

# Development & Dispossession

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### **Introduction**

*Development-Forced  
Displacement and Resettlement:  
A Global Human Rights Crisis*

**Anthony Oliver-Smith**

The displacement and resettlement of people and communities by large-scale infrastructural projects is one of the most bitterly contested issues in the field of development today. Publicly and, increasingly, privately funded development projects are estimated to displace more than fifteen million people a year (Michael Cernea, personal communication, September 2005). Capital-intensive, high-technology, large-scale projects convert farmlands, fishing grounds, forests, and homes into dam-created reservoirs, irrigation schemes, mining operations, plantations, colonization projects, highways, urban renewal, industrial complexes, and tourist resorts, all in the name of regional and national development. Aimed at generating economic growth and thereby improving general welfare, these projects have all too often left local people permanently displaced, disempowered, and destitute. Resettlement has been so poorly planned, financed, implemented, and administered that these projects generally end up being “development disasters.” The process of displacement becomes a “totalizing” phenomenon, affecting virtually every aspect of life.

More people were involuntarily displaced in the twentieth century than in any other in recorded history. Adding to the wars and environmental havoc that uprooted millions was the global drive to develop. Despite sharing many similarities, displacement caused by development

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projects differs in important ways from the dislocation experienced by participants in voluntary relocation schemes, victims of natural and technological disasters, and refugees from civil and international conflicts. As in disasters and wars, people in DFDR (development-forced displacement and resettlement) are “pushed” to move rather than “pulled” or attracted by better possibilities elsewhere.<sup>1</sup> DFDR is entirely involuntary, despite the inducements devised to attract people to resettle voluntarily. Furthermore, although wars that turn people into refugees are the outcome of intentional decisions taken by political authorities, the general consensus is that wars should be avoided whenever possible. Large development projects, however, also the result of intentional decisions by authorities, are seen as positive steps that fit well within national ideologies of development. In effect, empowered by international standards granting the state the right to take property for national goals, such projects are justified by a cost-benefit analysis that assigns losses and gains on a political basis. Finally, unlike disasters and wars, there is no returning home after the situation has stabilized. DFDR is permanent. There can be no return to land submerged under a dam-created lake or to a neighborhood buried under a stadium or throughway. For this reason, the solutions devised to meet the needs of development-forced displacees must be durable, not contingency-based emergency strategies to meet immediate needs until people can return home (Guggenheim and Cernea 1993:3–4).

The problem of development-forced displacement and resettlement expresses the frequent tension between local and national development needs. In DFDR, society’s need to develop its infrastructure to produce more energy, better water supplies, more efficient transportation systems, and more productive agriculture is balanced against the welfare of the local communities that face displacement and possible resettlement to make room for such projects. The DFDR costs borne by local people are measured against the benefits that the entire society will purportedly enjoy from a project’s implementation.

In the phrase “development-forced displacement and resettlement,” three basic ideas (development, displacement, and resettlement) are linked, but there has not always been, nor is there now, any necessary relationship between them. Development, obviously, can take place without displacement or resettlement. Many people displaced by development projects are never resettled and either succumb to the impacts of dislocation or find themselves consigned to the margins of society and the economy. Further, the vast majority of those displaced who do resettle suffer the outcomes of inadequately financed, poorly designed, and incompetently implemented

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resettlement projects that bear no resemblance to any honestly rendered interpretation of the concept of development. No necessary or inevitable linkage exists between development, displacement, and adequate, humane resettlement.

The trauma and hardships experienced by the displaced pose critical moral questions about the nature, scale, and ethics of such development models and practices (see de Wet, chapter 4, this volume). Generally, development as a goal of public policy aims at improving levels of well-being through enhancing productive capacity, based on the premise that greater production and income will filter through the system to increase general patterns of consumption. Enhanced productive capacity is posited on a principle of efficient use of resources to render maximum market value (Penz 1992:107). National governments and private developers assess that local users do not efficiently exploit resources and argue that large-scale projects will produce greater value, thereby enhancing levels of overall economic development. Projects that displace communities justify themselves ethically by the belief that greater value production increases consumption and welfare at all levels of society. When projects force people to resettle, the process may be defined in economic terms, but resettlement is fundamentally a political phenomenon, involving the use of power by one party to relocate another. Current trends suggest that development strategies will continue to promote large-scale projects that result in the resettlement of large numbers of people. The extent to which this kind of development can be carried out ethically, democratically, and effectively is an issue of considerable dispute.

For local people, often indigenous or minority groups and their allies in the global networks of social movements and NGOs (nongovernmental organizations), rights to land and other resources, self-determination, cultural identity, environmental protection, and more sustainable forms of development are central to the survival of their communities. Their claims emphasize the rights of the less powerful, the significance of cultural diversity, and the sustainability of environments over what they consider ecologically risky, economically questionable, and socially destructive projects (Oliver-Smith 2001). They point to the consistent failure of governments and private developers to adequately fund, plan, or train personnel for the complex tasks of DFDR, resulting in the impoverishment of the displaced. Deploying international covenants, they have actively broadened the agenda to include questions of human and environmental rights and justice in development, frequently converting their discourses of resistance into alternative models and strategies for socially responsible development.

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A central issue in DFDR is the democratic character of the development process.

### **ANTHROPOLOGY AND DISPLACEMENT AND RESETTLEMENT RESEARCH, THEORY, AND PRACTICE**

Anthropologists in the mid-twentieth century were among the first to recognize, report on, and work toward mitigating the serious impoverishment and gross violation of human rights occurring among populations resettled by development projects (Brokensha and Scudder 1968; Butcher 1971; Colson 1971; Hansen and Oliver-Smith 1982). Despite the participation of other disciplines, anthropology can reasonably claim to be the foundational discipline of the field of development-forced displacement and resettlement research. Because DFDR impacts virtually every domain of community life, anthropology's holistic approach well equips it to address the inherent complexity of the resettlement process. In DFDR, anthropology also has made the single strongest, tangible, and internationally documented and recognized contribution to development policy and practice over the past quarter century (Oliver-Smith 2005b).

Since the 1950s, anthropologists have spanned the entire field of DFDR in basic and applied research, policy formulation, theory building, evaluation, planning, implementation, and community- and NGO-based resistance movements. Anthropologists have helped to frame current DFDR debates concerning human and environmental rights, policy frameworks and guidelines, implementation, evaluation, the limits of state sovereignty, and the agendas of international capital (Colson 2003). Because of its central role in the field, anthropology has a responsibility to expand the array of approaches and methods addressing the current, intensified challenges presented by DFDR at the local community and project level, in national and international political discourse, and in the policy frameworks of multilateral institutions.

Research on displacement and resettlement emerged in the 1950s from the post-war concern for the welfare and fate of the enormous numbers of refugees and displacees in World War II. The pioneer document was Alexander Leighton's *The Governing of Men: General Principles and Recommendations Based on Experiences at a Japanese Refugee Camp* (1945). In 1952 Elizabeth Colson and Thayer Scudder (see Scudder, chapter 2, this volume) began long-term research on the social and ecological consequences of resettlement for the Gwembe Tonga, who were relocated by the construction of the Kariba Dam in what was to become Zambia (Colson 1971; Scudder 1973a; Scudder and Colson 1982). The topic also attracted

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interest elsewhere in Africa (Chambers 1970; Fahim 1983) and in Asia (Dobby 1952) and Latin America (Villa Rojas 1955) as post-war and subsequently post-colonial development efforts accelerated.

At roughly the same time, sociologists in the United States studied the displacement of urban neighborhoods by urban renewal and large-scale construction projects. Their research led to important perspectives on grief and mourning for lost homes among resettled people (Fried 1963; Gans 1962). In the 1960s, in efforts to develop greater conceptual understanding of the displacement and resettlement process, Chambers (1969) and Nelson (1973) proposed models for voluntary land-settlement projects in Africa and Latin America, respectively. The problems associated with DFDR provoked a response in the form of an organizational manual for resettlement from the UNFAO (United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization) (Butcher 1971).

In the 1970s the problems of people displaced by development projects were linked to those of people displaced by conflicts and natural disasters (Hansen and Oliver-Smith 1982). In that context, Scudder and Colson (1982), addressing the responses of dislocated peoples regardless of cause, proposed a stress-based, four-stage process of recruitment, transition, potential development, and incorporation (also see Scudder, chapter 2, this volume). As the pace of large-scale development and concomitant displacements accelerated, displacement and resettlement studies also expanded in the 1980s, focusing on the environmental and social impacts of large infrastructure projects, particularly dams. A key element in the growth of this concern about DFDR was the expansion of well-organized and widely publicized resistance movements in nations where projects were displacing and resettling many thousands of people, such as Brazil, India, Thailand, and Mexico. Resistance movements publicizing the many inadequacies of displacement and resettlement policies and practices moved DFDR to center stage in the debates about development and gained the attention of the general public and the research community alike (Fisher 1995 and chapter 8, this volume; Oliver-Smith 1994, 1996, 2006).

Following the lead of Colson and Scudder, studies stimulated by this massive increase in DFDR-affected peoples in the 1980s documented the social impacts and injustices of the displacement process, focusing on the stresses of dislocation and resettlement, the patterns of individual and group reaction, and the negative outcomes imposed on people in the resettlement process. DFDR research began to emerge in those nations in which large-scale infrastructural development processes were being funded by national, international, and multilateral sources. Along with international

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private consulting organizations, researchers produced a substantial “gray literature” of feasibility studies, project evaluations, and in-house reviews of policies and outcomes (for example, Rew and Driver 1986).

In similar fashion, anthropologists worked with NGOs to record the deficiencies of DFDR policy and the negative project impacts (for example, Aspelin and Coelho dos Santos 1981; Barabas and Bartolome 1973; Feit and Penn 1974). In India, researchers documented the displacement of hundreds of thousands with no resettlement at all by development projects (Fernandes and Thukral 1989). In Mexico, analysis of the displacement and relocation process for the Cerro de Oro Dam assessed the impacts as a process of “ethnocide” (Barabas and Bartolome 1973). Brazilian researchers also explored dam-induced, large-scale relocation and resettlement projects, particularly for indigenous and peasant populations in the Amazon region (Santos and de Andrade 1990; Sigaud 1986).

Researchers also pointed out the failure of governments and government agencies to adequately plan, fund, or train personnel for resettlement projects. Lack of consideration for the human rights of the people being affected and ignorance of the complexity and gravity of DFDR’s impacts characterized the arrogance of authorities in many countries of both the developed and the developing worlds. Other researchers studied planning and implementation problems such as land replacement, social stress, differential gender-based effects, ideological impacts, legal issues, compensation problems, lack of participation in project planning and implementation by local people, problems experienced by host populations, failure to provide economic support, ecological impacts, and urban planning and housing.

Although much of this research focused on the negative outcomes, a number of investigators turned their attention to the question of successful resettlement in those relatively few cases where it could be claimed. Recognizing the difficulty inherent in establishing a set of criteria to measure success for such a multidimensional social process transpiring over many years, several researchers highlighted those projects that enjoyed partial success at one stage or another of development as beacons of light in the otherwise dismal record of DFDR (Partridge 1993).

A 2001 study by the World Bank’s Operations Evaluation Department (OED) of five major bank-funded dam projects concluded that although better planning had occurred, the public agencies charged with resettlement implementation had not produced significant improvements. The study also found that income-restoration strategies, whether based on land for land or on other options, had not been successful generally. Success

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must be based on the borrower country's genuine commitment to the resettlement process as a development opportunity (Picciotto, van Wicklin, and Rice 2001). Another advance in dealing with the challenges of DFDR was provided by the Impoverishment Risks and Reconstruction (IRR) model. Developed by Michael Cernea, the IRR has become a significant tool for the prediction, diagnosis, and resolution of problems associated with DFDR (Cernea and McDowell 2000; see Scudder, chapter 2, this volume).

Generally, non-dam forms of DFDR, such as conservation, urban renewal, mining, public use complexes, transportation, and pipelines, have received less attention as causes of resettlement. As mentioned earlier, urban renewal (and, more recently, "gentrification") in the developed world has been closely examined since the 1950s (for example, Fried 1963; Gans 1962; Squires et al. 1987). With rapid urban growth in both the developed and the developing worlds, projects ranging from public use facilities (stadiums, conference centers, government complexes), to slum clearance, to major transportation redevelopment have displaced hundreds of thousands of people. Local authorities are increasingly employing eminent domain to transfer property to private developers in order to spur economic growth (Cauchon 2004; see Koenig, chapter 6, this volume).

Conservation-driven resettlement is also receiving increasing attention (Brechin et al. 2003; see Oliver-Smith, chapter 7, this volume). In 1980 the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) published the World Conservation Strategy, which challenged the national park model and advocated the incorporation of local people into the conservation process—in Integrated Conservation and Development Projects (ICDP)—in order to benefit local people economically.

Dissatisfaction with the outcomes of such projects, however, has generated a more exclusionary strategy entailing the forced removal of people from their homelands, producing yet another variety of "environmental refugee" (Geisler and de Sousa 2001).

There is still considerable need for research on other forms of development-forced displacement, such as privately funded development projects. The significance of this form of research will only increase in the coming decade as privatization of previously publicly provided services increases. Some private-sector projects have developed their own resettlement plans and policies (Rio Tinto 2001). However, most privately funded development, such as the outcome of market factor speculation, presents significantly different problems for people affected by DFDR, in the disguised involuntary quality of market exchanges between parties of unequal power. Although private projects must agree to DFDR guidelines to get

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World Bank guarantees for lower interest rates, other private-sector infrastructural initiatives that do not want or need the guarantees are free to subordinate the human and environmental rights of affected communities to corporate agendas and market logics.

#### **DEVELOPMENT-FORCED DISPLACEMENT AND RESETTLEMENT AND APPLIED ANTHROPOLOGICAL PRACTICE**

Anthropologists have spanned the entire field of DFDR in applied activities as diverse yet related as applied research, policy formation, evaluation, planning, implementation, and resistance. They have also played major roles in the development of appropriate policies within multilateral institutions such as the World Bank, the Inter American Development Bank, and the Asian Development Bank regarding the planning and implementation of resettlement projects that accompany infrastructural development. They have authored the guidelines for best practices and procedures that borrower nations must comply with. World Bank Operational Directive 4.30: Involuntary Resettlement (OD 4.30), written by applied anthropologist Michael Cernea, called for minimal resettlement; improvement or restoration of living standards, earning capacity, and production levels of local people; resettler participation in project activities; a resettlement plan; and valuation of and compensation for assets lost (World Bank 1990: 1–2). Although these guidelines have been an important step toward the partial reduction of damages, costs, and losses incurred by some resettled peoples, their implementation in borrower nations has been consistently problematic. A number of nations see the OD 4.30 guidelines as an infringement on national sovereignty. Furthermore, adoption of formal policies, either by the World Bank or by borrower nations, is no assurance of adequate implementation. In addition, the degree to which projects financed by private capital must adhere to these now modified guidelines and procedures established by the bank is far from clear. Most recently, World Bank policy and guidelines have been weakened regarding protection for indigenous peoples and other peoples lacking formal title to lands, making it easier to carry out resettlement and, in some circumstances, reducing the World Bank's responsibility for certain kinds of displacement and resettlement impacts (Clark 2002a:10–11).

Anthropologists working as consultants to international financial institutions, among other kinds of organizations, have carried out assessments of policy frameworks, as well as the applied research necessary for better-informed planning and implementation of humane and developmentally



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oriented resettlement projects (Johnston and Garcia-Downing 2004; Partridge 1993; Rew, Fisher, and Pandey 2000). Anthropologists have also engaged in advocacy activities in behalf of affected communities. Working closely with groups and communities facing DFDR, anthropologists have joined in legally contesting the decisions and actions of international financial institutions, national and local governments, and private corporations (Johnston and Garcia-Downing 2004). Currently, anthropologists are taking leadership roles in many NGOs that work with affected communities to gain better conditions or to resist resettlement entirely. They are part of the larger community of activists and scholars keeping close watch on policy formulation in lending institutions to guard against the dilution or weakening of any policy relating to DFDR (Colchester 1994; Fox and Brown 1998; Waldram 1980).

Grassroots organizations, NGOs, and social movements resisting DFDR have also acquired legal personnel, expertise, and general knowledge that enable them to sue projects for violation of national civil and human rights law, as well as international accords. The growth of international human rights norms supplies a series of conventions and covenants that, although difficult to enforce in local circumstances, can be used to identify projects violating internationally accepted standards (see Fisher, chapter 8, and Clark, chapter 9, this volume). There are now much more active efforts to use these and other documents as means to achieve reparations for past injustices as well (Johnston 2000 and chapter 10, this volume).

## **THEORIZING DEVELOPMENT-FORCED DISPLACEMENT AND RESETTLEMENT**

Theorizing DFDR as a problem in human social and cultural organization has been inextricably woven into applied concerns for developing approaches to deal with the dire needs of the affected people and their legal rights. Although some efforts toward theorizing voluntary resettlement had occurred, little theoretical work was done on DFDR until Thayer Scudder and Elizabeth Colson developed a model based on the concept of stress to describe and analyze the process of involuntary dislocation and resettlement (Scudder 2005a; Scudder and Colson 1982; see Scudder's elaborations on this model in chapter 2, this volume). They posited that three forms of stress result from involuntary relocation and resettlement: physiological, psychological, and sociocultural. These three forms of stress, referred to as "multidimensional stress," are experienced as affected people pass through the displacement and resettlement process. The process itself is represented as occurring in four stages: recruitment, transition,

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potential development, and handing over/incorporation. Scudder and Colson note that the potential development stage is often never reached in many DFDR projects because inept and inappropriate policy and implementation frequently trap people in perpetual transition.

At roughly the same time that Scudder and Colson were developing their model, an approach began in an emerging political ecology that focused on the linked ideas of vulnerability and risk. Terms initially employed in disaster research to understand the vast differences among societies in disaster losses, *vulnerability* and *risk* refer to the relationships between people, the environment, and the sociopolitical structures that make the conditions in which people live more prone to disasters. These concepts gained greater currency as Michael Cernea (1990) began to explore an approach that focused on the risks of poverty resulting from displacement by water projects. Eventually, he developed his well-known Impoverishment Risks and Reconstruction (IRR) approach to understanding (and mitigating) the major adverse effects of displacement. In this, he outlines eight basic risks to which people are subjected by displacement (Cernea 1996a, 1997; Cernea and McDowell 2000). The model rests on the three basic concepts of risk, impoverishment, and reconstruction. Cernea models displacement risks by deconstructing the “syncretic, multifaceted process of displacement into its identifiable, principle and most widespread components” (Cernea 2000a:19): landlessness, joblessness, homelessness, marginalization, food insecurity, increased morbidity, loss of access to common property resources, and social disarticulation (Scudder, chapter 2, this volume). He also notes a high probability that these risks will produce serious consequences in badly planned or unplanned resettlement.

Several refinements to the risk approach were developed by Dwivedi, who views risk as “a subjective calculation of different groups of people embedded differentially in political-economic and environmental conditions” (Dwivedi 1999:47). People facing DFDR must often cope with great uncertainty and a lack of information concerning their future, resulting in conditions of considerable stress, disorientation, and trauma (Dwivedi 1999:47). Indeed, most involuntary resettlement projects deprive people of control over fundamental features of their lives, as well as the necessary information to reestablish satisfactory control and understanding of the resettlement process or the changed circumstances of their lives. If people find that their understanding and control are diminished, then change will be characterized 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

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control and understanding, creating motivation for resistance. Resistance is a reassertion of both a logic and a sense of control (Oliver-Smith 1996; Turner 1991).

NGOs, independent commissions, and other mediating institutions, in the ways they frame risk and uncertainties, have contributed to theorizing the challenges of DFDR. The World Commission on Dams (WCD) links risk with the concept of rights in advocating that an “approach based on ‘recognition of rights’ and ‘assessment of risks’ (particularly rights at risk)” be elaborated to guide future planning and decision making on dams (WCD 2000a:206). The global review of the WCD stressed the need to address the five values of equity, efficiency, participatory decision making, sustainability, and accountability as justification for the elaboration of a rights and risks approach to dam construction. Rights that were seen to be relevant in large dam projects included constitutional rights, customary rights, legislated rights, and property rights (of landholders and of developers and investors). In terms of purpose, rights pertain to material resources such as land, water, forests, and pasture or to spiritual, moral, and cultural resources such as religion, dignity, and identity (WCD 2000a:206).

Most recently, Chris de Wet, asking why resettlement so often goes wrong, sees two broad approaches to the question. First, the Inadequate Inputs approach argues that resettlement projects fail because they lack appropriate inputs, such as national legal frameworks and policies, political will, funding, pre-displacement research, careful implementation, and monitoring. The Inadequate Inputs approach optimistically posits that appropriate policies and practices can control and mitigate the risks and injuries of resettlement. The second approach, what de Wet calls the Inherent Complexity approach, identifies in resettlement a complexity that is inherent in “the interrelatedness of a range of factors of different orders: cultural, social, environmental, economic, institutional and political—all of which are taking place in the context of imposed space change and of local level responses and initiatives” (de Wet 2006:190). Moreover, these changes are taking place simultaneously in an interlinked and mutually influencing process of transformation. Further, these internal changes from the displacement process are also influenced by and respond to imposition from external sources of power, as well as initiatives of local actors. Therefore, the resettlement process emerges out of the complex interaction of all these factors in ways that are unpredictable and unamenable to a linear-based, rational planning approach.

De Wet suggests that a more comprehensive and open-ended approach than the predominately economic and operational perspective of the

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Inadequate Inputs approach is necessary in order to understand, adapt to, and take advantage of the opportunities presented by the inherent complexity of the displacement and resettlement process. Some might see this perspective as unduly pessimistic, but the limited degree of control that authorities can exercise over a project creates a space for resettlers to take greater control over the process. The challenge thus becomes the development of policy that supports a genuine participatory and open-ended approach to resettlement planning and decision making (de Wet 2006).

### **ANTHROPOLOGY OF THE DISPLACED**

Today, development planning and funding are rapidly changing, particularly regarding the roles of the public and private sectors, state-local relations, and social and environmental justice advocacy. Anthropology, building on the substantial work already done, needs to examine critically and participate in the evolving nature of the local-global politics of social and environmental advocacy to develop better understandings and approaches to the typical, as well as the novel, challenges that DFDR presents. For example, DFDR-affected peoples are developing innovative strategies to defend their rights in negotiations with the state and the global capital market by invoking international human rights covenants. Indeed, locally based resistance movements have, in some cases, provided an important corrective to or have completely halted seriously flawed projects (Oliver-Smith 2006). New sources and forms of political power have been emerging in supranational organizations, NGOs, and private institutions to support and expand the claims for disempowered subjects under the law (Clark, Fox, and Treacle 2003; Clark, chapter 9, this volume). DFDR-impacted communities provide a point of convergence for the human rights and environmental movements to create an arena for an expanded, international civil society across borders (Fisher 1995 and chapter 8, this volume). This convergence entails both a critique of development models that accept the necessity of relocating people and a questioning of the scale of development interventions that create major disruption for people, their way of life, and their environment. This critique explicitly espouses a reorientation toward more locally based, sustainable forms of development and a distancing from the ecological and human rights catastrophes resulting from development of an "industrialized nature" (Josephson 2002). Further, this discourse reassesses the extent of state sovereignty and invokes changes in global political culture.

The role of large infrastructural projects in the development process is now the focus of intense debate among powerful interests. On the one

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hand, national governments and private interests are redoubling their efforts to promote development projects with DFDR components but without significant legal and economic protection for increasing numbers of people and communities. Notwithstanding broad criticism, the practice of development today continues to favor large infrastructural expansion and economic growth over ecological and cultural concerns (Flyvbjerg, Bruzelius, and Rothengatter 2003; Josephson 2002). For example, the World Bank, nation-states, and industry associations have made recent efforts to reframe dams as environmentally benign, socially productive, efficient technologies. The World Bank now espouses a position favoring “high risk, high reward” projects. India’s enormous river-linking scheme, for example, defies every major recommendation of the World Commission on Dams. Allegedly bowing to pressure from borrower nations that see their sovereignty threatened, the World Bank recently weakened its guidelines regarding both involuntary resettlement and protection of indigenous people affected by development projects (Downing and Moles 2002). Further, the activist community has become greatly concerned regarding the lack of clarity in the responsibilities of privately funded development projects to affected peoples.

On the other hand, these trends have been countered by initiatives from civil society that have produced significant steps toward policies and guidelines to limit projects and curb abuses. Such initiatives as the World Commission on Dams (2000b), the Extractive Industries Review (2003a), and the Equator Principles (2003) are aimed at creating what Jonathan Fox (2003:xii) has called “accountability politics” to ensure socially and environmentally responsible development. Pressure from civil society led the World Bank to create an inspection panel. The World Bank Inspection Panel gives people affected by bank-funded projects the opportunity to file complaints and request independent investigations regarding the bank’s compliance with its own social and environmental guidelines. Although the panel’s results since its creation in 1993 have been uneven, the inspection panel is another element in the quest for accountability (Clark, Fox, and Treacle 2003). Furthermore, gaining prior informed consent from people to be affected by projects (Goodland 2004) and strengthening the legal basis and procedures for payment of reparations for injuries and costs imposed on individuals and communities by projects have recently emerged as strategic priorities (Johnston 2000 and chapter 10, this volume). Because anthropology played a central role historically in documenting the problems and framing the debate on DFDR, the present context of rapidly evolving debate and conditions make it ever more urgent for the discipline to

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contribute further to the development of socially and environmentally responsible DFDR policy and practice in the future.

To that end, the advanced seminar “Rethinking Frameworks, Methodologies, and the Role of Anthropology in Development-Forced Displacement and Resettlement (DFDR)” met at the School of American Research (now the School for Advanced Research) in late September 2005. The assembled scholars focused on the known links between involuntary displacement and impoverishment, drawing on research over the preceding fifty years. The participants included anthropologists and activists working in the fields of economic development, medical anthropology, urban anthropology, ethics, conservation, nongovernmental organizations, and human rights. Questioning fundamental frameworks to generate alternative concepts and practical responses, the participants engaged DFDR issues such as human rights violations; compensation; environmental rights in conservation; reparations for displaced peoples; legal protections and international organizations; issues of free, prior, and informed consent; and theoretical syntheses in DFDR research. Because DFDR is a “totalizing” process, affecting virtually every aspect of life, to cover the topic comprehensively in one volume is impossible. Important topics that are not specifically discussed here include gender (Colson 1999; Koenig 1995), cultural heritage (Brandt and Hassan in press), and displacement by export processing zones (Free Trade Zones, Special Economic Zones), resistance to which has recently sparked so much violence in India. However, the seminar gained particular salience in view of its convening within three weeks of Hurricane Katrina on the Gulf Coast of the United States and the massive displacement and highly questionable resettlement of hundreds of thousands of citizens of New Orleans. To explore similarities, differences, and potential contributions of DFDR research to disaster-induced displacement, Gregory Button, a specialist in disaster research, was invited to join the group directly from his fieldwork with displaced hurricane victims at the Houston Astrodome. The seminar issued a Declaration on Disaster Recovery in response to the Katrina catastrophe, included as an appendix to this volume.

The first essay in this volume is by Thayer Scudder (chapter 2). His research on the problems of DFDR spans more than fifty years and focuses on the largely unrealized potential for social and cultural theory, as well as policy and practice that displacement and resettlement research represents. Development-forced displacement and resettlement presents the social sciences with a unique opportunity to develop important, policy-relevant theories as to how communities are impacted by and respond to com-

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plex development interventions. Because researchers can identify, before resettlement commences, development situations that will involve DFDR, they offer a quasi-laboratory context that allows long-term comparative research, starting with “benchmark” pre-resettlement studies. Four dimensions of DFDR are relevant to theory building: an increased rate of social change, resettlement’s involuntary nature, resettlement as a byproduct of a different development initiative, and the complexity associated with DFDR. Calling for more systematic and longitudinal research, Scudder assesses the possibilities of theoretical synthesis between his and Colson’s Four Stages model and Cernea’s Impoverishment Risks and Reconstruction model by using both to analyze the impact of resettlement on the Gwembe Tonga by the Kariba Dam.

Michael Cernea’s chapter 3 tackles the thorny issue of compensation for losses suffered by displaced and resettled peoples. He is particularly concerned with the reasons for the abject failure of so many resettlement projects to produce tangible benefits for displaced communities. Although states and international financial institutions have, for years, accepted the proposition that resettlement projects must be development projects in their own right, the record of dismal failures and concomitant pain and suffering for the displaced continues with depressing regularity. Cernea attributes this failure to flaws in the compensation principle and the accompanying intention to restore levels of well-being. Resettlement projects are consistently underfinanced because of a failure to understand the nature and extent of losses and needs, thus dooming displaced and resettled peoples to impoverishment. Drawing on economic theories of economic rent and concepts of property, Cernea proposes a variety of benefit-sharing strategies to address the lacking financial capacity of resettlement projects. To illustrate how such strategies can be used to address the inadequacies of resettlement financing and improve outcomes, he cites examples of successful outcomes through benefit sharing in Colombia, Brazil, China, Canada, Norway, and Japan.

Given the dismal outcomes for most peoples displaced and resettled by development projects, Chris de Wet (chapter 4) raises the question of how DFDR projects are approached in ethical terms and, further, of how to grapple with the ethical tensions arising out of such projects. De Wet poses the situation in which a choice has to be made between equally compelling but competing moral values within an ethical framework. In effect, he asks how we are to deal ethically with a development project that promotes human well-being for a generalized population at the cost of enormous deprivation and suffering for specific communities. The traditional use of

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cost-benefit analysis to weigh the gains for some against the pains of others is found wanting. However, he argues, blocking a project because it displaces and resettles people denies another population the benefits of the project. In some sense, decision makers find themselves having to trade off competing notions of good against each other, creating a situation in which it is impossible to apply an ethical approach consistently. In effect, de Wet finds that we are unable to create the moral space in which everyone can win. Development requiring resettlement thus displaces ethics, in turn requiring a general rethinking of the “very relationship between development and resettlement, and particularly what has been taken as self-evident in this relationship.”

Dealing with perhaps the least well-studied or documented dimension of DFDR, Satish Kedia (chapter 5) presents the health consequences of hydroelectric dam projects for communities affected by dam sites and by displacement and resettlement. Such consequences are described as severe and wide-ranging. Kedia explores how dam construction impacts the health of populations residing in and around the construction area. He then discusses the health problems among displaced peoples affected by the Tehri Dam in northern India. Noting that the compensation policies for land losses were inadequate and poorly implemented, Kedia analyzes the impacts on the physical health of the displaced population caused by dam-created environmental changes, novel environmental threats and hazards in the resettlement site, the influx of eight thousand construction workers, declines in dietary intake, deterioration of water supplies, and changes in hygiene facilities and practices. The stresses engendered by the DFDR process were also the source of significant mental health consequences: most villagers suffered from insomnia, feelings of guilt, depression, and feelings of insecurity. Compounding this troubled mental state was their sense that sacred ancestors, gods, and spirits had been abandoned and that their illnesses and troubles derived from this weakening connection.

The increasing urbanization of the world, an outcome of massive migratory forces and processes, has led to almost unending urban construction as cities expand and renovate. Dolores Koenig (chapter 6) explores the consequences for people and neighborhoods uprooted by the dynamism of urban economies. Noting that the choice for urban development sites rarely affects the affluent or middle classes, Koenig establishes that, in high-density urban areas, even small projects can displace many people. Often, it is their very poverty that subjects the poor to the processes of displacement and resettlement. Particularly in the developing world, the



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poorest may lack formal title to the land they occupy, in both rural and urban areas, becoming subject to eviction when that land is found desirable for development purposes. Moreover, in urban resettlement, Koenig finds that an excessive attention to housing and services, congruent with World Bank guidelines on restoring standards of living, to the detriment of programs aimed at restoring livelihoods, has led to increased impoverishment for the displaced. Therefore, Koenig counsels that improved outcomes for urban resettlement projects must be based on better understanding of urban economies and the roles that displaced populations play in them.

Anthony Oliver-Smith (chapter 7) maintains that conservation, although not generally thought of as a form of development, becomes a development strategy when invoked in discourses of sustainable development and the valorizing of resources and environments. Noting the similarities between DFDR and conservation-forced displacement and resettlement (CFDR), Oliver-Smith adopts a political ecological approach to trace the evolution of conservationist thought and policy regarding both nature and the peoples residing “in nature” in the West, from the national park model to contemporary forms of integrated conservation and development models. Although indigenous and traditional peoples are generally not “natural ecologists,” they are hardly to blame for the vast majority of environmental devastation that has taken place in the world. Many biodiversity “hot spots” are inhabited by indigenous peoples, but logging, mining, petroleum exploration, cattle ranching, and commercial agriculture are responsible for far more environmental destruction. In advocating the expulsion of indigenous and traditional peoples from protected areas, the conservation movement has chosen targets of least resistance, the marginalized and disparaged indigenous and traditional rural peoples, instead of confronting directly the powerful economic and political interests that have driven the devastation of nature.

William Fisher’s chapter 8 focuses on the dynamic political character of the development processes within which DFDR policies are made and development decisions formulated, against which project-affected peoples must mount organized resistance or efforts at mitigation. Specifically, chapter 8 discusses the roles played by NGOs, social movements, and other civil society groups in the ongoing struggle to develop better policies and accountability mechanisms. Fisher highlights four key aspects of a larger story about transnational advocacy: the extent to which DFDR obliges local people to develop new alliances and political forms; the importance of changing the information environment to influence policy and alter power relationships; the effect of engaging in these new activities on project-affected

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groups; and the tension between democratic participation and the need for efficiency and effectiveness in altering policies. These issues make clear that addressing the complex problems of DFDR involves not only identifying best practices and penning new guidelines but also understanding and engaging these dynamic, transnational political processes.

Dana Clark, whose work as an environmental and human rights lawyer has focused on displacement and resettlement policy issues, examines in chapter 9 the policies developed within the World Bank, revealing their strengths and weaknesses regarding affected people. She analyzes two recent, in-depth multistakeholder reviews, the World Commission on Dams (WCD) and the Extractive Industries Review (EIR). Particularly significant are the adoption of a rights and risk approach to development planning by the WCD and the principle of free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) in the EIR. These recommendations, however, have not been effectively translated into World Bank policy. She notes that recent developments in both World Bank and International Financial Corporation (IFC) policies do not bode well for the displaced. Landless people and people without legal title to land have been placed in jeopardy by policies that recognize compensation only for legal titleholders. The situation becomes even more worrisome in the IFC endorsement of the use of force by the state to benefit private sector investment.

Barbara Johnston's contribution to this volume, chapter 10, focuses on the legacy of poverty, misery, and intergenerational disaster that some development projects have bequeathed displaced communities. Johnston discusses the movement to secure reparations for development disaster, drawing from the case of the Chixoy Dam in Guatemala. She outlines the basic protections, conditions, and actions needed to achieve reparations for development-forced disaster. Ideally, these efforts inform responsible parties, encourage participation in a negotiation process, and help shape and structure meaningful remedy. In reality, as the Guatemalan case aptly illustrates, this world is a place where rights-protective arenas are increasingly under siege and legitimate human rights complaints are recast as threats against the state. Johnston poses the important question of how to support and facilitate struggles to secure meaningful remedies in today's context of the militarized state's resurgent supremacy and the related erosion of rights-based governance.

Ted Downing and Carmen Garcia-Downing (chapter 11) argue that insufficient attention has been paid to the psycho-socio-cultural (PSC) impoverishment inflicted by involuntary displacement. Mitigation of PSC damages has proven much more problematic. Few projects consider miti-

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gating, or even attempting to mitigate, this risk. Five fallacies block discussions and actions, offering those who should bear responsibility an untenable rationale for not addressing the issue.

The first, the “compensation is enough” fallacy, asserts that compensation payments meet all the moral and economic obligations due displaced peoples. The second fallacy blocking action is the “strict compliance” fallacy, which holds that resettlement risks are addressed by adherence to project plans, policies, and laws. Assuming that the policies, politics, and economics have been addressed but PSC impoverishment still occurs, a third fallacy is to “blame the victims” themselves: they are incapable of understanding or taking advantage of economic opportunities offered them. A fourth, “the clock stops with construction” fallacy, asserts that responsibilities to displaced people end at the completion of the Resettlement Action Plan (RAP) or with completion of the construction phase. Fifth and finally, the “someone else should pay” fallacy holds that the project designers, governments, and financiers are not legally or economically liable for PSC changes.

Chapter 11 reframes the sociocultural dimension, arguing that, in the psycho-socio-cultural (PSC) realm, it is highly improbable that a pre-displacement routine culture may be recovered, let alone be restored. However, this does not mean that nothing can be done. The relative success of PSC recovery must be measured by different criteria from those for economic recovery or legal liability. Relative success is determined by how well the transformed routine culture answers the primary questions of the displaced, compared with the pre-displacement culture. Primary questions include, Who are we? Where are we? and How do we relate to one another? The applied question thus becomes, What can be done to facilitate the new routine culture so that it adequately addresses the primary cultural questions faced by the displaced peoples?

Gregory Button, leaving his field research with the survivors of Hurricane Katrina to attend our seminar, presented a field report on the conditions he was encountering with the displaced in Houston. His participation in the seminar proved to be invaluable in assessing the differences and similarities between disaster-caused displacement and DFDR. To conclude the volume, his primary aim in chapter 12 is to narrow the gap between the two seemingly different, but actually closely allied, literatures on disaster-caused displacement and DFDR. Noting certain disparities in cause, Button asserts that, after the impact stage is over, the challenges confronting displaced peoples in disasters and in development projects begin to resemble each other. Both involve a process of reconstruction. To

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explore these similarities, Button applies and tests concepts from DFDR research (many of which were developed by authors in this volume) against the challenges and problems that the displaced victims of Katrina suffered in the roughly eighteen months following that catastrophe. With Wittgenstein, he sees important “family resemblances” between disaster displacement and DFDR that offer insights into the total phenomenon of displacement and can lead to greater understanding and improved capabilities for mitigation. Indeed, given the recent massive displacements driven by disasters and environmental forces such as desertification, deforestation, pollution, and contamination, many of them closely related to development processes and climate change, the need for this mutual exchange between disaster-induced and development-forced displacement becomes even more acute.

As will become apparent to the reader of these chapters, there are diverse interpretations of fundamental questions that are philosophical, theoretical, or practical in nature. Should development that displaces individuals and communities be allowed? What are the development rights of the state and of private capital? Are there limits? Are the problems that result from displacement and resettlement simply the consequence of inadequate economic resources, or do other aspects inhibit success? Who represents the displaced, and in what forums and venues? Can reparation payments compensate for the losses experienced in displacement and resettlement, or should other forms of restitution be considered? These and many other questions became the focus of our discussions at the School for Advanced Research and are articulated here in this volume.

### **CONCLUSION**

As the debates on development evolve in the twenty-first century, the concerns for continued infrastructural and economic growth will continue to be countered by concerns for more environmentally sustainable and more democratic forms of development, particularly at the local level. Because of the human rights issues of displacement and resettlement and the environmental concerns, development projects have increasingly become the sites in which these interests and issues are contested and played out through different models of development by individuals and groups from a variety of communities, local and nonlocal. As Fisher (1995:8) points out, to some extent, both sides of the discussion share similar rhetorics of social justice and material well-being, but they differ

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markedly on the deeper philosophical meaning of development as a social goal and the means by which that goal should be achieved.

Dominant development models, promoting large-scale infrastructural projects, transform social and physical environments and espouse the concept of “the greatest good for the greatest number” while attempting to safeguard local rights and well-being. Although their record hardly reflects it, they assume that the less powerful will benefit eventually through well-designed and implemented resettlement programs. For many, realism about the framework of current international and national economic structures and conditions obliges acceptance of this development ideology. However, many others prefer to focus on the rights of the less powerful and the significance of cultural and environmental diversity rather than on the pursuit of what they consider to be ecologically destructive and economically dubious projects. In this volume, anthropologists, employing their knowledge, analytical skills, and energies in good faith on both sides of the debate, disclose and analyze the complexity and urgency of the problem.

### Note

1. The participants in the SAR seminar now submit that “development-forced displacement and resettlement” (DFDR) is more appropriate than the previous term, “development-induced displacement and resettlement” (DIDR). The reasoning behind this change is that *induced* is not an appropriate term for something that is determined by fiat, decided and planned in advance (Michael Cernea, personal communication, February 2007). *Induced* is inadequate also because it suggests that people may be convinced by arguments or rewards to be resettled. In such a case, involuntary resettlement becomes voluntary, not forced or imposed.