately. The woman eventually survived.

Another villager died in order to resist the migration policy in Shuanghe Village. The victim was an old woman who spent nearly all her lifetime in the Three Gorges area and never traveled outside the Wushan County. As a result, she was sentimentally attached to her hometown and strongly unwilling to spend her remaining years in a new place. Frustrated by the
repeated annoyance of officials, she decided to commit suicide so that she could stay forever in her hometown. She did it, and died.

Nearly all migrants have their own stories of resisting the unpopular policy, but not all stories end peacefully. Some peasants sacrificed their lives during the process of resistance. A recent study shows that the suicide rate in China is 23-30 cases for every 100,000 people, almost two times higher than that in the United State. Especially, the suicide rate among Chinese women is about 25 percent higher than among men (Philips, Li and Zhang, 2002). Wu finds that, most people in China who committed suicide did so due to family conflicts, or in Chinese terms, duqi (gambling for Qi) (Wu 2005). In practice, however, committing suicide can also be the ultimate weapon to resist unpopular policies.

3.3.5 Coercion by the State
Shuanghe Villagers made use of all possible means, including committing suicide, to fight the special work team, but they were powerless and helpless when faced with the strong-willed government. When the deadline of the second stage of migration work was coming and the area below the altitude of 105 meter would soon be inundated, the local state used coercive means to clean up the reservoir area (qingku). Dozens of armed police went to the scene to make sure that the work would go successfully, and bulldozers were utilized to pull down houses. Nevertheless, some peasants still did not give up resistance. While some male peasants tried to use chopping knives to confront the officials, old female villagers stayed in their houses to show their willing to die with their houses. With the culture of “respect the old and protect the young” (zunlao aiyou), the old people hoped that the police would give up. But their effort was in vain. The armed police officers handcuffed them and then carried them out of their houses compulsorily. The bulldozers knocked the peasants’ houses to the ground immediately. “The house was completely ruined within a few seconds. It looked strong but so week when confronted with the bulldozers, like paper made.”25 A witness told me. “How could the villagers fight the government?” He commented.

As table 1 lists, culture weapons employed by villagers was useless facing the coercion from the government. The coercive measures paid off. In Shuanghe Village, only nine households did not sign the contract of migration; all others moved to Anhui Province. The nine

25 See interview 15.
households paid great costs, too. The local state compulsively transferred their registered permanent residence (*hukou*) from Chongqing to Anhui. The local state also demolished two peasants’ houses. In a petition letter, the nine villagers complained that:

The Wushan County government did not implement the State Department’s Regulations on Migration Work in the Three Gorges Area. The regulations indicate that there are various ways to relocate rural migrants, including local relocation, distant relocation, centralization relocation, decentralization relocation, relocation by government and relocation by migrants themselves. The Wushan County government, however, forced us to move to Anhui Province, not permitting us to resettle nearby. We currently engage in service industry so that we can make a living in our hometown later. For this reason, we do not want to move outside. None of us signed the contract of migration or got the migration compensation from the state. However, the local state forcefully moved our *hukou* to Anhui.

When I asked one official why the local government did not permit peasants to relocate nearby, he told me that although the central government indicated that there were various ways of migration, it also asked the local government to move a certain number of peasants to other provinces. For example, Chang Town had to move 5,000 peasants outside to other Provinces. At the same time, most peasants were reluctant to leave their hometown. To complete the quantified migration task assigned by the central government, the local state had to employ coercive means to deal with peasants.

The local cadres apparently completed the task of migration in 2002. In Shuanghe Village, among 273 households that should have moved, 264 did eventually move to Anhui. More than ten thousand peasants were moved from Chang to other provinces in 2002. Because the local government successfully fulfilled the task of migration work, Liu Jing’an, the Party Secretary of Chang Town, was promoted as vice head of Wushan County. But the success did not last long. Before Liu worked on the new position, he was charged with corruption and was arrested in 2003.

Those peasants who were relocated to Anhui kept struggling. They tried but failed to detain the cadres who sent them to Anhui. The frustrated peasants surrounded the government
The building of Huayang Town, fought against the local officials and police, and ruined police cars. The resistance developed into collective clash. The state had to send a large team of armed police to repress the peasants. Several migrants were wounded and more detained. In order to press the state to set the detained peasants free, more than one thousand migrants gathered collectively again. The local state released the peasants and the conflict finally ended in peace. Different from the collective action in Yang village, collective action in Anhui encountered repression from the government. Coercion did not scare the villagers. Instead, they organized more large-scale demonstration, which finally forced the local government to compromise.

Finding that the local state in Anhui was against their interests, the migrants elected several representatives to petition to Beijing. The effort was futile, too. When the representatives failed to get substantial help from the central government, their depression turned to desperation. A spirit of hopelessness pervaded the migrating village. The despaired peasants gave up fierce resistance; most of them chose to come back to their hometown. They sold their farmlands in Anhui and bought houses in the new town of Chang. In 2007, I learned that among 264 migrant households only three households remained in Anhui. All others returned to Chang.

3.4 Factors Contributing to Resistance

*Insufficient Planning and the Lack of Resettler Participation*

Many factors contribute to peasant resistance to the distant resettlement. Insufficient planning and the lack of resettlers’ involvement during the resettlement breed later conflicts and dissatisfactions. The central state regulates that resettlers should participate in the resettlement work, including the selection of resettlement sites. In practice, however, peasants had no choice but to accept the state’s arrangement. In Shuanghe Village, the main factor contributing to resistance was that the resettlement site in Anhui province was located in a flood discharging area. In a petition letter, the villagers complained that:

> The Huayanghe farm is located in an area for an overflow of water. It means that our lives and treasures would be under the threat of floodwater all the time. The relocation area is a region impoverished by its single-crop farming. In case when having plant diseases and insect pests, we cannot make a living. The unqualified schoolhouse and equipment in the reception area make us disappointed. The bad
quality of education makes the migrants’ offspring unable to get rid of poverty.
Finally, we cannot get used to the climate and natural environment in the relocation area.

Because Shuanghe Villagers were extremely dissatisfied with the place, they resisted the resettlement fiercely. The local officials struggled to cope with the resistance. The state finally moved the villagers’ hukou and properties to Anhui, but it failed to make the peasant stay in the resettlement sites forever. When the migrants could not make a good living in the new place, most of them chose to come back to their hometown and only three households remained. We must note that not all distant replacers returned hometown. In Chang, many peasants moved to Hubei and Guangdong province. These peasants found that the living condition there was much better than that in Chang. It is natural that these peasants would like to stay in the resettlement place. Sufficient planning and resettlers participation can mitigate resistance to a large degree.

*Ambiguous Property Rights and Inadequate Compensation*
Inadequate compensation also made peasants resist the resettlement. Both the out-of-date compensation criterion and corruption resulted in inadequate compensation. Property investigation and registration are a time-consuming task. If the investigation operates too late, it will bring problems. Later the issue of compensation for lost fishing income arose, once again the lack of baseline data made analyzing and challenging resettler claims. This led to high costs of compensation fees. If the investigation begins to run too early, however, it also induces peasants’ complains, as what happened in the Three Gorges Project.

In 1992, Chinese state finished investigating and registering people’s properties that would be submerged by water. Based on these data, the state set up the standard of compensation for people’s loss. However, China developed quickly after Deng Xiaoping’s travel to the south in 1992. As a result, the standard was out of date when the state launched the migration work in 2001. Many resettlers had enlarged their houses and accumulated more wealth in the past years, but these properties could not get compensation. They complained that the compensations were unfair not only because the standard was too low but also because the information was out of date. According to them, they should get compensation according to the current situation rather than the standard of 1992. Ignoring the newly added properties is just
like confiscating the landowner’s property in the early period of liberation, they said. In addition, they complained that the central government, on one hand, encouraged peasants to be rich, on the other hand, the state confiscated their property after they became rich.

In China, peasants could utilize their farmlands but they do not have the ownership. Without the full rights of their lands, peasants can hardly defend their own rights. They are unable to prevent land confiscations if the central state decides to launch important projects. The Three Gorges Project is such a case.

3.5 Discussion and conclusion
In Chapter one, we have listed four types of weapons used by peasants: weak weapons, cultural weapons, institutional weapons and collective action. We also know that cadres may use different strategies to cope with peasant resistance, ranging from soft persuasion to coercion. We can see that all of these strategies in the case of Shuanghe Village. In the following, we will discuss some questions mentioned in Chapter one.

The first question is: can institutional weapons protect peasant interest? The answer is no. From the beginning, the villagers tried every lawful ways to resist distant resettlement. They first elected their favorite village head, hoping him to represent the villagers’ voice. However, the new head betrayed the whole village because he faced pressure from the state and because he pursued his personal interests at the expense of the villagers’ interest. Material interests become an effective way for the state to mobilize the village cadres when implementing unpopular policies. Some shrewd peasants tried to utilize the conflicts among bureaucratic institutions to protect their limited interests. They thought that officials in local People’s Congress had little chance to be corrupt so they wanted to strengthen their power; and it was more possible for peasants to gain help from local People’s Congress. Sometimes the strategy did work. Nevertheless, when the resettlement became the most important task of local government, all institutions, including People’s Congress, were motivated to do the migration work. No one would be on the side of peasants.

The villagers also tried to seek help from the higher authorities and the media. As we have seen, because the high-level government assigned the task of migration to local government, it was natural for them to delay the peasants’ petition. In addition, the state wants the media to propagandize the successful stories of migration rather than criticizing the project.
The local state establishes strict regulations to prevent the surveillance from the media. Peasants can hardly get any substantial help from the state.

Another related question: will rightful resistances lead to unintended political modernization, such as making local election competitive or making local People’s Congress stronger? The answer varies; it depends on external pressure from the central government. In the case of Shuanghe Village, when there was no external pressure, the election of village head became more competitive and local People’s Congress wanted to strengthen its power by helping peasants. But when the local state was under the great pressure of the central government, resistance would not result in any political modernization except the centralization of power.

What will lead peaceful resistance to a violent one? The case of Shuanghe Village shows that when peasants found that no formal institution would protect their interest, and when passive resistance such as running away could not work, they would resist violently. Some peasants committed suicide, others tried to detain officials and protest the state by means of collective action. The collective action finally developed into riots in Anhui, which was suppressed by police.

The local officials employed various strategies to mobilize the peasants. They tried to change the policy slightly to satisfy the peasants’ requests. Flexibility and compromise were helpful in appeasing the conflict between peasants and officials. The local state also utilized the informal relative networks to mobilize the society. But the most effective way of mobilization was coercion. No matter peasants adopted which strategies to resist the distant resettlement, their efforts were in vain. They were forced to move to Anhui eventually. But the unsatisfied living conditions in the receiving area made the peasants return to their hometown. If the story of Shuanghe Village tells us something, that is, coercion can force peasants to move temporarily but it cannot restrain them from moving back.
When probing mobilization, previous literature mainly focuses on formal organizational structures and norms that facilitate cohesion. Since the 1970s, Charismatic or personal authority has been neglected to a large degree although it was emphasized by Weber (Andreas 2007). Based on an investigation of Chang Town, this chapter will brings personal authority back into the study of mobilization.

In 2003, two main leaders at Chang Town, including the Party secretary and the deputy Party secretary in charge of the construction of new town, were arrested due to corruption. The migration work in Chang Town paralyzed. Against this background, Mr. Tang Xinjian became the new chief leader of Chang. In order to facilitate the process of relocation work, Mr. Tang made use of several strategies to establish his personal authority and a kind of charisma. It proves that charisma was helpful to mobilize the residents.

4.1 The Party Secretary Liu Arrested

January 16, 2004, Chongqing Evening News published a news report with the title “A Subprefect in Chongqing arrested after taking the post for one month”. It writes that:

In March 2003, Liu XX, at the age of 37, was elected as a vice head of Wushan county, Chongqing municipality. In April, Liu was in custody as a suspect of corruption. In May, Liu was formally under arrest. In November, Liu was put into prison for 13 years.

Liu became a teacher at the age of 16 and joined in the Chinese Communist Party at 21. He got promotion as a head of a town at 27, and then a Party secretary of a town at 28. ….. Last year, Liu XX was elected as a vice head of Wushan county. From the perspective of some leaders, Liu had a bright future and potentially endowed an even higher level of leadership. Liu was previously portrayed as an able young official as well as a hard-working local cadre who took good care of the people. Liu was so successful that CCTV interviewed him and propagandized his story.
Liu was the Party Secretary of Chang Town where I conducted the field research. In early 2002, the Procuratorate of Wushan County began to investigate the corruption case of Wu Zaoyan, the deputy Party secretary of Chang Town as well as the commander of the construction of new town. In the process of investigation, Wu Zaoyan confessed that one architectural businessman got one project of Chang new town by bribing Liu and Wu. They accepted 170,000 yuan RMB respectively. When getting the information on Liu’s corruption, the prosecuting attorneys were very discreet because Liu was a very able local cadre with a bright future. He successfully completed the task of distant resettlement in Chang Town and thus was promoted as the associate head of Wushan County. After careful investigation, they collected testimonies that proved that Liu was corrupt. In 2003, Liu was arrested before he performed his new duty. When getting the news that both Liu and Wu were under arrest, the peasants in Chang were very happy but the local cadres were very scared because they did not know who would be the next to be arrested. In this situation, Mr. Tang Xinjian became the Party secretary of Chang Town.

As argued by Li Lianjiang, most villagers in China disaggregate the state into a trustworthy Center and untrustworthy grassroots authorities (Li 2004). There was no exception in Chang town. My interview also showed that even after the arrest of local leaders, most of the villagers still thought the Center’s resettlement policy was good. However policy has been distorted by the local leaders in the implementation process. In this way, it allows villagers to condemn local officials while retaining some trust in the Center, which offered a way to resolve the problems of implementation.

4.2 Mr. Tang as a “Firemaster”

Beginning his career as a high school teacher, Mr. Tang was the General Director of Industrial and Commercial Bureau in Wushan County in the 1990s. On this position, Tang got in touch with the Chang people through dealing with the Zhangjiagang event. Chang Town has a long history over 1700 years. In the past centuries, it has been the business center of Wushan County. Many people from other provinces traveled to do their business in Chang Town. In 1997, several merchants from Zhangjiagang, Jiangsu province went to Chang to sell knitted sweaters. Since the price was very low, their businesses were very good. This made the local merchants hate them. Commercial competition eventually developed into conflict. Some merchants in
Chang hired several local ruffians beat the merchants from Zhangjiagang and plundered their goods.

The media reported this event. In addition, Jiangsu province government pressed Wushan County government to punish the Chang businessmen involved in the event. As the chief leader of Industrial and Commercial Bureau in Wushan County, Tang played an important role in investigating the conflict. In the process of investigation, Tang realized the people in Chang Town were agile, bold and sometimes troublesome. But he successfully collected evidences to sue those people who attacked the Zhangjiagang merchants and put them into prison.

After successfully dealing with the event, Tang was appointed as the Party Secretary of Wuxia Town where the Wushan County government located. At the time, the relocation work in Wuxia Town was far behind the plan. Regarded as an able cadre with great ideas, he was a perfect “firemaster” (Jiuhuo duizhang) to cope with emergencies. When he did the migration work, he found that the main factor underneath resistance was that the residents were not fully compensated. According to the compensation regulations of reservoir survey in 1992, the criterion of residents’ house compensation is 280 yuan per square meters. But the price of real estate increased quickly and many families expanded their houses. As a result, they requested the government to compensate the same size of houses. Tang thought that the requirement was reasonable. He tried his best to lobby the central government to compensate the residents not by means of money but by returning the same size of apartment to the residents. Due to his effort, this policy was implemented not only in Wuxia Town but also in other places.

This policy facilitated the migration work. In 2003, Wuxia Town accomplished the task of resettlement half a year ahead of schedule. In addition, unlike many other towns of the Three Gorges reservoir had villagers to go to petitions collectively, Wuxia Town did not have the collective petition (jiti shangfang) in which more than five people are involved. After the completion of the second stage resettlement, Tang headed the United Front Ministry of Wushan County in May 2003. He was also one of the seven Standing Committee members of CCP in Wushan County.

When Liu Jing’an and Wu Zaoyan got arrested, the migration work in Chang was in an awful mess. As we note in chapter 3, in order to complete the task, Liu Jing’an and his colleagues relocated many fake migrants to other provinces. Fifteen thousand people still
needed resettling, but the resettlement funds were almost used up. A large number of villagers appealed to higher authorities. Local cadres had no idea to resolve the problems. Once again, Tang turned into a “firemaster” to handle the final stage of migration work in Chang.

4.3 Taming the Local Cadres

An important feature of the institutional structure at township governmental level is the “first-hand responsibility system” (diyi bashou fuzezhi), which means that the Party secretary at the town level has the predominant power (Gong 1994). When Tang shouldered the task of migration work in Chang town, he was not only the leaders of the town, but also one of the chief leaders of Wushan County. In theory, he had the absolute power in Chang. However, Tang knew that in practice he would face challenges from senior local cadres. These officials had worked in the town for many years and thus they had extensive networks to influence the policy implementation. Because most of them lost the hope for the further promotion, they were not always collaborative. As a result, if the first hand is an “airborne” (kongjiang) cadre who came from outside, it was very difficult for him to govern senior local officials. There is a Chinese saying on this phenomenon: qiangleong nanya ditoushe, which literally means that “the powerful dragon cannot defeat the local snakes.”

Regarding himself as a powerful dragon, Tang knew the importance of taming the local snakes, namely the senior local cadres. He decided to establish a powerful image the first day he worked in Chang Town, making sure that no one could challenge his authority there. On December 30, 2003, one of main leaders of Wushan County held a meeting, announcing the appointment of Tang Xinjian as the first hand of Chang Town. As always, the leaders praised the local cadres, claiming that the resettlement work in Chang was affirmative. At the end of speech, the leader encouraged the officials to keep on working based on previous achievement.

The speech was nothing new to the local cadres. Mr. Tang thought that although the migration work in Chang was in a mess, most local cadres thought highly of themselves. He wanted to teach the attendees a lesson by discussing the theme of achievement. He began his speech by stating that26: “the leader tries to console us by affirming the positive side of the work.

26 See interview 17
It does not mean that you really get great achievement. Perhaps all of you worked hard. But hard-working is not equal to achievement.”

He continued: “what is achievement? In my point of view, there are three kinds of achievement. First, if you can solve a problem that nobody else can solve, that is your achievement. Second, if other people need a long time to solve this problem, you can resolve it in a short time and improve its development. Third, your theory and ideas are better than others are, and the facts prove that they are right. That is also achievement. Please use the criteria to check what you have done in Chang. Can you say that you have made great achievement when doing the migration work? I think few people can say so. I can.”

Next, he listed his achievements when he did the migration work in Wuxia Town. First, he contributed to the advisement of compensation criterion; it is a great contribution to the whole resettlement work. Second, there was no collective petition to the higher authorities when he governed the Wuxia Town. Third, he completed the task of migration work ahead of the schedule.

When I interviewed Tang in 2004, he still remembered what he said at the first meeting in Chang. Specially, he emphasized that he must tame the local cadres. Otherwise, he could not fulfill his instructions later. By offering the tough speech, Tang wanted to indicate that he was the master of Chang Town; everyone must obey him. In the interview, Tang emphasized that the institutional arrangement cannot always work; People were more important than institution. Indeed, Mr. Tang depended much on his personal authority to implement the policy.

The speech was just a prelude. Tang adopted some measures to build a powerful team of cadres as well as to establish his predominant power. One was to forbid all cadres to eat in restaurants outside. It is usual in China that officials use public money to host people. From Tang’s perspective, no matter who paid the bill, it was not good for local cadres to visit restaurants frequently with businessmen. Such behaviors would exert negative impact on the image of local government. If the officials were not the host, people would think that the businessman bribed the officials. If the officials were the host, it wasted money. Because the fund of resettlement had been overspent in Chang, the government badly needed money to do the migration work. The less money was used on eating, the more on migration.

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27 See interview 17
In addition, Tang thought that it would take hours for cadres to eat outside; and it was a waste of time. If the cadres spent too much time on enjoying foods, they could not have enough time to focus on work. “I am a workaholic.” 28 Tang said. “I usually worked twelve to fourteen hours everyday. In 2002, my working hours was more than sixteen hours. Before the check of migration work by Chongqing municipality, I had rarely slept for one week. During the period when I worked in Wuxia Town, I had been too tired to pass out for three times.”

Tang devoted himself to the migration work, and it was usual for him to call the cadres and assign the task at any moment. He always asked his colleagues to work overtime. He knew that many cadres complained him on this issue. In order to respond to the cadres, he had to try other ways to make best use of working time. One way was to build a dining hall in the local government. All cadres must have lunch in the government building; they cannot have lunch outside. By this way, it was not only to save money and time, but also to build an uncorrupted image of local government.

When Liu was the first hand of Chang Town, he had a well-known saying: “the life is not complete if one does not become rich after he becomes an official”. In order to help the cadres to become rich, he sold some shops in the new town to the cadres at very low price. Liu’s measure gained the cadres’ support because they benefited a lot from this policy. However, it caused the villagers’ complain. In order to mitigate the conflict, Tang decided to withdraw this policy and made a new rule that the cadres could not buy the beneficial shops. Those who have bought the shops should return them to the state. He thought that the government paid the cadres and thus they should not compete with the villagers on business. When getting the message, nearly all cadres opposed this measure. Many cadres refused to implement this policy; others wrote petition letters and lobbied the county government to dismiss Tang from his post.

4.4 Punishing the Corrupt Officials: Killing Two Birds with One Stone

The measures employed by Tang brought forth the resistance of cadres. Among the oppositions, Mr. Deng Fulin was the most active one. Mr. Deng was an able man without good fortune. He was found to have adultery relationship when he was young. The problem of life style (shenghuo zuofeng wenti) blocked Deng’s promotion. He had been a common cadre for many

28 See interview 17
years. Without the lifestyle problem, many people thought that Deng should have been promoted as the head of Chang Town or even a County-level leader.

Although Deng was a common cadre, he had worked a long time in Chang Town. As a result, he had built extensive networks in locals. Because the first hand of town changed frequently, those who kept working in Chang Town became important. The newly appointed Party secretary had to depend much on such “senior comrades” (Lao tongzhi) as Deng because they were very familiar with the local affairs.

When Tang Xinjian became the first hand of Chang, he did not pay much respect to Deng. The relationship between Deng and Tang became worse when Tang requested all cadres to return the shops. Deng united other cadres to oppose Tang, refusing to collaborate with him. With the time going, the conflict became open. Tang decided to fight back and punish those local cadres who dared to challenge his authority. Corruption became a weapon.

In a meeting, Tang warned the opponents “the officials in county-level ministry of personnel have investigated every cadre in Chang town. They found that few cadres are not corrupt. They wanted to adjust the personnel arrangement dramatically. I persuade them not to do so. We need a stable team of cadres. Let the past thing pass and prepare for the future. I do not care you were models or you did something wrong in the past. The key is that you must obey my leadership to do the right thing now.”

His warning, however, did not work to a large degree. In the meeting, Deng publicly argued with him. Many cadres were waiting to see how Mr. Tang would deal with Deng. This event motivated him to punish Deng and teach the other cadres a lesson. Soon, he found that Deng embezzled ten thousand RMB when he was in charge of a project. He had a long discussion with Deng, hoping him to collaborate. Nevertheless, Deng was still very tough and did not give up. With the investigation going further, more corruption facts exposed. Finally, they found that Deng had bribery with more than fifty thousand RMB. In 2004, the sentence for Deng was two years in prison.

Punishing Deng had two purposes. One was to establish Tang’s personal authority. The other is to gain the villagers’ support. When I interviewed Tang in 2004, he talked a lot about corruption, acknowledging that the problem of corruption was serious. The central government allocated 350 million RMB to relocate people in Chang town. While the money was nearly used

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29 See interview 17.
up in 2004, still more than fifty thousand people needed relocation. It means that the officials misused the relocation money and did not spend it on migration work, Tang said. Corruption had led to people’s complain. Tang thought that punishing corruption was vital in the process of migration. “Only when we successfully cope with the problem of corruption,” Tang said, “we can grasp the heart of people”. He continued to comment that “Chairman Mao emphasized that grasp class struggle and all problems can be solved (jieji douzheng, yizhua jiuling). Now we can say that grasp corruption and all problems can be solved (Fanfubai zhizhua jiuling).”³⁰

Indeed, one of his main tasks when Tang became the leader of Chang Town was to investigate corrupt officials, especially those who bribed more than one hundred thousand RMB. Trying to challenge Tang’s authority, Deng Fuling became the first to be put into prison although his bribery was fifty thousand RMB. After Deng was charged, no cadres could challenge Tang’s authority. In doing so, Tang also established an uncorrupted image.

Punishing Deng is a way of “killing chicken, scaring monkey” (shaji jinhou); other senior local cadre would not dare to challenge Tang’s authority. In addition, Tang asked several cadres to work in other places. In the fieldwork, Tang told me that two kinds of cadres should not keep working in Chang. One kind is those who brought forth fierce peasant resistance. One instance is Zheng Changsheng. As we analyzed in chapter 2, Zheng became the main target of peasant resistance, especially for villagers in Yang village. The town government had to spend much time to deal with the resistance. If those cadres kept working in Chang Town, according to Mr. Tang, peasant resistance would paralyze the migration work. As a result, it is helpful to mitigate the conflict if the local state sent these troublemakers to work in other towns. The other kind of cadres is those who had worked in Chang for a long time. Although they were familiar with the local affairs, they tended to protect their own interests. From Tang’s perspective, these cadres were not a credit but a burden for the resettlement work.

Under the leadership of Tang, one cadre was under arrest, seven cadres were transferred to other towns, and six young cadres were shifted to work in Chang Town. By punishing the cadres who tried to challenge his authority, and by adjusting the personnel arrangements, Tang built a team of cadres that absolutely obeyed his order.

³⁰ See interview 17.
4.5 Establishing a Positive Image of New Leadership

In addition to building a powerful team of cadres, Mr. Tang Xinjian also tried to tell the people that the new leadership of Chang Town was different from the previous. Rebuilding the road from old town to new town provided Tang a good opportunity to establish the new image of his leadership. The road was previously built in 1998, spending more than 2000,000 RMB. However, the road was a “jerry-built project” (doufuza gongcheng) because of corruption. In 2003, it was difficult for the traffic transportation due to its bad quality as well as the lack of maintenance.

The importance of the road was obvious. Without a high quality road, the construction of new town would slow down. On the first day when Tang worked in Chang, he had thought to fix it up. A few days later, he held a meeting with cadres, discussing the issue of rebuilding the road. The first thing was to make a budget. The budget showed that it would cost more than four-hundred thousand RMB to repair it.

Tang was very angry at the budget, thinking that the cost was too high. “The fund of migration work in Chang Town had been overused. We could not waste even one penny. How could we spend so much money on this small project?” Tang told me. “I decided to show the cadres how to save money.” He continued.

Next day, Tang asked all cadres to cease their work, following him to repair the road. The work was not complicated. Workers first made clean of the stones in the road, and then spread some soft soil. The road rollers would finish the last job. Since the cadres got salaries, they should not get extra payment. In addition, if villagers were interested in the work, they were welcome. The villagers could earn twenty-five Yuan RMB per day and they would be paid immediately after work. Because most of the projects did not pay the peasant workers in time, the peasants were happy when they learned that they could be immediately paid. More and more peasants joined in the project. Three days later, they finished repairing the road and the cost was finally no more than fifteen thousand Yuan.

The news of Tang’s efficient work on rebuilding the road spread quickly in the villages. “That is the result I want to get”, Tang told me. “I wanted to tell the mass and the cadres that I am a person who would like to do substantive things.”

31 See interview 17.
32 See interview 17.
4.6 Giving the Matter Further Thought

Repairing the road was a good start for Tang to gain the mass’s trust in Chang Town. The challenges were still to come. As mentioned above, the local government of Chang Town was badly short of money due to corruption in 2003. Tang knew the importance of financial support. As the Chinese saying expresses, “even the best cook can not prepare a meal without rice.” Tang tried his best to apply for the money to do the migration work. In order to gain the support, he even knelt down to beg a leader who was in charge of resettlement funds. He said:\footnote{See interview 17.}

The institutions in China are lack of efficiency and the officials are often cold. In order to fight for the interests of resettlers in Chang, I have to sacrifice my personal dignity. One time, the chairperson of County People’s Congress accompanied me to meet the associated head of Wushan County. We asked him to approve the application for resettlement funds of Chang Town. However, he was very hardhearted, totally ignoring our request. Worse still, he criticized that the chairperson should not be involved in the application. I explained the difficulties of Chang Town in detail, but he did not listen to me. At that time, I felt so desperate that I knelt down, begging him with tears in my eyes. “Please, give us some money for 10,000 resettlers in Chang Town, please.” I said. To tell the truth, I was very emotional, but I had no choice. I am a standing member of CCP committee in Wushan County. In the bureaucratic system, I am in the same level with the official who scolded me. I am even older than he is. In order to gain the financial support, I knelt down in spite of personal dignity.

Every time when the media interviewed Mr. Tang, he would like to tell the story, one of his colleagues told me that. Tang purposely spread the story in order to establish a positive image, showing that he would like to do anything for the interests of people in Chang town. His effort paid off. When I did the fieldwork in Chang, most of peasants thought highly of Tang. In 2004, Tang had gained a large sum of financial support. The migration work was launched again.

Tang also adopted some measures to appease the conflict between the state and peasants. He told me that he could not resolve all unresolved problems, but he tried to avoid producing
further problems. “We need to give the matter further thought,” Tang told me. From his perspective, the main problem of migration work in Chang Town is not money but the programming, or more exactly, the planning size of new town. Previously, the new town’s design was to hold ten thousand people. When Liu became the first hand of Chang, he reported that more than fifteen thousand people moved to other provinces. As a result, the size of new town would be largely decreased because only three thousand residents would move to the new town. Accordingly, the budget was cut.

If the new town was designed to hold three thousand people, Tang told me, it would cause many serious problems. He acknowledged that there were many fake resettlers. After careful investigation, Tang found that at least fifteen thousand people needed relocating to the new town. “You can cheat the central government one time, but you can not do this forever.” Tang commented, “We must be practical and realistic”. Considering many distant resettlers would like to move back in future, Tang thought that the new town should at least hold twenty thousand people. At the suggestion of Tang, the government finally changed the design of new town. Now, the new town can hold thirty thousand people.

After Tang became the head of Chang Town, he asked the cadres to measure the size of the residents’ houses again. After the careful measurement, he added 20 percent of the area of the houses in case that some places got neglected. “Of course we rarely ignore the places,” Tang told me, “I just want to make peasants to benefit from the resettlement. They have had sacrificed a lot in the past years and we should not treat them unfairly any longer.” He decided to extend his successful experiences in Wuxia Town to Chang Town, compensating the same size of houses to the residents. Because nearly all residents had lost their lands, they must make their livings by doing small business. As a result, they must have the first floor rooms in which they could do business. Tang said that he would try his best to satisfy this request. In short, Tang wanted to show me that he was very considerate to deal with the migration work. “I am very tough to cadres. At the same time, I am very soft to the people,” Tang said, “only in doing so can I establish my personal charm (geren meili). The migration work can thus run smoothly.”

By repairing the old road, spreading stories about how he sought money, and by satisfying the villagers requests, charismatic Tang regained the villagers’ trust. When more

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34 See interview 17.
35 See interview 17.
villagers trusted both the lower and higher levels, the local government could more easily implement the policy successfully without employing coercive strategies.

4.7 Reforming Local Governments into Troop-like Organizations

In 2005, when the old Chang Town would be submerged soon, the resettlement of Chang residents became urgent. Tang adopted some measures to mobilize the cadres, emphasizing that all work should serve for the resettlement work. First, he canceled the labor division among leaders of the Party and government temporarily. All leaders should devote themselves to the resettlement work. Second, he suspended the system of full-time cadres working in the village. All the cadres must focus their attention to the resettlement work. Third, he cancelled all the holidays and the day-off of the cadres’. They should be ready for the resettlement work any time. Fourth, the cadres’ promotion was determined by their achievement on the resettlement work. In short, the local government operated like troops to implement the policy of migration.

Mr. Tang also tried to appease the conflict through the following ways. The first is to increase the transparency of policy implementation. The town government would publicize all the hot questions that the resettlers concerned with in the villages, accepting the villagers’ surveillance. The second is to institutionalize resettlers’ representatives. The resettlers elected representatives based on the unit of village team. The representatives attended the meeting regularly to investigate and learn the resettlers’ opinions. The third is the institution of resettlers’ acknowledgement signature. In each process of resettlement, resettlers’ signature was required. The fourth is the hearing system of important events. The fifth is public bidding system. The construction project above ¥300,000 RMB must invite public bidding.

When beginning to move the town, the local government first moved the schools. It proved that this strategy was helpful to accelerate the speed of resettlement. After the primary school and high school were move to the new town, it was very inconvenient for the residents to send their children to go to school if they kept living in the old town. As a result, many residents were very collaborative when the state asked them to move to the new town. When more and more residents moved to the new town, businesspersons began to realize the business opportunity in the new town increased and they were willing to fasten the speed of resettlement. At the same time, the state dismantled one house after allocating one household. By forming
strong offensive of dismantling, seventy percent of the buildings in the old town were razed to the ground in one week. In early 2006, all residents were moved to the new town.

Discussion and Conclusion
This chapter tries to argue that personal authority or charismatic mobilization is an important factor that shapes the policy implementation in China. When studying the mobilization in the Chinese Cultural Revolution, Andreas (2007) finds that charisma played an important role in mobilizing students, worker, and peasants to attack the bureaucratic authority. The informal structure of charismatic mobilization, he argues, gave the movement a rule-breaking power that made it highly effective in undermining bureaucratic authority.

Three decades have passed after the death of Mao in 1975. In the past three decades, the personal worship has been rejected by Chinese state. But charismatic mobilization still exists in current China. Andreas defines the term charisma as “the ability of a leader to mobilize people without the benefits or constraints of formal organization” (Andreas 2007: 436). My research finds that some local cadres utilize their personal ability rather than institution to mobilize the society. Mr. Tang is one of them. As an official expert at doing resettlement work, Tang has a strong-willed personality and a kind of charisma. In the field, I was quite impressed by his comments on the relationship between leaders and institution. He said, “a good official should be a commander as well as a fighter. The qualification of leaders and the style of leadership play important roles in local development. Sometimes the institutions can not guarantee local economic development, and it needs specific person to achieve that purpose.” Obviously, he stresses the importance of individuals rather than institutions.

Mr. Tang is not an isolated case. Indeed, China has a highly complicated bureaucratic system. However, when social crisis emerges, the government depends much on some able officials. These officials are usually named as “the firemaster” (jiuhuo duizhang). The most well known “firemaster” official in China is perhaps Wang Qishan, currently the vice prime minister of China. He was appointed as the mayor of Beijing municipality to cope with the crisis of SARS. Under his leadership, Beijing successfully got through the crisis. In a sense, Mr. Tang Xinjian is a firemaster at the town level.

How could one become charismatic? It is not a mystery but an ancient art of power in China. According to the legalists (Fajia), people can employ appropriate law (fá) and strategies
(shu) to achieve a kind of influence (shi). The three factors, namely law, strategies and influence (fa, shu, shi), are basic for the rulers to govern the society. But these methods could also be utilized to make personal worship. Gao (2000) uses these ancient Chinese concepts to interpret the rise of Mao Zedong in the 1940s, arguing that Mao shrewdly follow the legalist wisdom to seize power.

The logic is still visible in current China. As an official who stress the role of strong leadership, Tang adopted the several strategies to establish his personal authority: punishing corrupted officials, adjusting the personnel, and constructing an incorruption image. These measures are helpful to strengthen his power and build an image of incorruption and hard working. Tang achieved a kind of influence (shi) which helped him to lead his subordinates and peasants in implementing policies. Due to these measures, Tang gained predominant power in Chang Town. He proudly said that “I can not make all cadres in Chang Town love me, but I can try to make them obey me”.

By repairing the old road, spreading stories about how he sought money, and by satisfying the villagers requests, charismatic Tang regained the villagers’ trust. When more villagers trusted both the lower and higher levels, the local government could more easily implement the policy successfully without employing coercive strategies.

At the same time, Tang was very practical and realistic. In order to fulfill the task, Tang reformed the town government into a troop-like organization. Tang acted as the commander of this troop. During that period, the function of local state focused exclusively on the migration work. By this means, the state can efficiently implement the policy. Tang was not the only person who likes to use the military ways to manage the civil affairs. Wang Qishan likes to do so, too. One slogan that was repeatedly quoted by Wang is that “a military order must be carried out” (junzhong wu xiyuan). Indeed, these “firemasters” stress much on obedience. They know that in China many officials overtly agree but covertly oppose their supervisors. Because the army must be realistic and practical, and because the military orders can be fully carried out, these capable cadres tend to borrow the military wisdoms to implement policy.

However, the dependence on personal authority and the stress on obedience can also breed serious problems, especially corruption. More often than not, when one person totally controls key policy implementation, economic matters and personnel arrangements, the
predominant power can be easily abused to selectively carry out or distort policies from higher authorities
Chapter 5
Conclusions

The main intellectual interest of this thesis is to explore the implementation of unpopular policies in China. As Sun Liping and his colleague (Sun 2000) pointed out, the media gives us two different pictures of Chinese state. On one hand, many reports comment that the Chinese Communist Party is losing control of rural China because its village-level organizations are weak. On the other hand, the state can achieve its purposes to a large degree, such as implementing the policy of family planning. How can a “weak” state successfully implement unpopular policies?

The resettlement work in the Three Gorges area furnishes a good case to examine the politics of policy implementation in China. When the Chinese state decided to build the mega dam in 1992, millions of people had to move against their will. More than half million were peasants. Compared with urban residents, peasants had lower compensation and less protection from the government (Picciotto, Wicklin & Rice 2001). Worse still, the limited compensation fee was usually delayed or used for other expenditure by the relocation administration (Wang and Shen 1993). It is especially difficult for those distant-resettlement villagers. They may need to change their mode of production; they also lose some social network and resources; they face the challenges of integrating into the host community; finally, they need to accustom to the new environment, such as local language, life style etc..

Due to the above reasons, it is natural that peasants resist the population relocation that is against their interest. How could the state implement this unpopular policy? By investigating the resettlement work in Chang Town, this study tries to reveal the politics of policy implementation in China. When studying decollectivization occurring in late the 1970s, Zweig (1989) finds that reformers employed the following techniques of implementation: press reports, work teams, and creating models. We will see that these techniques are still visible today when Chinese government resettles peasants. The state also adopts other techniques to mobilize the society, including informal relative networks, charisma, institutional innovations, and first of all, coercion.
5.1 Press Reports and Propaganda

The hallmark of Chinese politics in the Mao era was to launch political campaign. Although since the late 1970s, the state has abandoned the political campaigns to a large degree (Perry and Selden 2000: 6), campaign as a way of mobilization still exists in China. As Yang (2003: 131) observes, “many crucial policies are carried out in campaign or movement (yundong) form in which all political and social resources are mobilized to fulfill policy goals.” The same logic is visible in the case of the Three Gorge Dam Project.

As always, propaganda was the first step to initiate a special campaign. In the 1970s, supporters of agrarian radicalism manipulated the press at various levels of society helped create the winds and maintain a radical environment; they “used the national press, such as the People’s Daily, to mobilize support for their policies by floating policy ideas and seeing if local leaders picked up the cues (Zweig 1989:47)”. We can find the same logic in the resettlement work in the Three Gorges Project. In late 1991, the Chinese government launched a publicity campaign to deflect the criticisms of the project. In this campaign, every newspaper, radio and television station in China were required to begin “guiding public opinion” by running favorable reports about the project. Books and pamphlets about the project’s feasibility and long-term benefits were hurriedly published (Jing 1997: 71).

In order to prove that the central state’s policy was right, the state controlled the media and tried its best to propagandize that the resettlers supported the project. As the Party’s throat and tongue (dangde houshe), the media plays an important role in guiding public opinion. Many students declare that media helps to disclose some problems in rural China and peasants learn more on how to make use of the power of media than before (O’Brien 1996, Solinger and Lu 2003). But when the central state has made the decision on some controversial topics, such as the construction of the Three Gorges dam, the media can hardly challenge the authority of the central state. As in the Mar era, the Party hoped the press to create fear among societies who do not “dance to the official tune” (Zweig 1989:183).

The press reports positive examples to mobilize the villagers. However, after over three decades of administrative reforms, the traditional ways of mobilization, such as ideological propaganda, have been significantly weakened. The capability of propaganda has been reduced.
Official propaganda becomes nothing else but a way of showing the strong will of the government. It cannot motivate the people any longer.

5.2 Creating models

Chinese Communist Party has a tradition of creating models to implement its policies. “Establishing such prototypes in the early stages of mobilization ensured that policies were tested and mass opinions were gauged before they were popularized. (Zweig 1989:40).” In order to spread the policy, the Party established and propagandized model units “through the press, unofficial speeches, organized visits by local bureaucrats (Zweig 1989:40)”. This technique kept alive after post-Mao era. When Deng and his allies began their reforms, they attacked false models and created new models, such as Fengyang County in Anhui Province.

When Chinese state decided to build the mega Three Gorges Dam, it created some “model villages of resettlements” (Yimin mofan cun) to motivate peasants to actively support and participate in the resettlement work. Among these villages, Yang village in Chang Town was well-known. According to the media’s report, the village finished the relocation work far ahead of the schedule. The state mobilized some models to support these policies publicly in return for political and economic rewards. In Yang Village, Zheng Changshen, the Party secretary, became an advanced representative who supported the migration work. For his achievement, Zheng was promoted as a leader of Chang Town. In addition, the state arranged Zheng to report his events in the Three Gorges area. These models tried to persuade visiting cadres to implement radical policies.

The state hoped that the propaganda would help formulate a common belief in the society. The making of model villages could perhaps facilitate the resettlement work, the officials thought that. However, they were wrong. The outcomes of propaganda might often differ significantly from its intended goals. Through careful investigation, I found that the resettlement work in Yang Village was different from the official version. The corruption of Zheng directly contributed to the peasant resistance. The angry peasants even adopted collective action to protest the local government. In Chang Town, the propaganda of Yang village could not exert any positive impact on the resettlement work. On the contrary, it made peasants in other villages distrust the state, because they knew that the positive press reports on Yang Village were false.
5.3 Mobilizing Cadres by Means of Military Ways

One of the main findings of this study is that the local state would adopt institutional innovations to facilitate the implementation of policy. More often than not, the local states in China cannot work efficiently. But when they face the high pressure from the central government, they can reorganize themselves quickly. As a revolutionary party which came into power by means of military struggles, Chinese Communist Party tends to make use of military ways to cope with civil affairs even in peace era.

In Chang Town, when the deadline of resettlement was coming, the local state transformed itself into a troop-like organization. All work except the resettlement was temporarily canceled; all departments of local state focus on the migration work in spite of the previous labor division; all state employees, including teachers and doctors, were mobilized to do the relocation work. The cadres must totally devote themselves to the migration work, without any holidays or weekend; each cadre was assigned quantified task of resettlement; and finally, the achievement on the resettlement work determine the promotion of cadres.

When the local state became a machine aiming at the fulfillment of migration task, the local state became more efficient. It is common that local cadres would selectively implement policies. In order to protect their own interests, many local cadres overtly agree but covertly oppose the central state. By using the military ways to cope with civil affairs, and by emphasizing obedience, the local state becomes more powerful in the implementation of policies.

The above institutional innovation can throw new light on the central-local relations in current China. Many scholars (e.g. Jia 1994) hold that the central government should decentralize its power to mobilize local enthusiasm. But decentralization has risks. Decentralization means that the local government can gain more power and that the center’s capacity of control local government would be greatly weakened. As a result, the actual process of decentralization has great possibility of going beyond its original intent. “Once the process began and preceded with some degree of consistency, there was no guarantee that the essence of the nation’s original system would remain untouched” (Jia 1994: 3). Such decentralization efforts inevitably affect the central regime’s capacity to govern.
But the stories in Chang Town tell us that the game of power between central and local is not a zero-sum game. As Lampton (1987) observes, the Chinese political system is overloaded, decentralization offers a great opportunity for Chinese political system to alleviate the overloaded tasks and be more efficient. In the case of Chang, the local state strengthened its power by imitating the operation of troops. The institutional adjustment permitted all power to focus on one specific task: resettlement. It also provided a variety of structural arrangements for the reallocation of power and other resources. In doing so, the local state became more powerful and more efficient in a short time. Once the task gets finished, however, the local state would operate regularly. The expanding of local power may not weaken central power or state unity; strengthening the local authority will ensure that the central government’s policy can be fully and efficiently implemented.

5.4 Charisma as a Technique of Implementation

When mobilizing the people to attend political movements, Charisma played an important role in the Mao era (Andreas 2007). Interestingly, I find that charismatic mobilization is still available in current China to a degree. Especially when serious social crisis emerges, the state depends much on some able officials rather than institution. These officials, who are called as “firemaster” (jiuhuo duizhang), tend to resolve the problems without the constraints of formal organization. Wang Qishan, the former mayor of Beijing municipality, is such a firemaster. His success on coping with the SARS makes him well known in China. Now he is the vice prime minister of China.

Mr. Tang is a kind of firemaster in Wushan County. He was an expert at resolving problems. When two main leaders of Chang Town were arrested in 2003, he became the leader of Chang town, shouldering the task of dealing with the awful mess (Lan tanzi). Tang chose to employ some strategies to establish his personal authority. Through punishing corrupt officials, he gained predominant power in Chang. By innovatively reforming the town government into a troop-like organization, Tang can implement the policy effectively. As a practical and realistic official, Tang also tried his best to satisfy the resettlers’ reasonable requests. His attitude and hardworking were not only helpful to appease the conflict between the state and peasants, but also helpful to regain the villagers’ trust to local officials and local government. Through these
measures, Tang finally got the resettlers’ support and successfully implemented the resettlement policy without using coercive measures.

Local cadres with charisma and strong personal abilities can implement the policy more effectively. Nevertheless, when institution gives way to Charisma and personal ability, when the power is lack of effective institutional monitoring, it provides potential spaces for local cadres to become corrupt or abuse their power, which finally influence their efficiency of policy implementation. As Chapter 4 points out, Liu XX, the previous Party Sectary of Chang Town, was also a political star with charisma. His events and success had been widely reported by the local press and even by national press (e.g. CCTV). But finally he was arrested due to corruption. As a double-edged sword, charisma is potential for good or evil, depending on whether it is under effective surveillance.

5.5 Informal Relative Networks

After mobilizing the local cadres by using the military ways, the state used cadres as a lever to mobilize the peasants. In the fieldwork, I found that the local state officially required all cadres to do their relatives’ persuasion work on migration. If their relatives strongly opposed to the policy of resettlement, the cadres’ promotion and salaries would be at risk. Usually, the cadres cannot come back to office until they successfully persuaded their relatives to move.

The above strategy indicates that the state is weak in mobilizing peasants directly. Before the decollectivization in the late 1970s, peasants depended much on the state’s allocation to survive. With the process of collectivization, however, central planning mechanisms declined and peasants did not need the state’s resources any longer. They not only supported themselves but also contributed to the economic development by paying taxes. Because peasants gain little from the government directly, the government can not influence peasants efficiently. When peasants find that they have nothing to lose if they do not obey the state’s order, why do they implement the unpopular policy?

While the state loses its power in influencing peasants, it is still strong in determining the fate of its employees. The government monopolizes the cadres’ opportunities and resources. Administrative punishments or even removals from office is the most effective mechanism by which the central state forces local government officials to carry out and comply with central policies. By forcing cadres to utilize the informal networks to persuade their peasant relatives,
the state extends its influence to the rural area through an indirect way. It proved an effective way of persuading the resettlers to move. However, it is also lack of transparency to utilize informal networks. The lack of transparency may cause problems as well, such as the abuse of power and corruption. It is common that those who have a close relationship with government would benefit more from the policy implementation. Many fake resettlers are relatives of local cadres.

5.6 Coercion: “Kill the Chicken to Scare the Monkeys”
In the Mao era, threat of coercion and terror was a part of mobilization. The radicals held struggle meetings to “kill the chickens and let the monkey watch”; ex-landlords were castigated as class enemies, and potential oppositions to radical policies were the chicken; and struggle meetings “fulfilled a critical function in creating the radical environment (Zweig 1989:39).”

Today, coercion is also an important technique of mobilization. The resettlement in the Three Gorges area is involuntary migration (fei ziyuan yimin). Peasants have no choice but to move. Although the peasants adopted various weapons to resist the resettlement, their effort was in vain. When the deadline of relocation was coming, the strong-willed state would repress all resistance. The officials forced peasants to sign the contract of resettlement; the police arrested incompliant peasants and moved their Hukou out of the Three Gorges Area without their agreement; the state destroyed resisters’ houses by force; and the state used armed police to suppress depressed peasants who engaged in violent protest. Coercion could create the atmosphere of political and personal insecurity. Under the threat of coercion and terror, peasants might move away temporarily. But compulsion cannot make peasants love the land they move to and stay there.

5.7 Concession
When coping with the challenges from below, the state utilizes strategies including repression, concession, and the combination of repression and concession (Khawaja 1993; Rasler 1996; Olivier 1990). But coercion has risks. The systematic repression of confrontational protest has perverse and contradictory effects. The initial success of repression can produce a radicalization of collective action and a more effective organization of opponents (Tarrow 1994). In order to appease the conflict, local cadres also made concession. The state may send local cadres to
persuade the resisters first, combining with rational analysis and symbolic coercion. Comprise is the spirit of soft persuasion. For example, the local cadres made the resettlers more compensated by changing the compensation criterion. When peasant resistance became fierce, the local state would “bribe” the leaders of collective actions by means of interests. If this strategy did not work, the state would transfer local cadres with bad reputations to other towns to detract the villagers’ attacking focus. Sometimes the state would punish corrupt officials to appease peasant resistance.

**Concluding Observation**

Many factors contribute to the implementation of unpopular policy in current China, such as press report, the creation of models, mobilizing cadres by military ways, mobilizing peasants by relative networks, charismatic mobilization, coercion and concession. I do not attempt to reduce the explanation for the policy implementation to any single factor. But I must acknowledge that no other factor was associated as strongly with policy implementation as the state’s flexibility. When studying the implementation of de-collectivization, Zweig observes that “the reform group was able both to reengineer the external environment and to alter the policy’s content, thereby creating continual convergence between context and content” (Zweig 1987: 257). My research also shows that Chinese state is very flexible in the process of policy implementation. Indeed, the flexibility of local state plays an important role in implementing policies.
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