**Title:** Do the migrants benefit from the ecological migration policy? Evidence from Northwest China using a structural equation modeling approach

**Abstract:** China’s Sloping Land Conversion Program (SLCP) is the largest land retirement program in the developing world and recognized as a practice of payment for ecosystem services (PES) which achieved many ecological outcomes and incurred a socio-economic result named ecological migration. Policy assessment of ecological migration is a heated issue in a multidisciplinary context, and the impact mechanism lies on the key position.

By constructing the analytical framework of ecological migration policy → livelihood capital → income and using Structural Equation Modeling with Formative Indicators, a structural equation model with livelihood capitals as mediator variables was adopted to explore the impact mechanism of ecological migration policy on household income.

Through the Partial Least Squares regression method, path coefficients were calculated to estimate the direct, indirect and total effects between the ecological migration policy and income, and then verified the effectiveness of the mechanism. As the representatives of urban community and new village resettlement, the migration households in southern Shaanxi and Ningxia were selected as sampling to conduct an empirical analysis of the mechanism of ecological migration, and to put forward optimization measures to improve farmer livelihood capital and increase household income.

We found that ecological migration policy in southern Shaanxi and Ningxia has a positive effect on the improvement of farmer income through human capital, social capital, financial capital and physical capital, with a slight difference in each path. In southern Shaanxi, the most important way to improve household income is using social capital, the second is human capital; financial capital and physical capital are relatively small. In Ningxia, the sequence of importance is financial capital, human capital, social capital and physical capital, while natural capital plays a negative role. In general, ecological migration policy can effectively accumulate the stock of farmers’ livelihood capital and then produce a stable and sustainable income flow.

**Speaker:** Xiaonan Chen (Assistant Professor)

College of Economics and Management, Northwest A&F University