

2 Understanding the experiences of relocatees during forced relocation in Chinese urban restructuring

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Abstract

Despite the massive forced relocation of residents during urban restructuring in China, there is no systematic overview regarding how residents experience the process and its outcomes. Most studies concerning urban restructuring in China directly equate forced relocation with displacement, which has a negative connotation. This exclusively negative view overlooks the multifaceted effects of forced relocation on relocatees. This paper aims to provide a better understanding of relocatees' experiences during urban redevelopment in China by establishing a conceptual model in which the time sequence of events and their context are central, and by analysing the existing research on this topic about China. It conceptualises forced relocation as a process with various and changing socio-spatial implications over time, and as a specific type of residential mobility that occurs in the context of urban restructuring. As such, the paper presents a conceptual model that includes different stages and contexts to analyse the experiences of relocatees during and after forced relocation. It divides the process of forced relocation into a pre-demolition stage, a transitional stage and a post-relocation stage and investigates the social, economic, physical, psychological and behavioural dimensions of the experiences of relocatees as affected by the macro and micro context. As such, the conceptual model is used to structure the analysis of the existing literature about residents' experiences and subsequently identify the gaps in the literature that should be addressed in future studies of forced relocation in the Chinese context.

Keywords: *Experience of relocatees; Forced relocation; Urban restructuring; Demolition; Residential mobility; Displacement; China*

§ 2.1 Introduction

Driven by market mechanisms and economic growth, since 1978, developers and entrepreneurial local governments in China have formed pro-growth coalitions, which have embarked on extensive urban housing demolition and redevelopment on profitable locations, featuring large-scale forced rehousing of residents. Local governments or developers inform residents that their neighbourhoods are going to be demolished, and residents have to move involuntarily, regardless of their moving intention. This has resulted in the movement of residents from their original neighbourhoods to other “destination” neighbourhoods. For example, in the city of Shanghai, roughly 1.1 million households were relocated between 1995 and 2012, and 72 million square metres of housing demolished. In 2008, in parallel with the local-state-initiated residential redevelopment projects, the central Chinese government initiated the first round of national Shantytown Redevelopment Projects (SRPs), which aims to improve the living conditions of low-income residents and to stimulate the depressed housing market. Despite the current slowdown in economic growth, there is still more to come in China. In 2013, the central government triggered the second round of large-scale urban clearance projects, and it is estimated that between 2013 and 2017 approximately 10 million households will have been affected (Li et al., 2017; The State Council of PRC, 2013).

However, compared with the sheer numbers of affected residents in China, the research on the experiences of relocatees during forced relocation in China is still limited and needs to be updated. Outside Europe and the United States of America, where a significant body of research on forced relocation has been conducted, little is known about the micro perspective, i.e. individual relocatees’ experiences and coping strategies (behaviours and perceptions) with forced relocation. Furthermore, several key elements in the discussion have hindered the possibility to further reveal the diversity and the dynamics that underlies relocatees’ experiences in the Chinese context. First of all, the forced relocation of residents, which often occurs in urban restructuring projects around the world, has been criticized for having predominantly negative effects on residents and their communities (e.g. Atkinson, 2000; Davidson, 2008). Several scholars have blamed the large-scale property-led restructuring projects in China for causing displacement of low-income residents (He, 2007, 2012; La Grange and Pretorius, 2016; Gong, 2012). However, other studies have demonstrated real improvements in the relocatees’ (perceived) living conditions after relocation (Li and Song, 2009; Wu 2004a, 2004b). Thus, in general, it could be argued that the effects of forced relocation on relocatees during urban restructuring projects are diverse and not necessarily only negative; they may be simultaneously positive in other respects. Second, some studies and news reports have shown the conflicts and tensions between

relocatees and local governments or developers from a macro-, meso- or political-economic perspective (He, 2012; Hin and Xin, 2011; Qian and He, 2012; Sichuan News, 2009; Weinstein and Ren, 2009), which gives an impression that the role of residents in redevelopment projects is always passive. On the one hand, this might reflect wider experiences (He, 2012; Shin, 2016). On the other hand, however, this impression can lead to disregarding the active role that relocatees may play before and during urban redevelopment and forced relocation. Third, current studies about China mostly treat forced relocation as a single event, which might cover the temporal feature of relocatees experiences and overlooks the sequence of events that relocatees experience during and after forced relocation.

This paper therefore aims to provide a better understanding of the experiences of relocatees during urban redevelopment in China from the individual and household perspective. In particular, this is achieved by (1) establishing a conceptual model in which the time sequence of events and their context are central, and by (2) analysing the existing research on the implications of forced relocation for residents in urban restructuring areas in China on the basis of the model. As such, the conceptual model works as a structuring element for the review of the research. It divides the process of forced relocation into three stages based on chronological order: the pre-demolition stage, the transitional stage and the post-relocation stage. This conceptual model will also be used as a structuring element in the analysis of the reviewed research.

The following section will first discuss the literature on forced relocation and displacement in general and on this basis propose a conceptual model for studying forced relocation. Section 2.3 will provide the specific context of forced relocation in urban China, while Section 2.4 will apply three stages in the conceptual model for a better understanding of relocatees experiences by reviewing the current literature on Chinese forced relocation. The final section offers our conclusions and suggestions for further research.

§ 2.2 The experiences of relocatees in urban restructuring

Although this paper focuses on forced relocation in urban China, we will first briefly discuss the international literature on this topic in order to establish a conceptual model that offers a better understanding of the experiences of relocatees during forced relocation due to urban restructuring. This is the because that the international literature has advanced in studying relocatees' experiences during and after forced

relocation, which can therefore help to develop understanding with regard to related Chinese studies. Forced relocation refers to the process by which residents are forced to move from their original neighbourhoods to new destination neighbourhoods, due to urban restructuring projects. In most cases, it also involves the demolition of the original dwellings (Kearns and Mason, 2013). Forced relocation of residents is usually initiated and implemented top-down by local governments, housing associations or developers. Residents who are forced to move (relocatees) are often involuntarily involved in urban restructuring, and this is commonly regarded as displacement, a term which has highly negative connotations. 'Displacement' is defined as the state which:

... occurs when any household is forced to move from its residence by conditions that affect the dwelling or its immediate surroundings, and that: 1) are beyond the household's reasonable ability to control or prevent; 2) occur despite the household's having met all previously imposed conditions of occupancy; and 3) make continued occupancy by that household impossible, hazardous, or unaffordable (Grier and Grier 1980, 8).

Hence, relocatees and displacees are both forced to move involuntarily and they have little or no control over the decision-making processes underlying urban redevelopment projects or gentrification (Visser, Bolt, and van Kempen, 2013; Kleinhans and Kearns, 2013).

However, while the terms forced relocation and displacement are applied to related contexts and situations and both have predominantly negative connotations, we argue that the term forced relocation allows for outcomes which are not by definition negative. Displacement exclusively focuses on the downsides caused by "the involuntary residential dislocation" process of gentrification (Marcuse, 1985, 205), including worsened living conditions, harassment by landlords or financial constraints caused by rising housing rents (see e.g. Atkinson, 2000; Freeman and Braconi, 2002; Newman and Wyly, 2006). On the other hand, urban restructuring policies in many countries, such as the United States, France and the Netherlands include legally established compensation mechanisms for forced relocatees, whereas compensation is non-existent in the case of gentrification-induced forced relocation (Kleinhans and Kearns, 2013).

We will now explain several features of forced relocation that should be recognised while studying the experiences of relocatees, because they are conditional for various outcomes. These aspects will be built into our conceptual model. Firstly, forced relocation is a process that changes in content over time. The content of forced relocation, including policies and implementation, the stakeholders and their interaction, the social groups targeted or the aims of redevelopment, differ over

time (Goetz, 2013). Generally, a redevelopment project consists of different stages with different periodical targets as it proceeds over time. For each target at each stage, it involves different stakeholders and social groups. The interaction between different stakeholders can differ at different stage as well. Also, the contexts that are closely related to relocatees' experiences, such as related policies, housing market or household situation, may change as forced relocation proceeds. The experiences of relocatees therefore can vary over time, even within the same restructuring project. Thus, the evaluation of the outcomes of forced relocation should take into account the various stages and the inherent content of each stage, rather than focusing on a static event or unitary measurement. The outcomes for and experiences of relocatees will not necessary be universally the same (Allen, 2000; Kleinhans and Van der Laan Bouma-Doff, 2008, 584). Some studies have found that the experiences of relocatees are dynamic and vary as forced relocation proceeds (Goetz, 2013; Popkin *et al.*, 2004). Goetz (2013) also emphasizes the significance of 'time' and the 'micro and macro context' in exploring relocatees' experiences, by showing how the implementation of the project, the local housing market and the family situation cause changes to relocatees' experience.

Secondly, the forced movement of residents can be considered a specific type of residential mobility which occurs in the context of top-down imposed relocation decision. Relocatees may have behavioural and psychological experiences that are similar to voluntary movers, such as previously existing intentions to move, the search for (replacement) housing and the housing choice. In some cases, local governments or housing authorities provide relocatees special housing options with regards to the location, size, floor, rental fees/ housing price of the dwelling after rehousing, in order to improve residential satisfaction and promote a smooth relocation and redevelopment process. Relocatees also have to face similar macro and micro constraints related to the housing market context, their socioeconomic status, such as income and education, and their individual ability to search for information on housing market (Kearns and Mason, 2013, 189; Bolt and van Kempen, 2010, 161-164; Kleinhans, 2003; Visser, Bolt and van Kempen, 2013; Posthumus and Kleinhans, 2014; Popkin *et al.*, 2004). Thus, to understand the extent to which residents are forced to move, how and why residents have different perceptions and responses to forced relocation, and how this may lead to different outcomes, it is necessary to investigate the experiences of relocatees from a micro and residential mobility perspective (Doff and Kleinhans, 2010; Popkin, *et al.*, 2004). For example, studies have found that some residents who expressed a pre-relocation intention to move also reported a higher level of post-relocation dwelling improvement than those who had no intention to move (Kleinhans and Van der Laan Bouma-Doff, 2008). In addition, some studies have found that high-income relocatees are less likely to move into low-income neighbourhoods, while people from ethnic minority groups tend to relocate to

ethnically concentrated neighbourhoods regardless of the level of income or education (Doff and Kleinhans, 2010; Bolt and van Kempen, 2010). These findings show that it is somewhat simplistic to label (the outcomes of) forced relocation by definition as negative, because this ignores the complexity of relocatees' pre- and post-relocation housing behaviour and moving intentions, which may resemble that of regular movers without any top-down pressure to move.

Thirdly, the institutional, economic and social contexts in which forced relocation is embedded, as well as relocatees' personal characteristics, are also related to their experiences (Chen and Lai, 2013; He, 2014). Forced relocation is accompanied by constraints but also includes various social, economic and cultural resources unique to relocatees, which makes their experience different from that of voluntary movers. For example, the institutional context, such as the compensation criteria and the time span of the relocation process determined by local governments, affect relocatees' mobility experience. Also, whether the forced relocation is enacted by the governments or market forces can influence relocatees' experience differently, since in some cases developers might have more freedom on the compensation criteria than local governments. In addition, the social context, such as social movements or media demands for public participation in urban restructuring projects, also affects the experience of relocatees (He, 2014). Local housing market plays a significant role with regard to relocatees' housing options and choices. For instance, relocatees facing a relaxed housing market might encounter fewer challenges and competition than in a tight housing market (see also section 2.3 about the influence of local housing market on relocatees' housing choices in China).

Although relocatees are forced to move, they have a certain amount of 'freedom' and agency to make their own decisions, even if limited within the criteria of compensation schemes (Manzo *et al.*, 2008), which may help to alleviate the stress and disruptions resulting from their forced relocation. Relocatees may develop positive coping strategies in response to the stress caused by forced relocation, rather than passively accepting everything that forced relocation imposes on them (Posthumus and Kleinhans 2014, Weinstein and Ren, 2009). Some studies have found that those who feel in control or positive about forced relocation may end up more satisfied with their new dwelling. It also occurs that relocatees see forced relocation as a chance to improve their housing situation because compensation may effectively increase their options on the local housing market (Allen, 2000, 450; Kleinhans, 2003, 487). However, there are also relocatees who cannot effectively respond to or make choices during forced relocation, especially those who have limited resources and face multiple life problems, such as the aged, people on low incomes or with low levels of education, or particular ethnic groups (Kleinhans, 2003; Posthumus and Kleinhans, 2014; Popkin *et al.*, 2004).

As mentioned above, forced relocation is a process that changes in content over time, rather than a static event. Different dimensions of the experience of relocatees may differ over time, depending on the context of the forced relocation and an individual's or household's features. In other contexts, such as dam construction, the literature also recognises the importance of exploring relocatees' experience over time. For instance, Scudder and Colson (1982) explained how relocatees cope with 'stress' during the process of forced relocation preceding actual dam construction, and they established the four-stage model as: "recruitment, transitional, development and adaption/hand over". Other research in this context has also emphasized the importance of the social, psychological, cultural, economic and physical dimensions of relocatees' experience (Cernea, 1997;; Downing and Downing, 2009; Xi and Sean-Shong, 2011).

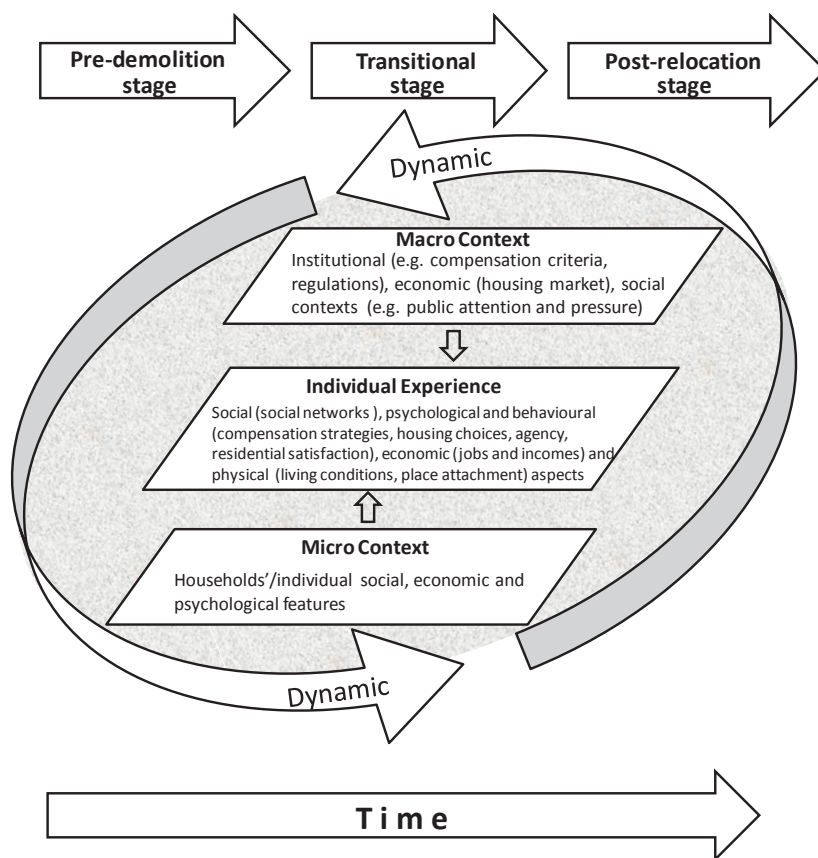


FIGURE 2.1 Conceptual Model
Source: Authors

The literature discussed above has demonstrated that time/stage, the context and the various dimensions of relocatees' experience are highly significant issues. Therefore, we present a conceptual model for understanding the experiences of individual relocatees during forced relocation in urban restructuring (Figure 2.1). Breaking down the time dimension reveals the sequence of events that individuals/households experience and the various factors that affect the experiences of relocatees at different stages. In the model, we therefore divide forced relocation into three stages: the pre-demolition stage, the transitional stage and the post-relocation stage. First of all, the *pre-demolition stage* refers to the stage when the original neighbourhood has not yet been demolished and relocatees still live in it. They are informed that their neighbourhood will be demolished and that they have to move out. In this stage, reaching an agreement on compensation between relocatees and the evictors is the main focus (Chen and Lai, 2013; Hu *et al.*, 2015). The nature and forms of compensation (monetary versus in-kind) will be further discussed in section 2.3. These are largely decided by the institutional context, the roles of local governments and developers, and the socio-economic conditions and preferences of relocatees.

Second, the *transitional stage* means that relocatees have moved out of their original neighbourhood, live in temporary accommodation but have not been rehoused into their final housing situation yet. In some countries such as China this is a necessary and normal stage, however, in Western Europe and the USA this stage is rare. In other words, adding the transitional stage to the conceptual model is an added value for studying the Chinese context. In China, the length of this stage is closely related to the performance and management of local governments and developers who construct the relocation neighbourhoods to which the residents can move (see also section 2.4.3).

The third stage is the *post-relocation stage*, which means that relocatees have moved into a 'permanent' housing situation and can start with adapting their daily routines and habits. Important factors are the new housing, the neighbourhood, social networks, but also transportation and employment.

As mentioned above, it is of crucial importance to divide the context is also divided into macro and micro levels. The *macro* level concerns the institutional, social and economic context in which forced relocation and urban restructuring are embedded, and conceives of the movement of relocatees as a specific type of residential mobility. In China, huge number of people from various social groups have been affected by the wave of capital accumulation through continuous and rapid spatial development and consumption. Obviously, various levels of government and developers strongly affect the nature and course of the relocation process, as a result of their (changing) roles, resources and interests (Li *et al.*, 2017). The same applies to rules and regulations on various administrative levels, and the state of the local housing market.

The *micro* level concerns the individual's and the household's socioeconomic features and preferences. Relocatees' experiences occur across similar dimensions as the experiences of regular movers: the social, physical, economic, behavioural and psychological dimensions. These dimensions also change over time within the context of forced relocation. For example, the levels of psychological stress are likely to vary in intensity throughout the relocation stages, associated with uncertainty regarding compensation, temporary housing, the final destination and other issues. In section 2.4, we use this model to discuss the experiences of relocatees at each stage, based on the available literature. At the same time, we demonstrate what has been evident and what is missing in current research. The following section will explain in more detail s the background of forced relocation in urban China.

§ 2.3 The macro context of forced relocation in urban China

In order to give a clear and reproducible overview of relocatees' experiences during forced relocation in urban restructuring in China, we did a search and analysis of the current literature on this topic. We used Scopus and Web of Science to conduct a literature search with combinations of four themes and related key words: 1) China OR urban China OR Guangzhou, Shanghai, Beijing (Chinese cities that often appear in related literature); 2) forced relocation OR forced movement OR eviction OR involuntary movement OR displacement or demoli*, etc.; 3) urban redevelopment OR urban restructuring, etc.; 4) forced mover* OR relocatee* OR involuntary mover*. We mainly (but not exclusively) focus on papers published in English, as including papers written in Chinese would limit accessibility to readers who are fluent in this language. While we actually searched for Chinese articles by using a popular Chinese scientific search engine (CNKI), we found that Chinese papers mostly relate to other issues than the experiences of forced relocatees, such as laws, policy, regulations, techniques for dwelling size measurement, urban economics and the real estate market development. However, we identified some dissertations in Chinese with regard to relocatees' experiences during forced relocation (Gong, 2012; Luo, 202; Ma, 2012), which are included in the review.

After checking the titles and abstract, we identified 51 articles in English (published between 1995 and 2017) on forced relocation and urban restructuring in China, which is a relatively small number considering the scale of forced relocation in China. We categorised these articles based on the relocation stage and the main issues covered (such as interactions between different stakeholders, implementation of specific urban

redevelopment projects and relocatees' coping strategies, experiences and outcomes). We found that most articles use specific projects to illustrate how local governments, developers and residents interact with each other during the redevelopment, which provides an opportunity to reveal the macro institutional, economic and social contexts with regard to relocatees' experiences.

In China, many conflicts related to forced relocation arise from the interactions between homeowners and local governments or developers. Most studies, news reports and regulations concerning forced relocation in China focus on homeowners – unlike the literature on Western Europe and the United States, which predominantly focuses on renters living in social or public housing. In the United States and Western Europe, renters can get compensation from local authorities or housing associations (Goetz, 2016; Kleinhans and Kearns, 2013), which is quite different with the experiences of their counterparts in China, who are usually excluded during the redevelopment process. This difference arises due to the fact the homeownership determines residents' accessibility to different social resources such as compensation during urban redevelopment. In this study, we mainly focus on the experiences of homeowners. Local governments and developers need to reach agreements with homeowners about compensation before the land is expropriated, which concerns relocatees the most. This compensation is financially highly significant to them, as relocatees generally belong to low to middle-income social groups.

The contexts has a significant influence on the experiences of relocatees. Urban redevelopment often includes both interventions targeting people (i.e. residents) and places (neighbourhoods) (Owens, 2017). Therefore, not only the features of place and people should be considered (e.g. physical, social and economic dimensions of neighbourhoods and demographic and socioeconomic statuses of residents), but also their positions within the macro context, i.e. the social, economic and institutional contexts matter for their experiences (Goetz, 2011; He, 2012; Li, *et al.*, 2017). We explain the key detailed macro contexts in relation to relocatees' experiences.

The institutional context, in particular the regulations and governance on urban redevelopment, is changing the interrelationships between different actors in urban restructuring (Shih, 2010; Ren, 2014). One of such outstanding institutional arrangements is the evolution of the land expropriation and dwelling demolition regulation, which has regulated and changed the governance, procedures, compensation criteria and the roles of residents and local governments during urban redevelopment (for an overview, see Li *et al.*, 2017). There have been three versions of national regulations on urban redevelopment and forced relocation, which are enacted in 1991, 2001 and 2011 (The State Council of PRC, 2001, 2011). Compared with the regulations issued in 1991 and 2001, the latest one highlights the interests

of residents. It sets out procedures that local governments should follow when expropriating land from relocatees. It also enables residents to get involved in the decision-making of the compensation criteria and the project (Li *et al.*, 2017). As regulated, generally, relocatees have to choose between two types of compensation: in-kind and monetary compensation. In-kind compensation means that relocatees receive alternative housing as compensation, while monetary compensation means that relocatees are given money for their dwellings. Local governments or developers determine the value of the dwellings that are to be demolished, based on the housing conditions (e.g. housing size and location of neighbourhood) and the local housing market (Chen and Lai, 2013). The choices that relocatees make concerning compensation directly affect the outcomes of forced relocation (Hu *et al.*, 2015). If they choose in-kind compensation and the value of their new housing is higher than that of their old dwelling, they must pay the difference; if the value of the demolished housing is higher than that of the new one, relocatees then either receive additional financial compensation or are given better housing. If relocatees choose monetary compensation, local governments and/or developers determine the compensation based on their assessment of the value of the dwelling that is going to be demolished. The institutional context, in particular compensation criteria and the length of the transitional period, varies in different cities (see section 2.4.2 for examples of different transitional period in different cities). This is due to differing local regulations, housing markets and investment levels of local governments in the redevelopment.

The economic context, especially the local housing market situation, influences relocatees' expectations of and housing experiences during urban redevelopment. First, the amount of compensation that relocatees can get from local governments or developers is closely related to local housing prices. Second, housing access in current urban China is largely dependent on a household's income and status and whether people qualify for subsidized housing provided by the state or work units (Chen *et al.*, 2014; Lee, 2000; Wang *et al.*, 2012). Currently, dwelling not only means home, but also an asset of growing financial importance because of rising housing prices. Therefore, the relocatees, especially those who are deprived and cannot move out of their declining neighbourhoods need to rely on the compensation that local government or developers provide to them to improve their living and economic conditions. The local housing market and economic situation of relocatees can influence their housing choices with regard to the location and the size of available dwellings and when they are going to be relocated. Third, these relocatees are mainly from the inner-city neighbourhoods, work-unit (*danwei*) communities, urban villages, old public housing estates or suburban villages. These neighbourhoods have relatively high land value locations, but are in a run-down physical conditions, which make them a priority for redevelopment by local governments and/or developers. Table 2.1 shows the types of neighbourhoods, their location and their residential composition.

Relocatees in these neighbourhoods are forced to move because their homes are demolished for redevelopment projects, such as old inner-city redevelopment, shantytown redevelopment or public infrastructure construction.

TABLE 2.1 Targeted neighbourhoods for demolition

| | TRADITIONAL INNER-CITY NEIGHBOURHOOD | DANWEI COMMUNITY | URBAN VILLAGE | SUBURBAN VILLAGE |
|-----------------------|--|----------------------------------|--|---|
| Owners | Inner-city citizens/ Local housing bureau | SOE or COE or their employees | Rural farmers | Rural farmers |
| Ownership of the land | Stated-owned land | Stated-owned land | Collectively owned land (by the villagers) | Collectively owned land (by the villagers) |
| Location | Inner-city centre | Old industrial area | Between inner-city centre and urban periphery | Urban periphery |

Source: Summarized from authors' observations and the literature such as He (2012), He and Wu (2007), Hin and Xin (2011), Liu et al. (2016), Ma (2012), Wu (2004a, 2004b).

At last, the social context, such as public opinions about redevelopment projects and the degree of public participation in the decision-making process, affects the experiences of relocatees (He, 2012; Qian and He, 2012; Weinstein and Ren, 2009). The governments, especially the central government make an effort to balance between economic growth and social equality (Duckett, 2012; Li, 2015). If market failure erodes social stability, the market transition process will be intervened in by the central government, as the social and political stability and economic development are the underlying principles for the central government to formulate their policy. (Chen et al., 2014; He and Wu, 2009; Wang et al., 2012). This can be traced from the evolution of the land expropriation regulations mentioned before (also see Li et al., 2017).

§ 2.4 Understanding the experiences of relocatees during three stages of forced relocation

Using the conceptual model and existing literature, this section reviews the experiences of relocatees in China during forced relocation across the three stages outlined in the conceptual model (pre-demolition, transitional, and post-relocation stage) against the macro and micro contexts. Based on section 2.3, the model includes key variables underlying the mechanisms of various relocation outcomes, which will be discussed in sections 2.4.1, 2.4.2 and 2.4.3. Because the mechanisms between the key variables differ in and between each stage, we choose not to include all mechanisms separately in the model, as it would become far too complicated. However, the relationships between the key variables will be explained in each of the subsections. We will also reveal the gaps in the literature that should be addressed in future studies of forced relocation in the Chinese context.

§ 2.4.1 Stage 1: the pre-demolition stage

At this stage, relocatees have not moved out of the dwellings, but have been informed by the government or developers that their dwellings are going to be demolished. Relocatees negotiate with developers or local governments about compensation (macro context), and they also grapple with issues such as what to agree to and when to sign compensation contracts. The interactions between different stakeholders in this stage are very intense. Some studies have found that relocatees have little influence on the decision-making process in relation to restructuring and forced relocation, while developers and local government dominate the process and displace original low-income residents to the urban periphery (He and Wu, 2005; He and Wu, 2007; Ren, 2014; Shin, 2014). In addition, tough disputes and conflicts may arise between relocatees, developers and local governments regarding redevelopment plans and compensation criteria (He, 2012; Hin and Xin, 2011; Hu *et al.*, 2015). Some scholars argue that the essence of the interactions between different stakeholders at this stage concerns the mobilization of social relationships in the context of, and against the accumulation of space-based capital, and they regard the relocatees' strong response as a claim to "the right to the city", including the rights to the equitable distribution of the social benefits of development and to engage in decision-making (Qian and He, 2012; Weinstein and Ren, 2009). These studies highlight the mechanisms of urban restructuring and forced relocation process from a macro- and political-economic perspective.

However, these studies tend to overlook the individual experiences of relocatees, in particular the agency of relocatees during forced relocation. At this stage, the experience of relocatees can be quite intense. Ownership of property and a land-use rights are the only resources that residents can utilize against forced relocation (Zhang, 2004). As mentioned above, relocatees can usually choose the compensation (in-kind or monetary) that they prefer, however, there is little research or evidence shows which option is the most popular. Relocatees' decisions on compensation choices depends on (1) the institutional context of forced relocation, and (2) the factors that are similar to regular movers, such as local housing market, their socio-economic and living arrangement. Many studies have shown how, when choosing compensation, relocatees take their life course, affordability and the location of the relocation neighbourhoods into account (An, 2007; Ho, 2013; Luo, 2012; Ma, 2012, Song, 2015). At the same time, however, their choices are also constrained by the institutional factors in which forced relocation is embedded (Ho, 2013; Hu *et al.*, 2015). For example, relocatees have to consider the amount of compensation they will receive from the local government and/or developer based on the compensation criteria (Ma, 2012), which is set by the real estate assessment company employed by local government or developers.

Most conflicts between relocatees and the local government and/or developer at this stage are about the amount of compensation. Usually, relocatees expect more financial compensation than the local government and/or developer intend to provide (He and Asami 2014). In addition to direct confrontation, relocatees use, sometimes illegal, strategies in an attempt to increase the amount of compensation (Ho, 2013; Hu *et al.*, 2015; Song, 2015; He, 2014). As a first key strategy, relocatees can choose the timing of their signing of the contract that transfers their land-use right to the local government and/or developer (Ma, 2012; Weinstein and Ren, 2009; Shi and Zhu, 2013). However, this may be influenced by various factors. For example, to promote the pace of demolition and motivate relocatees, some local governments and developers use arguments such as "the earlier you leave, the more benefits you will get; the later you leave, the fewer benefits you will get; refuse to leave, and you will get nothing" (Shi and Zhu, 2013, 76). They also provide more positive incentives for those who sign the land-use right transfer contract at an early stage. As a result, some relocatees choose to sign the contract earlier. However, others do not sign the contract until the very last moment, because they believe that by doing so the local government and/or developer will offer them more compensation than other relocatees (Ho, 2013; Ma, 2012).

The second strategy is related to relocatees' networks (Ho, 2013). The amount and the type of compensation are supposed to depend on the compensation criteria and the size of the demolished housing and/or relocation household. Since the compensation is closely related to whether and how relocatees can benefit from forced relocation, some relocatees try to maximize their compensation by looking for help from their

acquaintances (relatives, friends) working in related departments of local governments. It was reported that some governors or staffs (e.g. those who working in a dwelling assessment company) were accused of corruption because they illegally increased the amount of compensation for some relocatees (Liaoning Daily, 2015). Thirdly, in another strategy to increase the amount of compensation, some relocatees attempt to increase their household size or construct more illegal buildings (Luo, 2012; Wu, Zhang, and Webster, 2013). Last but not least, relocatees may organise online or real-world associations to exchange information or launch collective action against forced relocation (Erie, 2012; He, 2012; Song, 2015; Wang, 2009).

At this stage, it is not only the compensation choices that concern the relocatees the most (the study of which is absent from the literature on China in this field): the experiences of relocatees in the social dimension, such as their attachment to and interactions within the original neighbourhoods, also affect their response to forced relocation. For example, Gilroy (2012) found that older residents in an old inner-city neighbourhood facing demolition had a strong attachment to the neighbourhood and were not willing to move. She explained that this may be because the elderly heavily depend on the long-term mutual help they provide one another in their neighbourhoods due to the changes in living arrangements and family support in current urban China (Gilroy, 2012). However, there are also controversial findings that demonstrate that strong attachment to the neighbourhood does not equate a strong desire to stay. Wu (2012: 546) found that more established urban residents (i.e. those with a longer residential history and the more highly educated residents) of old urban neighbourhoods show a lower willingness to stay and a preference to leave such neighbourhoods. The main reason underlying this counterintuitive finding is an on-going transformation of these old working-class communities. The established residents deplore that many of their former neighbours moved out to suburban neighbourhoods where their children live, and that “there are more *wailai renkou* [outsiders] living here and everyone has different habits now” (Wu, 2012: 546). In other words, this reveals the dismantling of existing social networks and interactions of residents who are otherwise strongly attached to the area.

Other studies have argued that the physical conditions of neighbourhoods greatly affect residents' attachment to place in China (Li *et al.*, 2012; Zhu *et al.*, 2012). Zhu, Breitung, and Li (2012) also found that intensive social interaction – which was considered a major source of attachment to place – is regarded as less important now in urban China. These findings reveal that attachment to the neighbourhood in urban China has multiple dimensions (including social and physical spheres), and these different dimensions play different roles for different social groups and affect their housing behaviour differently.

Political-economic theories explain the mechanisms that induce forced relocation and urban restructuring, and demonstrate from a macro perspective why there are tensions and conflicts between different stakeholders at this stage. At the same time, the ways that relocatees cope with forced relocation are more complex and do not all end in confrontation. Current research mostly displays how a specific redevelopment project is implemented at this stage, and it has been neglecting the coping strategy of relocatees (He, 2007, Hin and Xin, 2011). While this research explores the physical, economic and social experiences of relocatees, however, little has been revealed about their behavioural and psychological reactions to forced relocation. This may lead to ignorance regarding residents' potential agency during this stage. There is also a lack of research on how factors such as national policies, housing markets, and social movements influence relocatees' experiences at this stage. Individuals have different coping strategies, make different compensation choices and have different attitudes to residential mobility, which are all important, not only at this stage but also insofar as they greatly affect the experiences of relocatees in the following stages.

§ 2.4.2 Stage 2: the transitional period

Stage 2 is the transitional stage, which is often absent in European and American relocation scenarios. In the Western context, most people move directly into pre-existing properties elsewhere rather than having to wait for new properties to be built elsewhere. In the latter case, relocatees often wait in their original properties, with clearance delay as a result. In China, at the transitional stage, residents move out of their original neighbourhoods, but do not move immediately into relocation neighbourhoods. This stage is especially significant to those who choose in-kind compensation, because these relocatees have to wait for a certain period of time before they can move into the relocation neighbourhood. These residents need to find a temporary accommodation themselves to go through this phase. Local governments and/or developers usually promise to rehouse relocatees within a certain time (Song, 2015; Chen and Lai, 2013), and they are given monetary compensation for renting temporary accommodation. Some local governments stipulate that the length of the transitional period must not exceed a certain number of months/years. Nevertheless, in reality, the length of this stage greatly depends on whether the designated dwellings for rehousing have been completed. For example, in one project in Shanghai, the local government provided existing dwellings as in-kind compensation (Xuhui District Government, 2015), meaning that those who chose in-kind compensation needed to wait only three months and were given a one-off three-month rental subsidy payment for the transitional stage. In contrast, in another redevelopment project in Shanghai, the relocation dwellings were still under

construction (Jing'an District Government, 2015), and the relocatees therefore had to find a transitional dwelling and wait until the relocation dwellings were ready.

Very few studies focus on the experiences of relocatees at the transitional stage of forced relocation. Only sporadic news reports suggest that the long duration of the transitional stage can cause distress to some relocatees (Nandu News, 2015; People.cn, 2013). This lack of interest in the literature does not mean this stage is not significant to relocatees. In fact, there are many uncertainties embedded in this period which affect the experiences of relocatees. Firstly, as suggested above, the time span of this stage varies, ranging from several months to several years depending on the project and the related local regulations. The expected length of residence in a neighbourhood affects many aspects, such as residents' movement behaviour, their attachment to place, residential satisfaction, investment and neighbourliness. However, little is known about how the different durations of the transitional stage affect the experience of relocatees across different dimensions.

Secondly, in some cases the time span is completely uncertain, and may turn out to be quite different from what the local government or developer promised in the first stage, and hence from what was expected by the relocatees. In some cases, relocatees waited for more than five years (some even ten years), due to delays in the construction of the relocation dwellings (Xinhuanet, 2014; Xinjing News, 2013; People.cn, 2013). During these long periods, the relocatees have to rent dwellings (Xue *et al.*, 2015), which creates challenges, in particular for people in disadvantaged social groups, such as the aged, disabled or people on low incomes. News reports have suggested that some aged relocatees have died while waiting to move into the relocation neighbourhoods because the transitional stage was very long (Nandu News, 2015; Xinjing News, 2013). Thirdly, it is unknown whether the compensation fee for the transitional stage can meet the needs of relocatees. In sum, very few studies address how the length and the uncertainties of the transitional stage affect relocatees.

It is apparent from the above that relocatees have to cope with new situations and uncertainties at this stage. In particular, they need to find a place to live during this stage. Usually, when making their housing choices, they have to consider the constraints of forced relocation, such as the amount of rental compensation provided by the evictors and the duration of the transitional period. They also have to take into account their own socioeconomic situation. Their income, savings, and job location(s) can influence their preferences about location, size and rental fee of their accommodation at this stage. Only sporadic evidence suggests that at this stage some relocatees choose to stay with their relatives or friends (Fang and Zhang, 2003). Many questions are thus far from adequately studied, such as: What housing options do relocatees have at this stage? How and why do they make certain housing choices?

How does their housing experience at this stage affect their subsequent housing behaviour and residential experience in the post-relocation stage? The uncertainty about the length of this stage means that many changes can occur to relocatees, such as changes in their household size and socio-economic situation. This means that the compensation choice they made in the pre-demolition stage might not fit their needs as the transitional stage proceeds.

The experiences of relocatees in this stage can also affect their general attitudes towards local governments and/or developers. Previous research has shown that the uncertain duration of the transitional period has negative effects on residents' trust in local governments (Li *et al.*, 2016). This in turn has consequences for relocatees' perceptions of forced relocation. Most empirical studies on forced relocation have focused on the experiences of relocatees at the pre-demolition and the post-relocation stages, especially the latter. The transitional stage has long been neglected with regard to relocatees' housing behaviours and coping strategy. It makes it impossible to achieve an overall evaluation on how the forced relocation process can affect relocatees because of the absence of related studies about this stage. We have argued here that the transitional stage is an essential part of forced relocation, which requires more in-depth study focusing on relocatees' housing choices and coping strategies, especially in the light of the uncertainties of this stage.

§ 2.4.3 Stage 3: the post-relocation stage

In Stage 3, the relocatees have been relocated to their final, new neighbourhoods. Most Chinese studies about this stage focus on residents who choose in-kind compensation, while there is little research about the experiences of those who choose monetary compensation. This might be because that it is easier to track the former group than the latter one, as the former group (choosing in-kind compensation) is likely to move to a dwelling in the relocation neighbourhood and the latter one can relocate to anywhere they can afford.

By studying the experiences of relocatees who moved into relocation neighbourhoods, it is possible to trace and compare the foundations and effects of the various redevelopment projects. Similar to Western countries, the reasons for forced relocation in China have swung between economic and social motives. Since 1978, economic growth has become the overriding objective in China, and it has motivated local governments and developers to promote large-scale urban development and redevelopment for profit. Some studies argue that these large-scale developments have

substantial social costs, because the residents were relocated to neighbourhoods with poor standards of housing and neighbourhood maintenance (Fang, 2006; Gong, 2012; He, 2012; Li and Yuan, 2008). Other studies have argued that the economic situation of some relocatees worsens because they are relocated to the urban periphery, which has poor accessibility to public facilities, thus increasing commuting costs and the time required to access job opportunities and/or the city centre (Day and Cervero, 2010).

However, other studies found positive effects. Some studies comparing living conditions before relocation with the new living conditions, found that relocatees were satisfied with improved dwellings and neighbourhood conditions after their relocation (Li and Song, 2009; Xia and Zhu, 2013). By comparing different kinds of movers – voluntary, involuntary – with stayers, some studies revealed that forced relocatees are more satisfied with their housing and neighbourhood conditions than stayers, and relatively less satisfied than voluntary movers (Day, 2013; Li and Song, 2009). In addition, the level of relocatees' satisfaction with their housing and neighbourhood conditions is not much lower than that of voluntary movers (Li and Song, 2009).

The experiences of relocatees at this stage can also be differentiated in terms of their pre-relocation moving intention and place attachment in relation to the (post-) relocation neighbourhood. Some studies have found that preceding demolition, residents show strong neighbourhood attachment and expressed a strong desire to stay in their old neighbourhoods long term, while after relocation, relocatees are less attached to their relocation neighbourhoods and their level of social interaction in the neighbourhood has also been reduced (He and Liu, 2013). Similarly, Luo (2012) further demonstrated that after the initial relocation, some relocatees decide to move back or closer to their original neighbourhoods, rather than stay in the relocation neighbourhood. It was argued that this is because relocatees are more familiar with their original neighbourhood and perceive that they have better job and education opportunities there (Luo, 2012). It is not surprising that the resources and opportunities offered by the original neighbourhood affect the post-relocation housing behaviour of relocatees because the functional dimension of a place has also been found to affect residents' attachment to place and housing behaviour in general (Raymond, Brown, and Weber, 2010; Scannell and Gifford, 2010).

In the United States and several Western European countries, urban restructuring and forced movement have deliberately been used as instruments to change the residential composition of neighbourhoods and to achieve more social mixing. Although this is no deliberate intention of development policies in China, large-scale urban redevelopments and forced relocation have generated similar outcomes (i.e. social mix). This is evident in the current national program for Shantytown Redevelopment, in which the central government is encouraging local governments to purchase

dwellings on the housing market rather than construct relocation neighbourhoods to compensate relocatees. As a result, forced movers and regular movers are more likely to live in the same neighbourhoods. The term “regular movers” refers to residents who voluntarily move into relocation neighbourhoods and purchase housing on the housing market. Generally, this results in three types of relocation (destination) neighbourhoods, based on residential composition. Relocatees may be moved into:

- 1 A relocation neighbourhood that only consists of relocatees from the same original redevelopment neighbourhood.
- 2 A relocation neighbourhood that consists of relocatees from *different* original redevelopment neighbourhoods.
- 3 A relocation neighbourhood that consists of relocatees from one or more redevelopment neighbourhoods, and of regular movers.

The experiences of relocatees in these different types of neighbourhoods vary. Some studies imply that relocation neighbourhoods with a concentration of relocatees with a low socioeconomic status are more likely to become deprived urban enclaves (Day, 2013; Fang and Zhang, 2003; Fang, 2006; Gilroy, 2012; He and Wu, 2007; He, 2010, 2012). In addition, others have shown that in mixed relocation neighbourhoods, relocatees encounter problems such as the uneven spatial distribution of community facilities between relocatees and regular residents (Fang, 2006, 677; Song, 2015). Other studies have revealed that conflicts between relocatees and regular movers become evident over time, due to differences in terms of lifestyle, shared values and behaviour within the neighbourhood (Fang, 2006; Gong, 2012; Li and Li, 2010). Even when fighting for their common interests against real estate management companies, relocatees and regular movers sometimes cannot work together because they do not have the same norms and behavioural patterns (Gong, 2012; Li and Li, 2010).

The existing literature on the experiences of relocatees at stage 3 has shown that it has various dimensions, and relocatees may simultaneously experience various post-relocation outcomes. Large-scale urban restructuring activities generate different neighbourhood types and different forms of organization in relocation neighbourhoods. These further affect the residential composition and the nature of interaction between different types of residents. In a mixed neighbourhood consisting of relocatees and regular movers, residents face issues such as uneven spatial distribution of services and facilities (Fang, 2006, 677; Song, 2015). Whether this kind of social mix can help to generate social cohesion and social capital should be questioned, based upon the existing literature. Meanwhile, relocation neighbourhoods which purely consist of relocatees might also become concentration enclaves of low-income residents.

§ 2.5 Conclusions and implications for future research

This paper aimed to gain greater insight into the experiences of relocatees during forced relocation in urban China by establishing a conceptual model in which the time sequence of events and their contexts are central and by analysing the existing literature. To enable a structured approach of the analysis of the literature, the paper proposed a conceptual model that considers the time sequence, context and individual experiences in various dimensions to explore the diversity, complexity and variety of experiences of relocatees in forced relocation in general. This conceptual model can also contribute to a better understanding of the experiences of relocatees in the Chinese context. By analysing the existing literature and discussing issues that concern relocatees, we have shown the relevance of the temporal feature of relocatees' experiences of different dimensions during urban redevelopment, as exemplified by the stages in the conceptual model: the pre-demolition, the transitional stage and the post-relocation stage.

We believe that the temporal feature embedded in the conceptual model is the very first indispensable step to achieve a better understanding of relocatees' experiences against the Chinese context. Current studies about China mostly treat forced relocation and urban redevelopment as a static and single event (Day and Cervero, 2010; Fang, 2006; He and Liu, 2013; Hu *et al.*, 2015). They mainly target the relocatees who are already at the post-relocation stage to recall their experiences before being rehoused to evaluate the outcomes of forced relocation, which might lead to distorted retrospective accounts of their experiences and causes of their behavioural and emotional responses to forced relocation (Goetz, 2013; Higgins and Stangor, 1998). However, urban redevelopment and forced relocation often last for months or even years, during which period various incidents happen to relocatees in parallel with the changing macro (social, economic and institutional) and micro (physical, psychological and socioeconomic) contexts. To reduce the distraction caused by the accumulation of the dynamics of relocatees' experience as the urban redevelopment proceeds over time, it is necessary to capture the sequence of the events that occur to relocatees during urban redevelopment.

Overall, the experiences of relocatees during forced relocation are multifaceted and are not necessarily unilaterally negative. Displacement is only one of the possible effects of forced relocation, and there may simultaneously be neutral or significant positive effects in combination with displacement. Therefore, to improve relocation policies and the implementation and the outcomes of forced relocation, a balanced and critical perspective on the individual experiences of relocatees is important (see also Kleinhans and Kearns, 2013), insofar as it helps to identify both the advantages and

disadvantages of the current processes of forced relocation and urban restructuring. The conflicts and tensions between relocatees and other stakeholders during this process show that relocatees may effectively cope with the process and appeal to their rights to enjoy the benefits of urban redevelopments, which displays the agency of the relocatees facing forced relocation. This also includes how relocatees mobilize their resources to influence the process, compensation and outcomes of forced relocation. This is partly at odds with the general impression that the role of residents in urban redevelopment projects in China is always passive. Residents' agency during urban redevelopment (see also Manzo *et al.*; 2008; Posthumus and Kleinhans, 2014) might also indicate that, to some extent, consensus can emerge between residents, local governments and/or developers, in addition to conflicts (Li *et al.*, 2017).

Using the conceptual model, the paper also identified the following gaps in the existing literature. Firstly, most studies focus on the experiences of relocatees in the post-relocation stage, overlooking the pre-demolition and transitional stages. We have argued that the transitional stage is an essential part of forced relocation, which requires more in-depth study focusing on relocatees' housing choices and coping strategies, especially in the light of the uncertainties of this stage.

Second, by analysing various dimensions of individual relocatees' experiences, we found that most studies focus on relocatees' physical and economic experiences with regard to forced relocation, changes in their dwelling and neighbourhood conditions, and their income before and after relocation. However, existing research has significant shortcomings in analysing the experiences in the social, psychological and behavioural domains, such as perceptions of and reactions to the redevelopment, forced relocation and neighbourhood changes at different stages. As a result, the diverse roles, agency and strategies of relocatees relocation are often overlooked. While some studies focus on relocatees' relationships with neighbours and the built environment, there is still a lack of research on how and why relocatees have certain social interactions within different neighbourhoods under the influence of impending or completed relocation.

To summarise, the discussion about relocatees' experiences and mechanisms in this paper cannot cover all issues, as the outcomes for relocatees can be very diverse and time-dependent, and the macro and micro contexts that relocatees are involved in can be very different. However, the gaps that we found in this review can be the starting point for further research. In particular, the temporal feature of relocatees' experiences during urban redevelopment merits further study. Ideally, this should be done through a longitudinal panel survey following relocatees from the pre-demolition stage of the redevelopment through the transition phase and into the post-relocation stage to identify more clearly how and why forced relocation and urban redevelopment affect the well-being of the relocatees over time.

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