



Residents' experiences with tourism development and resettlement in Luoyang, China



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HIGHLIGHTS

- Tourism development induced displacement and resettlement is a global phenomenon.
- Resettlers are among the vulnerable populations under impacts of tourism.
- Resettlers' experiences in China showcase its positive impacts, e.g., job creation.
- The study also discovers its negative impacts, e.g., loss of social network.
- Suggestions to achieve a successful resettlement project are discussed.

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ABSTRACT

Tourism development induced displacement and resettlement (TDIDR) is an increasingly challenging phenomenon faced by the tourism industry, yet scholarship on the matter remains scarce. Impacts of TDIDR on resettlers are significant and vary in severity based on geopolitical contexts. The ubiquity of TDIDR, particularly within emerging economies such as China, indicates a need for further investigation. This case study, conducted in Louyang, China, contributes to tourism research by examining the various impacts of TDIDR on local (re)settlers. A cross-disciplinary review of extant research on impacts of development-induced resettlement is provided. Implications related to improving resettlers' wellbeing, ensuring equitable welfare distribution, and contributing to community empowerment are discussed.

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1. Introduction

In this paper tourism development induced displacement and resettlement (TDIDR) refers to population resettlement as a result of tourism development. It takes place when people are removed and relocated from their place of residence due to natural conservation and heritage protection associated with tourism-related uses; construction of manmade tourism projects including theme parks, museums, casinos, stadiums, or resort hotels; and/or, construction and upgrades of infrastructure and public facilities to accommodate tourists' needs. Given this broad definition, TDIDR is a consequence of a wide range of tourism development projects.

Extant research showcases a variety of TDIDR cases across different types of tourism destinations (nature-based tourism

areas, historical sites, and large recreational resorts) and countries at different levels of economic development (Brand, 2001; Brockington & Igoe, 2006; Fotsch, 2004; Herrera, Smith, & Vera, 2007; Judd, 1999; Schmidt-Soltau & Brockington, 2007; Wang & Wall, 2005a, 2005b, 2007). In the Congo River Basin of Central Africa, for instance, local residents have been involuntarily relocated as a result of the establishment of eight national parks (Schmidt-Soltau, 2003). In Aotearoa, New Zealand, Māoris have been displaced from their land due to tourism development efforts led by the *Pakeha*, a Māori word for New Zealanders of European descent (Barnett, 1997). In Vanuatu, indigenous people have been estranged from their (tribal) lands due primarily to the nation's colonial past, an historical era during which misappropriation of indigenous lands by colonial powers prevailed. In China, recent spatial and socio-economic transformation is evidenced in the "frenzy of land conversion from agricultural to nonagricultural use [such as tourism development]," resulting in the resettlement of numerous resident populations (Hsing, 2010, p. 2).

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Along with the pervasiveness of TDIDR are its social, economic, and ethical controversies and complexities. First, there is often an unequal distribution of resources between resettlers and other affected populations. Tourism development projects are designed to economically benefit relatively large areas whereas TDIDR is usually involved in the reconstruction of relatively small geographic areas, often impacting marginalized populations (e.g., rural farmers and urban poor). In this sense, poorly-designed TDIDR projects can result in inequitable distribution of benefits and losses: some people (non-resettled residents and tourists) enjoy the gains, while others (resettlers) bear its pains (Cernea, 2000).

Second, there are often conflicts between government, tourism developers, and resettlers. TDIDR involves fundamental and irrevocable changes in resettlers' living environments, so the process can easily present risks for resettlers such as loss of private property, food security, and income sources (Cernea, 2000). In some parts of the world, the situation is even worse as government officers and developers work collaboratively to reap economic benefits from land appropriation while leaving affected people impoverished (Gardner, 2012; Ojeda, 2012). Although resistance and opposition to TDIDR from resettlers is increasing worldwide (Cernea, 2008), resettlement issues related to property dispossession, under compensation, and loss of income sources still threaten a wide array of populations (Bui, Schreinemachers, & Berger, 2012; Mathur, 2013).

Third, since TDIDR often involves environment and heritage protection, it poses an ethical dilemma of how to reconcile "protection" with the safeguarding of local residents' livelihood, especially in less developed countries where economic growth is the priority. Questions such as "to what extent does maintaining residents' livelihood have to make way for nature conservation?" remain heatedly debated and unresolved in both academic circles and industry arenas (Agrawal & Redford, 2009; Buzinde, Kalavar, & Melubo, 2014; Cernea & Schmidt-Soltau, 2006; Schmidt-Soltau & Brockington, 2007).

Thus, TDIDR is a significant and controversial phenomenon that deserves particular attention from tourism scholars, yet relatively few have focused on this matter (except Wang & Wall, 2007). Instead, TDIDR has evanescently appeared and/or been briefly mentioned as a backdrop in studies on community participation (Wang & Wall, 2005a, 2005b); gentrification (Gotham, 2005; Herrera et al., 2007; Santos & Buzinde, 2007); land alienation (Burlo, 1989; Gotham, 2005; van Noorloos, 2011); and geographical isolation/exclusion (Buzinde & Manuel-Navarrete, 2013; Judd, 1999), which tend to focus on the subsequent phenomena related to TDIDR rather than TDIDR itself.

Despite the lack of direct discussion of TDIDR, the above mentioned studies showcase the prevalence of TDIDR and its linkage with various issues in tourism development. The inclusion of TDIDR frameworks within future studies on tourism development will allow scholars to better understand the processes and various byproducts associated with tourism induced changes. Furthermore, the consideration of TDIDR frameworks will enable scholars to focus on the heterogeneous composition of affected communities as well as the ways in which local people are distinctively impacted by tourism development and related policies (Sharma & Dyer, 2009). A resettled population needs to be investigated in this sense because of the particular risks and uncertainties it may face as a result of tourism development. Such research will contribute to tourism scholarship by offering a necessary foundation on which to better mitigate and redistribute impacts of tourism development.

This particular study contributes to tourism scholarship by adopting TDIDR as the unit of analysis. Unlike Wang and Wall (2007)'s study that focused on implementation of government

policies, we explored the processes and impacts of TDIDR from the perspective of residents in Luoyang, China who recently experienced resettlement predominantly induced by tourism development. China was chosen as an ideal case study site for the topic in question due to the ubiquity of resettlement cases in the nation (Cernea, 2008) coupled with its fast growing tourism economy (Airey & Chong, 2010). Overall, this study focuses on resettled communities and it aims to offer insights into the impacts of resettlement as perceived and experienced by resettlers.

This paper proceeds as follows. The first section contains a brief overview of existing literature on the impacts of development-induced resettlement and its implications for TDIDR. The subsequent section presents a case study in suburban Luoyang, China that draws on a series of interviews with local residents from two sites: one that has been resettled and the other to be resettled in the near future. Managerial and policy implications drawn from the case study are discussed in the last section of this paper.

2. The impacts of DIDR and TDIDR on resettlers

Within development studies, the term development-induced displacement and resettlement (DIDR) is commonly used to refer to involuntary resettlement caused by development projects—usually large-scale government-supported projects (e.g., irrigation systems, dams, infrastructure, mining, and conservative parks) (Downing, 2002). Across the globe, an estimated 100 to 200 million people have been resettled since 1980 (Agrawal & Redford, 2009; Cernea, 2000). Compared with resettlement caused by other reasons such as natural disasters and political turmoil, DIDR is irrevocable and permanent (Brand, 2001).

Earlier studies on DIDR tended to stress the adverse effects it has on local residents (Agrawal, 1998; Fernandes, 1991; Ferraro, 1983; McDowell, 1996). Building on extant studies, Cernea (2000) devised the Impoverishment, Risks, and Reconstruction (IRR) Model, which aims to synthesize the various risks of DIDR. According to the model, there are eight major risks associated with DIDR—landlessness, joblessness, homelessness, marginalization, food insecurity, increased morbidity, loss of access to common property resources, and community disarticulation. These risks comprise the very reasons that could force resettlers into conditions of impoverishment. To prevent or remedy these risks, Cernea proposes eight targeted reconstruction strategies, namely:

from landlessness to land-based resettlement; from joblessness to reemployment; from homelessness to house reconstruction; from marginalization to social inclusion; from increased morbidity to improved health care; from food insecurity to adequate nutrition; from loss of access to restoration of community assets and services; and from social disarticulation to networks and community rebuilding (p. 3662).

Cernea's model has been extensively used in planning and monitoring resettlement projects to prevent the degradation of resettlers' livelihood (Cernea & Schmidt-Soltau, 2006; Heggelund, 2006; Muggah, 2002; Schmidt-Soltau, 2003). However, it should be noted that despite its wide applicability the model does not account for the improvement of resettlers' livelihoods through resettlement. Recently, as real-world practices accumulate, the literature indicates that some complete resettlements have not only been able to prevent impoverishment, but they have actually led to poverty reduction and alleviation (McDonald, Webber, & Yuefang, 2008; Partridge, 1993; Schmidt-Soltau & Brockington, 2007; Sunardi, Gunawan, Manatunge, & Pratiwi, 2013; Yoshida, Agnes, Solle, & Jayadi, 2013). For instance, Karanth (2007) found that the majority of resettled households in India's Bhadra Wildlife

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