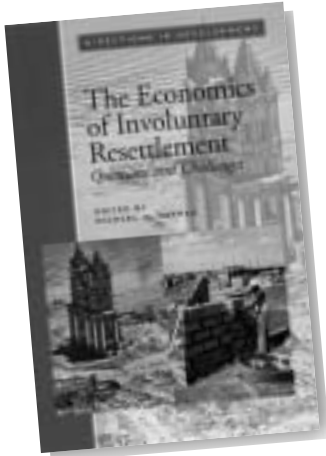


Literature on development-induced displacement and resettlement

The research literature on development-induced resettlement has increased by leaps and bounds over the last decade. Two recent volumes, which bring together multi-disciplinary contributions by a large number of scholars, are the World Bank publications *The Economics of Involuntary Resettlement: Questions and Challenges* (edited by Michael M Cernea) and *Risks and Reconstruction: Experiences of Resettlers and Refugees* (edited by Christopher McDowell and Michael M Cernea).¹

The Economics of Involuntary Resettlement



This is the first book in the resettlement literature which is devoted to the economic issues involved in processes of development-triggered forced displacement and relocation. In the introductory chapter Michael Cernea sets out two basic arguments. First, the economics of displacement and resettlement have been neglected by academic researchers and practitioners, a neglect that has resulted in gaps in economic analysis of displacement and the economic/financial remedies to it. He notes that sociological/ anthropological learning on resettlement is so far ahead of economic knowledge that it has created a dysfunctional gap in understanding which affects policy and practical action. Second, he contends that the economic methodology used in World Bank, donor or government-financed projects to analyse costs, compensations and expenditures for displacement/resettlement is based on conventional cost-benefits analysis (CBA) and is obsolete. It is not suited to analysis of displacement which entails distribution differentials in both costs and benefits. The use of CBA, he argues, leads to underestimates and to chronic under-financing of resettlement operations, vastly contributing to their frequent failures.

These charges are supported by a contribution from the British economist, David Pearce. From the

perspective of welfare economics, Pearce draws parallels between resettlement economics and environmental economics and criticises the unsatisfactory treatment of externalities in resettlement projects. He makes important policy and methodological recommendations for improving the economic and financial foundations upon which development-triggered displacement and relocation are predicated.

The other chapters, authored by John Eriksen and Maria-Clara Mejia, deal with Asian rural resettlement and urban resettlement in Latin America. They provide convincing empirical evidence of flaws in the economic planning for resettlement operations. An Indian anthropologist, Lakshman Mahapatra, tests the Impoverishment Risks and Livelihood Reconstruction (IRLR) model of resettlement against empirical findings about displacement-induced impoverishment processes in India. The book concludes with a contribution by a political scientist, Warren van Wicklin, who suggests how resettlement policies can better mobilise budgetary resources for resettlement and the new resources created by the project itself in order to improve the economic conditions of the resettlers and enable them to share in developmental benefits.

The book provides a perspective on resettlement's inner dynamics and suggests analytical tools and policy solutions to challenge the premises and to improve the resources and outcomes of involuntary resettlement processes. It is now up to economic researchers to respond to the questions and challenges raised in this volume.

Risks and Reconstruction: Experiences of Resettlers and Refugees

This massive volume, centered around the IRLR model, provides guidelines for risk identification and prediction,

risk intensity diagnosis and counter-risk mitigatory action. The book developed out of a major international conference organised by the Refugee Studies Centre in 1998 to discuss the content and functions of the IRLR model and to explore whether the model and its key components can be also employed to analyse refugee and other displacement processes.

The volume has eight sections. Following Cernea's opening chapter outlining the IRLR template, each main feature of the model is treated in a pair of studies, one written by a resettlement expert and the other by a scholar in the refugee field. Voutira, Harrell-Bond, Green, Kibreab, Sørensen, Hirschon and Wolde-Selassie contribute studies primarily about conflict-caused and politically-caused refugees, while Nayak, Lasailly-Jacob, Meikle, Zhu, Mejia, Fernandes, Koenig and other researchers employ the IRLR approach to examine major development-caused resettlements in China, India, Argentina and Africa.

The diversity of case studies powerfully indicates that in most cases displacement does indeed lead to impoverishment and that systematic risk analysis and identification are indispensable. A novel contribution of this book is the treatment of post-displacement reconstructive strategies drawing on the IRLR approach. This aspect has been historically under-treated in the resettlement literature which has been short of positive, successful experiences to report on. Resettlers' access to natural resources under common property and issues of community re-articulation are discussed.

The volume both presents a range of comparative studies and outlines dialogue and debate between different viewpoints, some complementary, some opposed. The book can be used by teachers, researchers and students of forced migration. Practitioners can use its insights and hypotheses to develop operational goals.

1. For ordering details, see page 47.