

**Poverty in Mountainous Areas
in Rural China:
Issues and Suggestions to Encourage
Sustainable Development**

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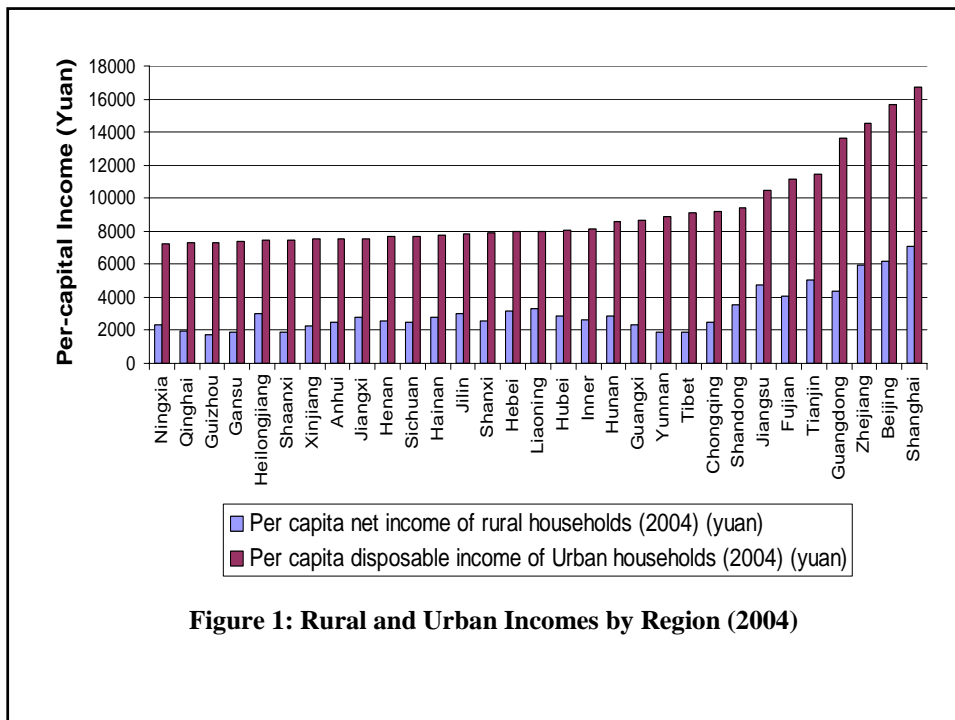
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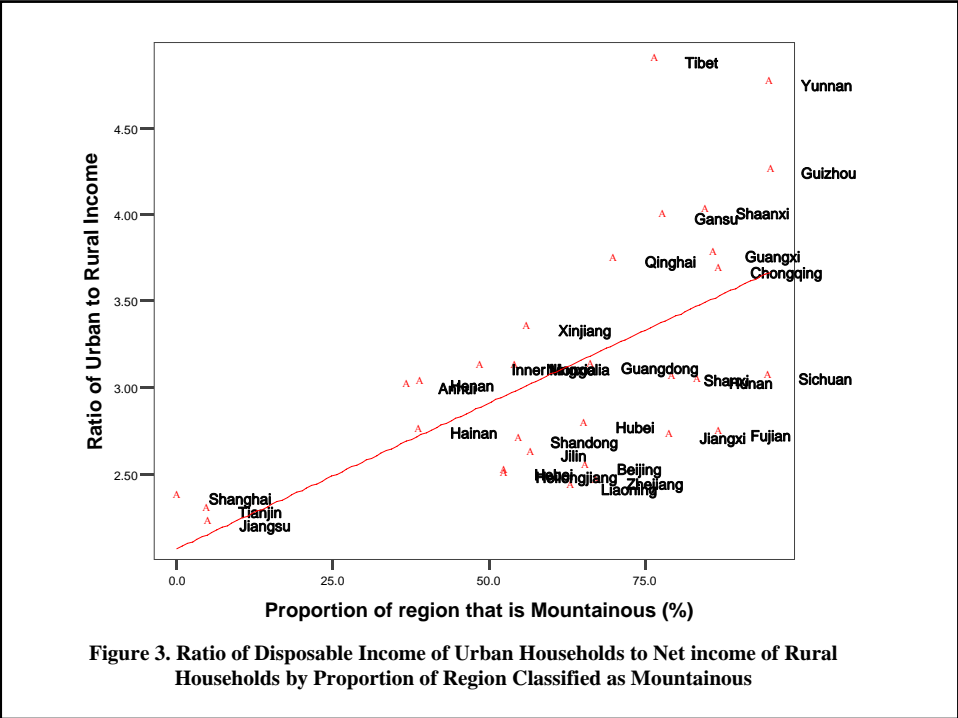
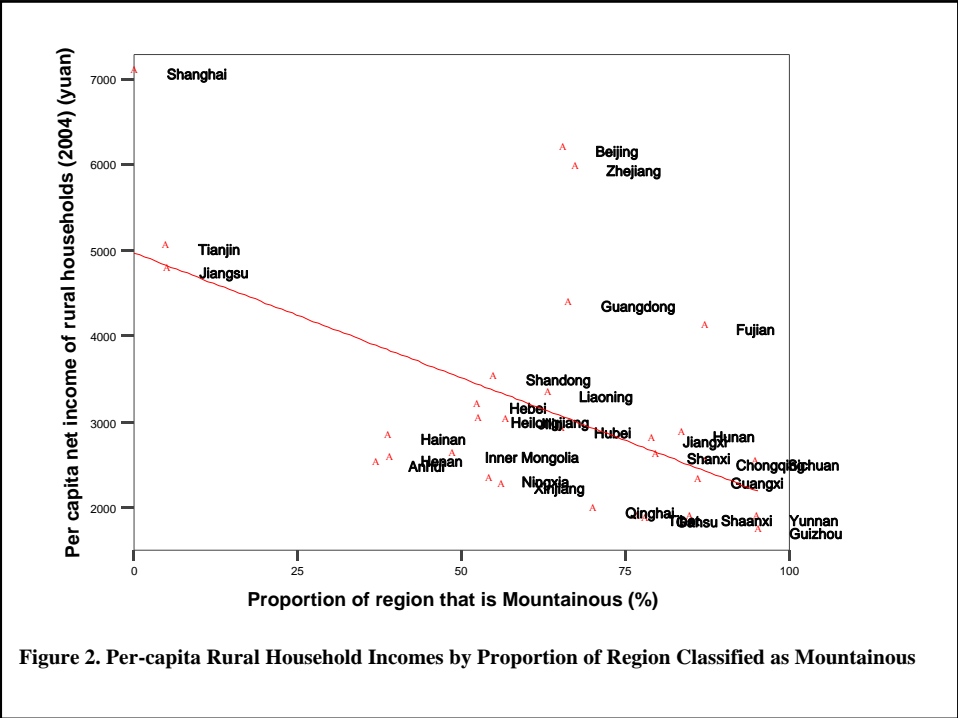
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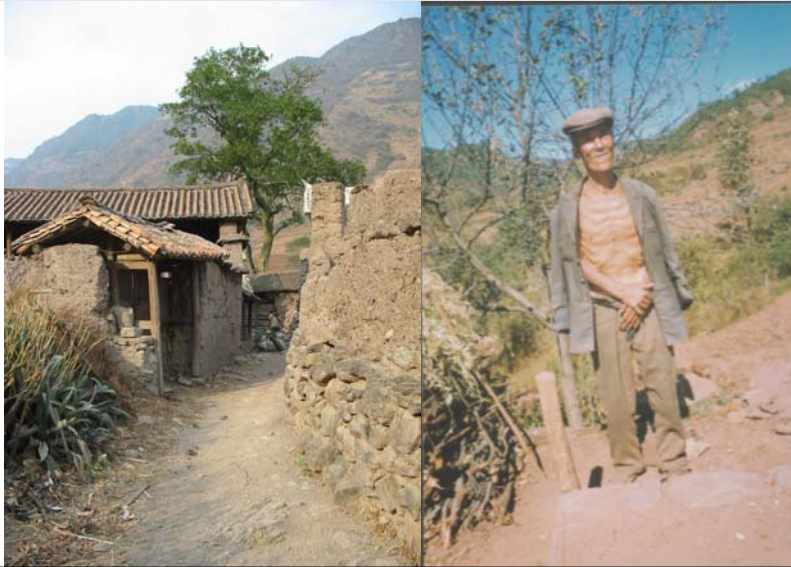
The outline of the paper

1. Introduction
2. Poverty in Mountainous Areas of Rural China
3. The 'Poverty-Environmental Degradation' Cycle
4. Factors Influencing the 'Poverty-Environmental Degradation' Cycle
5. The Suggestion: Integrated Regional Management
6. Concluding Comments





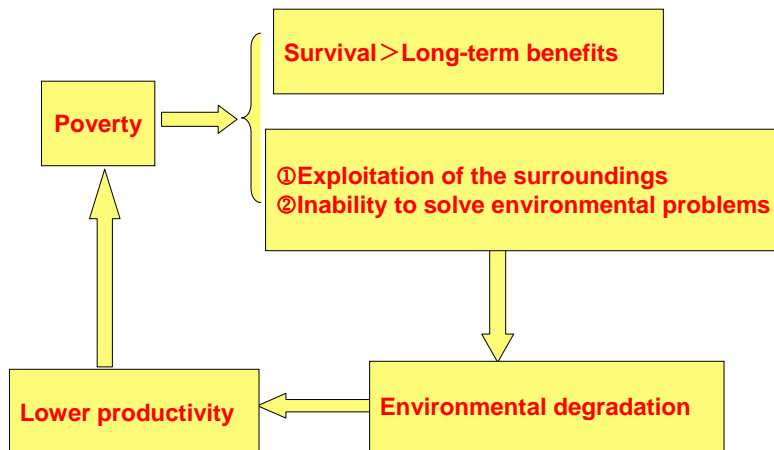
The Living of the Mountainous Areas



Literature about the cycle of 'poverty and ecological degradation'

- Pearce, D.W., Warford, J.J. (1993), *World without End: Economics, Environment, and Sustainable Development*
- It identified a worldwide phenomenon that “the poorest of the poor thus occupy the least resilient, most threatened environmental areas of the world” .
- HAN Jin (2004), *Achieving Sustainable Development in Poor Mountainous Regions of Rural China: Theories and Policies*
- It identified that, “like other parts of the world, in China, poverty and environmental degradation often co-exist and interact in poor mountainous areas”.

Figure 4. The 'Poverty-Environmental Degradation'
Cycle



World without End

- Pearce and Warford:

“The existence of poverty does not mean that environmental degradation will necessarily follow....[it] depends on **the coping strategies of the poor**, and these depend, in turn, on **the availability of options**, cultural factors, and **policies of local and national governments.**”

Government Policies

- In fact, the Chinese government has devoted considerable effort and resources towards both poverty alleviation and environmental conservation and rehabilitation.
- Such as...

1980~,

Anti-poverty campaigns throughout rural China:

- ‘Production Responsibility System’ reform;
- ‘Food for Work’ programs and other key infrastructure projects;
- 1986~, ‘Poverty Alleviation’ programs by governments and NGOs;
- National education support projects;
- 2005~, Free compulsory education for the 592 poorest counties;
- 2006~, Nationwide cancellation of agricultural tax.

1992~,

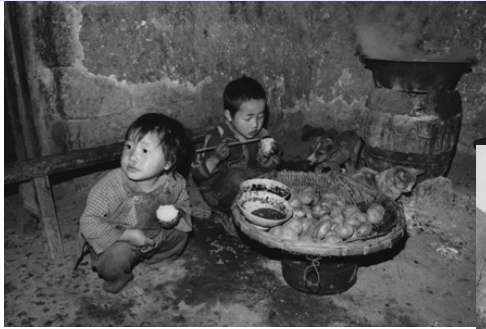
Environmental Conservation and Rehabilitation

- In 1992, China announced the implementation of Sustainable Development Strategy
- More environmental projects were implemented, such as 'Re-forestation' and so on
- So far, environmental degradation has slowed and improvement is taking place: "forest coverage rate" up from 13.63% in 1992 to 18.21% in 2003

Results of the policies

- Despite various efforts, the vicious circle of 'Poverty ↔ Environmental Degradation' has not been broken.
 - 1) The poverty in mountains has not been lessened.
 - 2) The environment has not been greatly improved.
- The key problem is **The poor are still poor.**

2005
The Living of the Mountainous Areas



2005
Chinese Farmers of the Mountainous Areas



Factors Responsible for the Cycle of 'Poverty-Environmental Degradation'

- 1) Lack of Social Capacity
- 2) Remoteness, Isolation and Lack of Infrastructure
- 3) 'Misuse' of Natural Resources
- 4) Lack of Market Development
- 5) Government Failure

The inter-relations of the influential factors

- Inefficient usage of finances → Lack of infrastructures
- Lack of social capacity & management knowledge of the local government → Misuse of resources
- Poorly-educated people & Improper intervention of local government → Lack of market development
- The government aspect, especially the **local governments**, should be blamed specially.

Government Failure

- ① Inefficient Usage of Governmental Finances
- ② Lack of 'Capacity' of Local Government Officials
- ③ Regionalism and Lack of Inter-regional Cooperation

The Suggestion

- What we propose: a new approach – **Integrated Regional Management (IRM)** in poverty-stricken mountainous rural regions.
- Governmental funding that is currently used to promote regional development would go directly to **an executive body** – the 'Regional United Entity'.

Characters of the 'Regional United Entity'

- ① could lead, organize and manage the local resources of a naturally functioning region ;
- ② with strategic vision and the ability of economic management;
- ③ has a sense of responsibility for all the people of the region.

Concluding Comments

- IRM is an untried idea
- RUE is a new institutional concept
- ❖ No precedent, so we need to **“cross the river by touching stones”**
- But go forward we should, for the existing systems are serving neither the poor nor the environment.
- **“Change if you are poor; if you change, there will be a way to go forward.”**
 - “穷则变，变则通”

THANKS!!!