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UNDERSTANDING IMPOVERISHMENT

THE CONSEQUENCES OF
DEVELOPMENT-INDUCED DISPLACEMENT



E D I T E D B Y

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Fighting for a Place

THE POLICY IMPLICATIONS OF RESISTANCE TO DEVELOPMENT-INDUCED RESETTLEMENT

Anthony Oliver-Smith

Introduction

In Goethe's *Faust*, in the conflict between the protagonist and Philemon and Baucis, an aged couple who refuse to be relocated to make way for Faust's triumphant final project, the author evokes the modern images of the developer and the 'people in the way' who must be moved for the greater glory of the projects that will supposedly benefit humankind (Berman 1982:68). To entice them to move from their coastal homesite so that he can build an observation tower for people to gaze out into the new world he has made, Faust offers the aged couple a cash settlement or resettlement to a new home, but they refuse his offers, preferring to remain where they can continue to live meaningful lives, providing service to shipwrecked sailors and wanderers. To this persistent resistance and refusal to be moved, Faust ultimately says: 'Resistance and such stubbornness/ Thwart the most glorious success,/ Till in the end, to one's disgust,/ One soon grows tired of being just.' (11,269-72) (Berman 1982:67) In the end, the power of the developer is served, the resistance of the elderly couple is overcome and they are destroyed.

There is an undeniable Faustian quality in development projects that transform environments and overwhelm people's lives for the benefit of 'society'. In my lectures in anthropology courses I have often, in part facetiously, referred to political power as 'the ability to

move people and things about the landscape in any way you see fit'. When one considers the whole phenomenon of development-induced resettlement, that perspective, all facetiousness aside, is remarkably apt. Development-induced resettlement is, in many ways, the ultimate expression of a state with its monopoly on the management of violence and its ambitious engineering projects, freed from all other non-political power or institutions of social self-management, and able to exert ultimate control over the location of people and things within its territory (Bauman 1989:xiii). Conversely, to be resettled is one of the most acute expressions of powerlessness because it constitutes a loss of control over one's physical space. The only thing left is the loss of the body. As Margaret Rodman so cogently notes, 'The most powerless people have no place at all' (1992:650).

Resistance to Development-Induced Resettlement

As resistance to development-induced resettlement essentially challenges the state and its hegemony over the territory and people within its borders, it may have profound implications for policy at local, national and international levels. In the sense that involuntary migration and resettlement are part of the means or outcomes of intentional, usually state-driven development projects and strategies, the phenomenon of resettlement is, therefore, fundamentally a political one, a clash of contesting interests involving the use of power by one party to relocate another. Reigning development models, promoting large-scale infrastructure projects, transform social and physical environments and espouse the concept of 'the greatest good for the greatest number' rather than the rights of the less numerous and the less powerful. Although the record does not reflect it entirely, such a position assumes that the less powerful will benefit eventually, through the project itself or through a well-designed and implemented resettlement programme. For some, within the framework of current economic structures and conditions, realism dictates acceptance of this development ideology. The opposing view tends to emphasise the rights of the less powerful and the significance of cultural diversity over what they consider to be ecologically risky and economically questionable projects. When communities embrace such a position within a local context, specific resistance movements can broaden the agenda and become more general movements of cultural resistance to hegemonic forms of discourse, debating fundamental questions of cultural identity and human rights. When local

communities propose alternative models of development, based on less environmentally disruptive, smaller-scale forms of 'sustainable development', respecting human rights of self-determination and cultural diversity, they convert their discourse of resistance into development strategies in and of themselves.

The negative impacts of development were the topic of a conversation I once had with an agricultural economist during which he employed the old, but quintessentially modernist (and indeed Faustian), saying, 'If you want to make an omelette, you have to break some eggs'. My retort was something to the effect that it was a shame that those with the fewest eggs too frequently saw them get broken for the development omelette. The conversation had little place else to go after that. But I began to think about that old saying he used in terms of what kind of eggs get broken for the development omelette. The disruption and trauma which involuntary migration and resettlement inflict upon people may be profound, an unintentional result of development projects, perhaps, but one that has been considered an acceptable risk or cost, whether or not efforts are made to mitigate it. Resettlement imposes forces and conditions on people that may completely transform their lives, evoking profound changes in environment, productive activities, social organisation and interaction, in leadership and political structure, and in world-view and ideology. Under these circumstances, it is not surprising that resistance or hostility to the idea of resettlement has been characterised as 'normal and ... expected', indeed, virtually inevitable (Cernea 1988a:15).

Resettlement means uprooting people from the environments in which the vast majority of their meaningful activities have taken place and on which much of their understanding of life is based. They may be relocated in a new place, where they may have little first-hand knowledge and experience. Anthropological research has recently demonstrated the role that a sense of place plays in individual and collective identity formation, in the way time and history are encoded and contextualised, and in interpersonal, community and intercultural relations (Low and Altman 1992; Malkki 1992; Rodman 1992). Place and space are the central concepts in the entire problematic of resettlement.

Resistance to resettlement reveals how important a sense of place is in the creation of an 'environment of trust' in which space, kin relations, local communities, cosmology and tradition are linked (Giddens as cited in Rodman 1992:648). The human need for 'environment of trust' is fundamental to the sense of order and predictability implied by culture, and threats of removal from these

spatial and symbolic environments have generally elicited some form of resistance.

Resettlement not only removes a people from their home ground, it also remakes them. When a community is relocated, it is not simply lifted up and set down whole in a new site. In most cases the community is reconfigured in specific ways. Most development projects, especially those that occasion the large-scale resettlement of populations particularly in rural areas, directly or indirectly further two fundamental processes, the expansion of the state and integration into regional and national market systems. Neither of these processes of inclusion is particularly simple or straightforward, but, in most instances, provokes a restructuring of social, economic and political relationships toward the priorities of the larger society. In many respects, the process of resettlement, insofar as it is oriented by development goals, is designed to change local cultures. In that sense, resettlement will not necessarily destroy 'local cultures', but it will appropriate them and restructure them in terms of values and goals often originating from far beyond the local context. Such a process of development must involve the reduction of local culture, society and economy from all their variegated expressions to a narrow set of institutions and activities that make them compatible with the purposes of the larger society (Garcia Canclini 1993).¹

Moreover, implementation of poorly designed resettlement projects imposed on people may exacerbate the stresses occasioned by uprooting from the geographical location of 'environments of trust'. Most mandated resettlement projects deprive people of control over fundamental features of their lives and have generally been derelict in providing affected populations with the kinds of information necessary to reassert satisfactory control and understanding over the resettlement process or the changed circumstances of their lives. Understanding of and control over circumstances are fundamental for human beings to deal productively and positively with the forces of change. Therefore, if people find that their understanding and control are diminished, change will be characterised by conflict, tension and, perhaps, active resistance. The often extremely negative concrete impacts of resettlement projects on affected peoples compound the disorientation generated by the loss of control and understanding as motivations for resistance. Resistance is a reassertion of both a logic and a sense of control. Thus, when we consider what is at stake for people threatened with resettlement, the picture of small

1. I am grateful to Jacquelyn Jeffrey for bringing the relevance of Garcia Canclini's analysis of the restructuring effects of capitalism on traditional societies to an understanding of resettlement to my attention.

local communities confronting the power of the state and multi-lateral institutions becomes more comprehensible (Alvares and Billorey 1987). What is perhaps less understood but extremely important is that the actions and organisation of resistance have profound implications for both resisters and those resisted (Oliver-Smith 1991a).

Development-Induced Resettlement, Resistance and Change

Since resistance to resettlement, in some form, is to be found frequently, a literature documenting its occurrence has emerged from a wide variety of examples and cases of population removal and resettlement. Population removal has been a common strategy of conquest, pacification and territorial appropriation throughout history, and there is a large historical literature ranging from antiquity to relatively modern times pertaining to resettlement and resistance. For example, much of the history of Native American-White contact and interaction deals with white land appropriation and resettlement schemes of violent and non-violent nature and subsequent Native American responses to these efforts (Fixico 1990; Levine and Lurie 1968). Currently, resistance to development projects requiring the resettlement of populations has generated considerable interest because it tends to be frequent, attract more attention and be better documented both because of the scale at which it is often undertaken and its relationship to publicly defined goals.

The form and development of resistance will be shaped in part by the nature of the force or forces threatening a population with resettlement. Some forces are clearly resistible, others permit the possibility of resistance and still others preclude resistance altogether. For example, forced removal by wartime military forces is difficult, if not impossible, to resist for unarmed populations. Many environmental conditions triggered by natural disasters result in conditions that require relocation through sheer destruction or because the environment has been made more hazardous. Development projects, while frequently massive in scale and formidable in political support, however, present more variable contexts for the possibility of resistance. Development projects are not forces of nature and, at least initially, tend not to resort to military force and violence to achieve their goals of resettling a population. Tribal and peasant peoples are generally interpreting development projects as products of a larger society that is the source of a series of broad-scale problems with

which they have had to cope or resist for some time. In effect, development projects present as a form of gradual onset disaster that offers both time and space for contestation.

Thus, while local populations may resist resettlement purely on its own grounds, their resistance may be intensified by alternative views on both increasing economic integration and changed relationships with the nation-state to be effected by the project. Where the market and particularly the state have not been important in setting local agendas historically, a resettlement project that increases their centrality and compromises local autonomy, particularly over territory and cultural identity, may be resisted tenaciously. The resistance and insurgency of tribal peoples in Bangladesh (Zaman 1982), Brazil (Fisher 1994) and the Philippines (Drucker 1985) to such encroachments demonstrate clearly that resistance constitutes a rejection of the state's right to change local agendas.

However, by the same token, the decision to resist a development project that includes resettlement embarks a community on a journey that, even if successful, entails significant changes for that community both internally and externally. It is fundamentally through the conflict forged by confrontation and resistance that communities subject themselves to forces of change, regardless of how conservative their motivations for resistance may be. Conflict can be an important organising principle of human behaviour. Friends and enemies and good and evil are more clearly defined in conditions of conflict. In conflict, clarifying the ambiguity of changing conditions and events becomes easier, and people can articulate their sense of identity and their positions on issues more exactly (Marris 1975:159). Resistance requires action, and consciousness is generated in and changed by social action (Marshall 1983 as quoted in Fantasia 1988:8). In this sense, society is constantly in the process of reconstituting itself through actions of alignment and disengagement, along the axes of individual-group, ethnicity, age, gender, class, etc., activating a process of continual contestation and interpretation of culture, that is, therefore, also constantly 'in production'. The threat of resettlement constitutes a crisis of enormous proportions for many communities. Crises are those moments when customary practices of daily life are suspended and new repertoires of behaviour, associational ties and valuations are created (Fantasia 1988:14). When communities are confronted with the threat of forced resettlement, rather than acquiesce to the disruption and changes they will be subjected to, they resist, and in so doing become subject to a different set of changes that will come about in their resistance. The initial steps taken in resisting resettlement may have a galvanising effect on peo-

ple as they become aware of not only their own resources and capabilities, but the vulnerability of their opponents as well. Undertaking resistance to the Grand Rapids Dam by the Swampy River Cree of Manitoba, Canada, began a process of political socialisation that has enhanced their capabilities for future negotiations with the government (Waldram 1980). The actions of resistance groups, as well as the changes in groups set in motion by the requirement of action in resistance, produce the kinds of alignments and coalitions that may gather sufficient strength and resources to influence policy throughout local, national and international systems.

Thus, it is in the social action required by resistance that consciousness becomes changed. From a cultural standpoint, in the conflict of resistance more precise definitions of cultural identity are worked out, and conceptions of the community in broader national and global contexts are developed. From the standpoint of social organisation, resistance efforts often initiate a process of redefinition of a variety of internal and external relationships and institutions. The need to organise for resistance will exert a new form of pressure on the internal organisation of a community. The organisation of a resistance movement may sharpen both internal and external pre-existing conflicts. The existence of patterns of internal differentiation based on ethnicity, caste or class in a community may constitute obstacles to the formation of the necessary levels of solidarity and cooperation for effective resistance, and may require efforts to alter local social structural patterns to enable the formation of an organised movement by isolating or banishing dissidents (Lawrence 1986). On the other hand, a successful record in defending local interests, usually based on a long history of internal coherence and solidarity, effective political structure, leadership and previously existing community organisations which may backstop a resistance movement, may also affect the community's ability to mount and ultimately institutionalise serious resistance efforts (Bartolomé 1992; Wali 1989; Waldram 1980). In terms of external relationships, resistance, on one hand, requires the intensification of relationships with traditional allies and, on the other hand, the development of new relationships with others, often completely foreign to the local context. The downstream *caboclos* affected by the Tucuruí Dam in Brazil acquired significant allies in a rural workers union and church organisations, articulating them with the larger community of Amazonian peasants and enabling them to assume new political roles (Magee 1989).

Today, many resettlement projects are taking place in situations of extreme asymmetry in social structure and power, in which elites are

the most capable of expressing their interests and needs. Basically, particular groups, whether defined by class, race, ethnicity, religion or another differentiating factor, may find their interests furthered by certain features of a resettlement project while other groups will see themselves suffering great disadvantage. Land compensation may be seen by some to be an economic opportunity, while formal sector housing, particularly in urban resettlement, may draw interested people into a project area. Differential costs and benefits from resettlement projects may vary according to land and labour factor markets, social differentiation or other local features, predisposing some groups to favour resettlement and others to oppose it. Therefore, some caution must be exercised in ascertaining whose interests are indeed being represented in resistance movements (Partridge 1993:9; Nachowitz 1988). Communities threatened with resettlement cannot be assumed to be homogeneous. In resistance movements all players have specific agendas which they attempt to further.

Economically, resistance requires the mobilisation and expenditure of labour and other resources in novel ways, diverting time and energy from other important tasks and stressing communities that may already be pressured to meet normal needs. However, the acquisition of allies may make available other resource pools, injecting new skills, technology and access to specialised economic resources into the local context. Politically, the established leaders of the community, if they favour resistance, are chosen to lead the movement, but, if they prove unsatisfactory or unequal to the task, new leadership may emerge in the context of the conflict. Furthermore, the enhanced contact with others brought about by resistance, combined with more precise definitions of community or ethnic identity, lead to more sophisticated understanding of local power, particularly that based in ethnicity, class, gender or religion in relationship to that of the group controlling state power. The Kayapo in Brazil have been particularly astute in their understanding and use of local, national and international sources of power for resisting the Tucuruí Dam and other Brazilian government and private initiatives affecting their land (see Posey in this volume and Fisher 1994). However, it must also be understood that the internal changes in communities set in motion by the decision, organisation and actions of resistance do not inevitably bring about changes in policy in the sense of establishment of new public goals at any but the local level. Indeed, depending on the reigning political climate, mobilisation for resistance at the local level may provoke a hardening of some policies at the regional or state level.

Since resistance in effect constitutes a challenge to the state, the politics of state-local relations in all their complexity come to the fore.

This sort of challenge constitutes 'news' and attracts the attention of the power structure as well as the media (and, I might add, the academic community) quickly. When brought into broader public contexts, resettlement of this type becomes then the forcing ground for basic policy questions of development and the extension of state hegemony over territory and population as well as majority-minority relations, state versus local determination, national development priorities and human-rights issues, not to mention important questions of practice and ethics for the social, behavioural and policy sciences.

Development projects involving large-scale infrastructure construction and/or environmental changes currently provide the most conflictive context of resettlement cases. Hydro-electric complexes, irrigation projects and major transport systems bring about the wholesale removal and relocation of populations. As the scale of these projects tends to be vast, informing the people to be relocated has generally had a fairly low priority. Usually, the projects are already underway by the time the people to be resettled are informed. When people decide to resist resettlement, they must decide whether to resist the specific project, which may be backed by the state and multilateral financial institutions, or to accept the project and to resist an unjust and poorly designed resettlement project. Individuals and communities must assess both the odds of success and failure, as well as the stakes that are involved in either eventuality, both in the short and long term and in terms of the implications of their strategies and goals at local, regional, national and international levels.

If people as a community decide to resist the development project itself, confronting the state and its ambitions, they are choosing a course of action that challenges both the specific project and, in essence, the development models that include such massive projects. In this case, resisters challenge a global political economic structure reinforced by a deep ideological tradition and philosophy of progress. Conversely, people may decide to accept the development project as a *fait accompli* and concentrate on improving the resettlement project. Although the degree of 'informed consent' afforded the Kuna affected by the Bayano Dam in Panama is questionable, once the project was initiated, resistance efforts were directed at both defending their culture and influencing the resettlement process (Wali 1989:63).

Policy Implications of Resistance to Resettlement

To assess the implications of resistance movements for public policies, I chose a broad approach to the concept of policy that emphasises as

much the political positions of all the participants in resettlement disputes as the formally defined strategies of governments and multilateral agencies. This approach is based on a changing climate in world politics, due in large measure to the expansion of the human-rights movement, which has created the opportunity for former recipients or objects of policy to now adopt policies of their own in their relations and interactions with larger national and international entities. In this approach, then, policies are the intentions and goals of public entities and the means and strategies to achieve them.

Policy thus involves public interests in which the public may be formally defined by statute or legislation, or informally defined by social and cultural organisation. It is clear today that a number of groups and communities, many of them relatively small, are engaging in the establishment of policies regarding group goals and relations with other groups, communities or entities of various sorts. In effect, small cultural groups, when they organise for resistance, acquire information and perspectives, often from newly found allies, that result in the alteration of long-held positions (or implicit policies) recasting their relations with neighbours, local government or the state. Indeed, the current political climate allows for a commonality of interests between large public or non-governmental multilateral organisations and small communities of resisters against the previously sacrosanct sovereignty of the state.

Therefore, when we speak of policy implications of resistance movements we refer to the impacts of resistance movements on the definition of goals and strategies in various institutional contexts and levels in which policies are formulated and activated. Such implications are felt throughout an interactive system, but these impacts will be different and will affect the various elements of the system differently. Furthermore, by 'implications for policy' there is an implicit focus on change, and more specifically, change and improvement in policy. In this case, given the theme of this volume, it is clear that policy changes which reduce impoverishment and enhance the material, socio-cultural and political well-being of the affected population are the issue at hand. In many respects, the extent to which at least state-level policies are impacted by resistance movements is linked to its receptivity and the democratic or authoritarian character of the regime. Similarly, just as communities cannot be assumed to be homogeneous, the state often displays considerable internal differentiation, with competing factions, agencies and ministries with widely differing agendas. Nor do policy makers, planners, and implementers constitute a homogeneous group, often coming from different class and ethnic backgrounds. This internal

differentiation offers resisters the opportunity to play one set of state actors against another in achieving both immediate gains and long-term policy changes.

At first glance resistance movements seem to display similar motivations, strategies and tactics, as well as levels of institutional support. Scrutiny of these similarities, however, often reveals only a superficial resemblance among resistance movements, since they emerge in response to extremely different events, projects, cultural contexts and institutional frameworks. As resistance movements in general evolve over time, they trace unique paths, evolving as systems in interaction with both inputs and outputs with other systems. Such is the variety of forms, strategies and tactics available to resistance movements that a 'natural history of resistance movements' is probably less fruitful than developing a set of levels of analysis or contexts of action in which resistance movements operate and variables that influence the evolution of structure and behaviour of a movement (Oliver-Smith 1995).

As a resistance movement emerges and develops, it interacts with processes and variables operating in at least four contexts: the local context of the affected community or region, the design and implementation of the project, the national political economic context and international political economy and political culture. Clearly such contexts are composed of different elements which must be understood as separate, often internally contradictory or opposing, but also interacting. In addition, in many instances the project becomes a means by which local interests can communicate with national institutions in clear and unmistakable ways. Particularly important for resistance movements are those factors which develop the level of organisation and capacity to operate effectively in both local and national level contexts (McAdam et al. 1988:697).

The Local Context of Action

Most resistance movements have an initial local expression in response to a specific project. In many cases, people simply do not believe that they will be resettled (Scudder and Colson 1982:271-272; Wali 1989:74). The idea that such an act would be contemplated simply strains their credulity. Their astonishment at the idea of resettlement may be a measure of the nature and quality of interaction between the community and the state. As communication becomes more frequent and intense between communities and the state, we can expect that people's credulity at the institutional operations and ambitions of the state will no longer be strained.

The threat of resettlement, once fully recognised, is often perceived as such a total threat to socio-cultural and physical survival

that it galvanises action as few other threats can. As previously noted, the decision to resist resettlement almost invariably involves people in innovative behaviour, resulting in changes in social relations and organisation, as well as altered relationships with external individuals and entities. When the decision to resist is taken, such action often evolves into the formation of grassroots organisations, in many instances initiating efforts that result in changes in the way that the local community interacts with power structures at various levels in the hierarchy of state institutions (Ghai and Vivian 1992). Furthermore, the speed and intensity of communications in previously remote areas have enabled local resistance movements to establish contact with similar efforts in other parts of the nation or indeed the world, resulting in the insertion of local communities into larger networks of resistance. Insertion in these larger networks can markedly change the resource base and strategic orientation of local resistance movements, ultimately perhaps creating pressure for policy adjustments at various levels. The experience of those expropriated by the Itaipu Dam had considerable influence on the formation of a successful resistance movement by farmers to be affected by the Santo Capanema project in Brazil (Bartolomé 1992:10). There is no question that the sharing of these experiences and others by people threatened with resettlement or those actually already resettled resulted in the formation of CRAB (Regional Commission Against Large Dams, in Brazil. CRAB, through the political acumen of its leaders, many of them originally small farmers, and its networking skills with regionally and culturally diverse populations threatened with resettlement, has developed a power base that enables it to negotiate effectively with Eletrobras, the national power company of Brazil and its regional subcontracting affiliates (Bartolomé 1992; Serra 1993).

Even when resistance is framed in highly traditional terms, the need to resist and its consequent expression may alter the ways a community interacts with planners and policy makers. Resistance may be catalysed or conditioned by the flexibility of a group's vital mythological symbols and the ability of the people to interpret and recontextualise the threat of resettlement in terms of those symbols. The threat of resettlement was recontextualised into mythological terms by both Chinantecs and Mazatecs in Mexico, generating a resistance movement expressed largely in messianic form (Bartolomé and Barabas 1990:76-77; see also this volume). As such the messianic resistance movement strengthened traditional culture and produced an activist stance toward regional and national authorities. The 'incipient messianic movement accomplished what politicians,

engineers, businessmen, and false mediators have tried to prevent: the unity of the Chinantec people' (Bartolomé and Barabas 1973:15). The achievement of local unity in opposition to the state and its allies also implies both an alteration of traditional relationships and pressure for adjustment of policies on both sides of the conflict.

Local expressions of regional levels of social and institutional development will impact the action and organisation of resistance movements. The structure of local leadership and its relationship to similar structures at the regional level are important. The degree of local integration with the state and its operating procedures and goals will impact on the articulation of the resistance movement with external resources and choice of strategies and tactics. If, for example, resisters are aware of and can affiliate with a national union, they may choose to form a local chapter whose main agenda is resistance to resettlement, thereby tapping into a larger resource pool for their efforts as well as acquiring an expanded agenda of goals (Wali 1989:85).

The Project Level of Action

The choice to resist or accept resettlement may be mediated by the quality of the resettlement project itself (Chambers 1970). Where national resettlement policy has been inadequate or non-existent, resistance to a project becomes a means to affect or create appropriate policies at a national level, particularly when international allies support the case (Cernea 1993b:32). The project is, in effect, the projection of the state onto the local context, reframing it in its own terms and for its own ends.

A project that is poorly designed and/or implemented may generate resistance in the local context, producing not only rejection of the project, but also the right of the state to redefine local agendas and terrain. In other cases, particularly where local interests predominate, the goal of resistance is less to improve policy than it is to improve the project. In this instance, resistance to resettlement is resistance to a bad resettlement project and implies a strategy of negotiation in which varying tactics are used to acquire bargaining chips in the effort to secure better terms and conditions for resettlement such as improved replacement land, compensation for losses or housing allowances.

Resistance to specific projects also constitutes an important corrective not only for the project, but, where administrators are astute, for revising inadequate policy as well. Resistance has contributed in major ways to improvements in resettlement policies and procedures, both in specific projects as well as at national policy levels. Indeed, it can be fairly argued that protest over and resistance to spe-

cific projects stimulated in large part the increased attention by social scientists to the deficiencies in national resettlement policy, leading to the adoption of specific policy and practice guidelines for resettlement projects at the World Bank and other international organisations and institutions (Morse and Berger 1992; Gibson 1993, Cernea 1993b; Serra 1993; Guggenheim 1993). However, a clear distinction must be drawn between resistance movements that result in policy and project improvements and the conflicts that emerge during consultation with relocatees during implementation. For example, while there was considerable resistance to government plans to resettle communities for the Aguamilpa and Zimapan projects in Mexico, altered national policies, in part the result of international pressure, created a context in which a form of participatory planning of resettlement took place. However, numerous problems and conflicts, some of which involve improvements in the planning process, may emerge in the context of the participation of community members. (Guggenheim 1993)

A project which does not empower relocatees with significant roles in design and implementation, enhancing both their understanding and control over their lives, will not inspire much confidence in a community threatened with resettlement. A resettlement plan which is vague or obtuse or does not demonstrate sensitivity to crucial issues in local economics, social organisation, politics and culture will likewise be unconvincing.

Regardless of the quality of the plan, resistance will often be provoked once resettlement is underway, by manifestly inferior aspects of implementation (Serra 1993). Indeed, sound policy and solid planning can be completely undone by poor implementation. This is where resistance can serve as an important corrective indicator for both specific projects and general policies for design and implementation. Broken promises, unfulfilled plans, negative environmental impacts, inadequate or inappropriate compensation, inferior replacement land or cultural unacceptability of settlement or residential patterns in the new community have all been known to trigger resistance movements after resettlement has taken place (Wali 1989; Serra 1993). Often, specific elements of resettlement schemes, particularly those requiring major adjustments by people in culturally important dimensions of their lives, will elicit the greatest opposition. Ultimately, a relocation project must not only be well designed and entirely adequate to the task, but also well presented and communicated in terms which permit comprehension and stimulate discussion among the target population (Cernea 1988a:15). Again, as mentioned earlier, the record of resettlement projects in these areas has been

generally poor, and responsible, at least in some measure, for the frequency of resistance to planned resettlement. Indeed, there are some who argue convincingly that positive, productive resettlement schemes are not only extremely difficult to achieve, even under the best of circumstance, but inevitably promote cultural disintegration (Chernela 1988:20).

The National Level of Action

When local communities mount resistance to resettlement movements, their efforts have been shown to have policy implications at the level of the state and national political organisation and political culture. In development projects the impelling force for resettlement today increasingly is the nation-state. Frequently, ethnic differences between those in control of the state apparatus and those subjected to its authority complicate the relationship between local contexts and the state in resettlement contexts (Colson 1971; Zaman 1982; Wali 1989; Bartolomé and Barabas 1990; Oliver-Smith 1991a). In some cases, the control and integration of ethnic minorities is a secondary goal, although somewhat covert, of development-project resettlement, and resistance will be expressed in terms of defence of ethnicity as well as territory (Zaman 1982).

Clearly, the general political climate of a nation will condition the way a resistance movement develops and operates. The democratic or authoritarian character of the state will provide a more or less fruitful terrain for resistance and its possible effects on policies (Magee 1989; Bartolomé 1992; Robinson 1992). For example, in Brazil in the 1960s a repressive military regime provided little space for either resistance or policy reformulation during the construction of the Sobradinho and Itaipu projects. However, during the late 1970s and 1980s with the Brazilian political 'abertura', strong national-level resistance movements emerged, acquiring significant political power that enabled them to negotiate at the national level and to force the national-level relocation authorities to address the possibilities of alternatives or cancellation of resettlement projects as well as other issues of concern to them (Bartolomé 1992:21; Fisher 1994). Indeed, the organised resistance of individual communities and in concert through the efforts of CRAB has contributed to an entire reconsideration of Brazilian national resettlement policy, designed to create an 'Environmental Master Plan' involving new relationships between the power sector companies, the local line agencies and affected populations. In many senses, the resistance movement at the local and national level both stimulated and constituted one of a variety of pressures on the Brazilian power sector, including legislation requiring

more rigorous environmental scrutiny, more stringent requirements from international funding agencies and national and international environmental and human-rights activists and academics. The new relationships established in the master plan are to recognise previously unperceived 'costs' of a socio-cultural and socio-economic nature to an affected population in the design of projects. Forums and formats under the new plan must provide for adequate information on project content and implementation schedules as well as formal representation of all interest groups (Serra 1993:68-71).

Furthermore, resistance movements in Brazil, in coordination with national and international allies, have actually directed a significant critique at the nation's overall development policy, calling for more sustainable alternatives (Turner, T. 1991; Fisher 1994). Similar efforts in India have linked resistance to resettlement to the lack of sustainability of urban culture, questioning the entire nature of the development process in that nation (Bandyopadhyay 1992:276). Popular resistance to resettlement has become part of a linked array of human-rights issues that exerts pressure on the state to alter civil and political-rights policies. Emerging resistance and negotiation efforts among different groups facing resettlement in Mexico have initiated a national dialogue on the power sector's relocation of peasant communities. These debates provoked by the resistance movements are both a partial cause and an effect, along with other issues such as the 1992 election results, that have produced popular pressures for greater governmental accountability and increasing governmental responsiveness (Robinson 1992). On the other hand, the authoritarian regime of Ferdinand Marcos in the Philippines made it almost inevitable that resistance to the Chico Dam would ultimately become framed in violent terms and in alliance with sectors dedicated to the larger goal of overthrowing the state (Drucker 1985).

The International Context of Action

The role resistance movements have played in international contexts has contributed to key changes in policy in very specific institutions, as well as to what can only be described as a fundamental transition in the terms of global political discourse. In some senses, the changes in specific institutional contexts have also become part of the larger discourse. The principle institution in which resistance movements achieved major impact in policy formulation was the World Bank.

For many years, within the World Bank and in other development institutions financing large infrastructural projects involving resettlement, policy makers and planners had little use for social science information on either project development or impact. Costs of such

projects were calculated basically in economic terms, and the resettlement dimensions of the projects were generally underfunded, poorly staffed and haphazardly planned in the borrower nations constructing the projects. Social impacts of such projects were deemed to be negligible or unavoidable. However, in the 1970s the difficulties created by poor planning and implementation as well as staunch local resistance in the Bank-assisted Sobradinho project in Brazil and the Chico Dam in the Philippines underscored the need for increasing use of social science knowledge and perspectives for the formulation of explicit resettlement policies within the Bank (Cernea 1993b:19-20).

This emerging position paralleled an overall interest on the part of the Bank in projects that addressed rural poverty in general (Shihata 1993). This interest, as Escobar notes, was due more to rural protest and resistance and the failure of modernisation theories than any transformation in the Bank's thinking (1991:664). However, as Autumn cogently points out, since institutions are rarely gifted with 'either superhuman prescience or unalloyed altruism', changes in institutional policy are usually responses to changes in the real world (Autumn 1994:34). The increasing media attention to and public recognition of resistance by local peoples to large development projects, coupled with sharp criticism of Bank financing of these efforts by NGOs and other organisations on human-rights and environmental grounds, constituted just such real-world changes and stimulated efforts to formulate a set of resettlement policy guidelines within the Bank. The result of such efforts was Operational Directive 4.30: *Involuntary Resettlement* (World Bank 1990). O.D. 4.30 calls for minimising resettlement, an improvement or restoration of living standards, earning capacity and production levels, resettler participation in project activities, a resettlement plan and valuation and compensation for assets lost (Ibid.:1-2).

However, the Bank soon found that resettlement policy guidelines within the Bank constituted little guarantee of their application by borrower nations undertaking resettlement projects. Consequently, the Bank has advocated the formulation and implementation of resettlement legislation in borrower nations, resulting in significant policy changes in several developing nations, most notably Brazil, Colombia and Mexico, as well as other development agencies such as the OECD and the IDB (Cernea 1993b:32; Shihata 1993). However, a number of nations have seen the guidelines contained in O.D. 4.30, as well as pressure to adopt them or some version of them as national policy, as a distinct infringement on national sovereignty. Others see the guidelines as written for large-scale

hydro-power projects and have questioned the appropriateness of, for example, certain forms of compensation called for in the guidelines for urban resettlement projects. Furthermore, adoption of formal policies, either by the World Bank or borrower nations, is not assurance of adequate implementation. The World Bank-commissioned independent report on the Narmada Sardar Sarovar project in India (Morse et al. 1992b), recommending cessation of the project pending major improvements, resulted in rejection of further World Bank funding by the government of India.

The impact of resistance movements in the broader contexts of political discourse begins at the local level, but may well be part of an overall process creating a climate for major policy changes of which the World Bank's resettlement guidelines are only the beginning. When a population threatened with resettlement employs resistance to gain a bargaining position to improve the conditions and terms of the resettlement project, a potential conflict may ensue between the threatened community and its actual and potential allies at local, national and international levels who may have much broader, more systemic goals, reaching beyond the local context. While the community threatened with resettlement may choose to view the struggle in local terms, limiting goals and action to their local context, the allies frequently acquired at the national and international levels may conceptualise the struggle in terms of dominant models of national development (Nachowitz 1988; International Dams Newsletter 1985; World Rivers Review 1988). The strategies and tactics preferred by these allies commonly reflect the goal of combatting models and policies of development that call for major alterations of natural and social environments. For local communities involved in resistance, embracing such far-reaching goals requires the realisation of a coincidence of interests and the construction of a shared or common ideological basis of motivation with others often distant socio-culturally and economically, as well as geographically, from them. It is in this context that local resistance dramas 'in the shadow land ... at the outer edge of the realm of politics ...' are internationalised with the potential for changing the character of political culture on the world stage (Falk 1983:25 as quoted in Wilmer 1993:39; Fisher 1994).

When local dramas of resistance to resettlement are cast in national debates and attract the attention of national and international non-governmental organisations and institutions, they become active participants in a larger global dialogue. The entrance of local resistance movements on to national and international stages as significant participants has contributed to a variety of debates of issues

with broad policy relevance internationally. In effect, resistance to resettlement has helped to frame the entire contemporary debate on development, the environment and human rights, a debate that shows considerable signs of expanding and of gaining increasing relevance to both national development and human-rights policy as well as international standards.

The linkage of two global movements, environmentalism and human rights, with the resistance of people threatened with relocation or suffering from poorly implemented resettlement, has begun a rethinking of the relationship between human beings and places on the earth and the rights that pertain thereto. This re-examination entails a critique not only of the model of development that accepts the necessity of relocating people for national priorities, but also a questioning of the scale of development interventions that create major disruption for both people and environment. As Adam Curle in discussing the removal of the Chakmas for Kaptai Dam in Bangladesh so succinctly puts it, there is ‘... a moral problem. How much suffering for how many can be justified by how much good for how many?’ (1971:105). Further, the discourse that addresses these issues implicitly and explicitly has drawn into debate a reassessment of the extent of state sovereignty (Downing and Kushner 1988).

Conclusion

The centre of the discussion on the environment has shifted from an exclusive focus on the destruction wrought by human beings on the natural world to an exploration of a sustainable relationship between human needs and the earth’s resources (Redcliff 1987). In this discussion the industrialised world is portrayed as developing through an unsustainable, environmentally destructive relationship with the environment, consuming non-renewable resources, creating non-absorbable toxic by-products and intervening in non-reversible ways in the various systems and cycles that ensure the renewability of the ecosystem. In the discussion of sustainable forms of human intervention, certain local economies in the non-industrialised world have been explored as examples of low-impact systems on the ecosystem at the same time that greater credence has begun to be given to indigenous voices in the development dialogue. This emerging discussion has found abundant material among the communities that are threatened with or have been subjected to resettlement. The construction of a large hydro-electric project in a rural area juxtaposes dramatically the two approaches to resource use and their constituents.

Although at some risk of romanticising local communities into ‘ecologically noble savages’ (Redford 1991), the debate on local knowledge and approaches to resource use has linked the sustainability issue to questions of local human rights (Redclift 1992). Among these human rights are those defined as environmental rights, pertaining to the right to live in a healthy, non-degraded environment (Johnson 1994). Notwithstanding the fact that local people are not always free from responsibility in the degradation of their own environments, their participation at the grassroots is seen as essential for the return to or maintenance of a sustainable relationship with the ecosystem (Ghai and Vivian 1992). In this fashion, not only the participation but also the empowerment of local communities becomes a key dimension (Redclift 1992). One dimension of empowerment is gaining a voice and not only being heard, but also being listened to.

If voices from the ‘shadowland’ of indigenous and peasant communities resisting resettlement as only one of a myriad of incursions upon their lives and resources are being heard increasingly by elites, it may be indicative of important changes in global political culture. These voices, questioning the entire model of development of the industrialised world, are insisting that territory not only consists of resources, but is also the basis of a particular way of life that people have a right to maintain. Such a position is consonant with a shift in world politics perceived by some, away from struggles over power and wealth toward struggles over normative issues (Wilmer 1993:40). Such a shift toward normative issues in international political culture has significant implications for the definition of the state as a political community with rights over both territory and people. When local communities resist the state’s efforts to resettle them to make way for development projects, they call into question not only reigning models of development and resource exploitation, but also the state’s right to define local terrain and priorities.

While there is little question that long-standing development strategies are undergoing some scrutiny in international fora, the actual practice of development continues to be realised in policies favouring infrastructural expansion and economic growth over ecological and cultural concerns. On average, 300 large dams enter into construction every year, displacing more than four million people, while urban development and transportation projects uproot an estimated six million more (World Bank 1994a:i). Most of these projects are not constrained or influenced by World Bank or other, similar guidelines in the resettlement of uprooted people. Although undoubtedly many, if not most, of these projects will produce benefits

for the societies and people they affect, realistic attempts to mitigate the high costs they present to uprooted people and impacted environments are only beginning. However, the fact that we are increasingly hearing serious discussions favouring international normative standards in issues of human and environmental rights over the power of the sovereign state places people who resist development-induced resettlement in the crucible of global policy change.