

A Study on the Impact of Land Acquisition and Relocation on the Quality of Life of Fishermen—Take Dongyu Village in Haicang District, Xiamen City as an Example

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Abstract. Land acquisition and relocation is one of the key topics of sociological research today. Some researchers have found that land acquisition and relocation will bring a series of livelihood security problems to the dispossessed farmers. However, there is still a research gap on the impact on the quality of life of the indigenous people, especially the dispossessed fishermen. Therefore, based on a qualitative research method, this paper studied the indigenous fishermen of Dongyu Village through interviews. It collected and collated interview data, and analysed the impact of land acquisition and eviction on the quality of life of the fishermen. It is found that the quality of life of fishermen has not been substantially improved after the demolition and relocation, which can be reflected in two aspects: economic quality of life and spiritual quality of life. The economic quality of life is improved for a short period of time, but the fishermen are unable to maintain a high quality of economic lifestyle in the long term due to their low educational level, inability to manage the available compensation for eviction and inability to create wealth through other means than fishing. The mental quality of life will be reduced by the disruption to the rhythm and routine of life due to eviction.

Keywords: land acquisition and relocation, lost sea fishermen, quality of life of fishermen.

1. Introduction

In the 21st century, as the urbanization process continues to accelerate, China's urban transformation work and land requisition and relocation work are also in full swing. In recent years, the issue of land acquisition and relocation and the resettlement of residents has also received widespread attention. The issue of demolition and relocation is one of the important research topics that must be faced in the process of social development in China, and the reasonable conduct of demolition and relocation is not only related to economic and social development, but also involves the vital interests of the general public. After the demolition and relocation, the lives of the local indigenous people have undergone a radical change and their quality of life has been affected as a result. While the evicted residents have been paid a generous amount of compensation for the demolition and relocation of their homes, they are also faced with the dilemma of having no land for farming and no job for work, especially when they face a change of identity and the problem of adapting to their own situation, which has led to a series of social problems.

In recent years, the issue of eviction and resettlement has begun to attract much attention and attention from the sociological community in China, and has become a hot topic of concern for many scholars, with many research findings. Getting rich through demolition and relocation is perhaps a popular way for farmers to get rich nowadays [1]. The state reclaims land that cannot be circulated in the market and gives the people a generous demolition subsidy, so that the demolished farmers can live a richer life overnight [2]. But by leaving the land they had been working on day and night, the skills these farmers relied on were no longer available and their lives were suddenly empty, while they also lost their most basic livelihood security [3]. These peasants became landless peasants overnight and were unable to adapt to such a new identity and truly integrate into urban life. Seemingly with demolition compensation and resettlement housing, but in reality, their standard of living has not been substantially improved [4]. Moreover, most indigenous people have no skills other than their ancestral farming skills, as they have not received a good education since childhood. As a result, they are faced with the daunting challenge of not being able to re-enter the workforce [5]. This

means that it will be difficult for these dispossessed farmers to create value through their labour, and their livelihoods will be affected as a result, with a variety of livelihood security issues arising [6]. As an inevitable product of the urbanization process, the number of landless peasants will become increasingly large, which to a certain extent will affect the harmonious and benign development of society [7]. Therefore, it remains to be seen whether land expropriation and demolition can truly meet the interests of farmers' demands [8]. A collated analysis of previous studies reveals that most previous studies have focused on the study of dispossessed farmers, while neglecting the study of dispossessed fishermen. What's more, most previous studies have been limited to the study of the livelihood security of indigenous people, lacking a discussion of the impact on the quality of life of the subject. Therefore, analyzing the impact of land acquisition and relocation on the quality of life of coastal aborigines is a topic worthy of in-depth study, and the study of this issue has certain practical significance.

This study focuses on fishermen, and takes as its subject the village of Dongyu in Haicang District, Xiamen City, Fujian Province. It is a small fishing village located off the coast of Xiamen, surrounded by the sea on three sides and known as a "floating island on the sea". In recent years, with the renovation of the city, the government has included Dongyu Village in the land acquisition and demolition plan, which will be used to build the city's Central Business District (CBD). At the same time, most of the indigenous villagers of Dongyu Village will be rehoused in the nearby Shui Yun Wan community.

This study is based on a qualitative case study approach to analyse the impact of land acquisition and eviction on the quality of life of coastal indigenous people, in an attempt to reflect the general social phenomenon through individual cases and to describe the historical trajectory through social structures.

2. Method

This study adopts the classic qualitative research method in sociology. It establishes contact with the interviewees through interviews, in order to understand what the interviewees think and feel, their family background, living environment, life experiences and events they have heard and witnessed. And this study obtains multiple descriptions and interpretations of the research subjects from the perspective of the interviewees, so as to obtain interview data and build a case. Through the analysis of the case studies, general social phenomena are identified from several cases.

2.1. Interviewees

By means of face-to-face interviews, two fishermen families who have lived in Dongyu Village for generations were selected, from which three representative interviewees were chosen: Li Mouan and Li Moubin from a fishermen family with the surname Li and Wang Mouyi from a fishermen family with the surname Wang (see Table 1).

Table 1. Information for interviewees

	Age	Academic qualifications	Gender
Li Mouan	60	Primary School	Male
Li Moubin	35	Senior High School	Male
Wang Mouyi	50	Junior High School	Male

2.2. Interview Steps

Firstly, the focus of the interview was to identify three indigenous people who have been living in Dongyu Village for generations as the interviewees. Secondly, the interviews were conducted face-to-face, with an outline drawn up in advance and keywords recorded in the form of notes during the interviews, which lasted approximately 20 minutes each. Next, the keywords were sorted out and the

interview data collated, and finally, the results of the interviews were analysed and conclusions are drawn.

3. Result

The focus of this interview with the lost sea fishermen of Dongyu Village was to focus on the impact of the demolition on their quality of life.

3.1. Li Mouan

Li Mouan, the middle-aged representative of a family of fishermen, is the breadwinner of the family. He sees two main effects of land acquisition and eviction on his and his family's quality of life. Firstly, although the government has given them a great subsidy after the eviction and eviction, they have been able to live a prosperous life. However, as he has not received a good education since he was a child, he has no skills other than his ancestral skills of fishing and fish knowledge. As a result, it is difficult for him to create value through his labour and to find a job in the city, resulting in a situation where his expenses now significantly exceed his income. This imbalance has created concerns for him and his family. Secondly, the demolition has disrupted their previously organised life, lost the sea and the mudflats, and left him with no place to use the skills he has passed down for generations. It is clear from his expressions that fishing is not only a way of supporting his family, but also a source of joy for him.

3.2. Li Moubin

Li Moubin, as a representative of the young and middle-aged members of the Li fishermen's family, is the future and hope of his family. He believes that the demolition has improved his quality of life. Firstly, he has purchased a luxury car and has also started to pursue luxury brands. Secondly, the generous compensation for the demolition has given him more opportunities to start his own business. However, as he was not good at business and management, he tried several times to start his own business but ended up failing and suffered huge losses as a result. He said that he had not done well in school since he was a child, so he followed his father out to sea while he was at school to learn various fishing and sea-faring skills. After graduating from high school, he moved to the city to work, and every holiday he would return to his village with his friends to grab his tools and go fishing together. In his opinion, fishing and catching the sea have become a joy in his life.

3.3. Wang Mouyi

Wang Mouyi, the breadwinner of Wang's fisherman family, also shares Li Mouan's concerns and worries. He says he became confused and anxious when the skills he relied on for survival were no longer available and he was never able to find employment again in the city. Furthermore, the family's cost of living has increased significantly since entering city life, and with his limited literacy skills, he is not able to properly manage the available demolition compensation. Therefore, he is worried that one day the demolition money will run out and what will happen to his family then. From his answer, people can sense that living in the former small fishing village has a higher index of happiness than living in the city. These cases show the universality of the lost sea fishermen and the specificity of the two fishermen's families.

4. Discussion

This study analyses the impact of land acquisition and relocation on the quality of life of fishermen in terms of both economic and spiritual life and draws conclusions from the study.

4.1. Economic Quality of Life

In terms of economic life, the majority of the indigenous people were able to obtain a generous demolition subsidy and live a prosperous life, and they began to pursue luxury and happiness [2]. At the same time, however, for a long time after the demolition, they are almost entirely dependent on the demolition compensation and keep their expenses much higher than their income. Such an imbalance between income and expenditure is likely to lead to a return to poverty and an insecure quality of life afterwards [9]. This is explained by the fact that these indigenous people have lived in small fishing villages for generations and have skills that have been passed down from generation to generation, but both the younger and older generations are generally poorly educated and have difficulty finding a job in the competitive city, losing the ability to exchange their labour for wealth and value. Due to their limited education, they are not good at managing the demolition compensation in their hands, nor are they able to create more value from the demolition subsidies in their hands. This is why there is such an imbalance between income and expenditure.

To address the issue of the impact of demolition on fishermen's economic quality of life, this study makes the following recommendations. Firstly, fishermen should plan and manage their demolition compensation money in a reasonable manner, not blindly following the trend of investment and overcoming the mentality of comparison. Secondly, fishermen can take the initiative to learn some knowledge about financial management and hire professional financial advisors for guidance if necessary. Finally, the local government can provide them with some basic jobs and create more employment opportunities for them.

4.2. Quality of Spiritual Life

In terms of spiritual life, most of the indigenous people can obtain more spiritual satisfaction after the demolition. For example, they can satisfy their vanity by buying luxury cars and houses. However, when they enter the city, they also feel more pressure and anxiety. The sudden demolition and renovation not only disrupt their orderly lives, but also make their relatively carefree lives stressful. In addition, without the day-to-day life of fishing, their lives became boring and confusing, with a consequent decrease in their sense of well-being [10]. This is explained by the fact that the cost of living for these indigenous people increases significantly when they enter urban life, and the economic stress is inevitably transferred to the mental level. Moreover, for most of the indigenous people, fishing is an integral part of their lives, and catching the sea, sea fishing and seafood is their spiritual source. This spiritual sustenance cannot be measured in monetary terms and cannot be replaced by other spiritual things such as vanity.

To address the issue of the impact of demolition on the quality of fishermen's spiritual life, this study makes the following recommendations. In order to help the fishermen to better adapt to urban life, the local government can speed up the construction of infrastructure, such as parks, gymnasiums, health trails, concert halls, beaches and cinemas to help fishermen develop their new hobbies.

5. Conclusion

This study uses qualitative research methods to establish case studies through interviews. Then, through the analysis of case studies, this study scientifically summarizes the impact of land acquisition and relocation on the quality of life of coastal aborigines, filling the gap that the research subjects do not have lost sea fishermen as well as filling the research on the impact on the quality of life of the subjects. It is useful to further explore the problems that would arise if these coastal indigenous people were to be left without a source of income for a long period of time and live on the compensation for evictions.

This study also has some limitations. This study only analysed the impact of land acquisition and eviction on their quality of life from a qualitative perspective, with a small sample size, and no quantitative approach has been considered. Therefore, in the future, quantitative research methods

could be used to further refine the above study and add more favourable data to facilitate in-depth research on the topic.

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