Development and Population Displacement

George Washington University

Prof. Michael M. Cernea
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United States of America

Course Description:

Development programs, large and small, frequently cause population resettlement, voluntary or involuntary. This course focuses on the study of development-induced involuntary population displacement, both economic and physical, and on post-displacement resettlement and reconstruction. Such population movements will be analyzed in the course not as idiosyncratic, accidental side-effects of particular projects, but as a category of complex social processes inherent to development. They exhibit distinguishable structural regularities in their content, unfolding, social mechanisms, and consequences, despite the wide spectrum of specific country and project contexts within which they occur.

By their high frequency, cumulative magnitude, and destructive socio-economic and cultural effects, forced displacements have come to be recognized as a severe pathology of development, of growing concern and visibility on international and national agendas. These processes give rise to massive socio-economic losses, to pain and suffering, to growing resistance movements, and also to policies and programs intended to restrict and temper their effects.

Anthropology and sociology are at the forefront of the social sciences exploring these processes. These disciplines have generated a massive body of scholarly knowledge about the patterns, content, and effects of displacement. Arguably, resettlement is the domain in which development anthropology has succeeded in exercising its single strongest influence on policies and practice. Therefore, understanding this body of knowledge is indispensable for anthropologists engaged in development. This study equips students theoretically and methodologically, and cultivates skills for influencing social practice.

The course will approach displacement/resettlement as a strategic window through which to explore broader theoretical and policy issues in development, especially “the makings of induced development.” Students are encouraged to take advantage in their learning and thinking of the fact that displacement processes are a propitious “site” for grasping the dialectic of development’s benefits and losses, its strengths and its pathologies, inner contradictions, conflicts, and trade-offs.

The course will place development-induced displacement and resettlement (DIDR) within the broader taxonomy of population displacements. It will compare development-displaces to other major categories of displaced populations, from conflict-generated refugees to environmentally related migrants, in order to identify common characteristics and substantive differences.
The course requires, and aims at, a deep immersion into the anthropological analysis of displacement processes, through consistent student reading, absorption, and discussion of the anthropological and sociological literature on resettlement—its empirical findings, concepts, and methods. The course bibliography also includes items of a different type—project appraisal reports, evaluation reports, policy statements on resettlement, development agency documents—intended to complement the scientific bibliography (available in the Course-pack or placed on reserve at GWU Library).

Finally, this course is given with a strong commitment to active engagement, rather than passive contemplation, towards avoiding or reducing displacements whenever possible, and towards improving the standards and processes of induced displacements. It also aims to convey and build this commitment among the participating students as—possibly—future practicing social scientists. The course and class debates will reach into the ethics of development and—vastly—into the political, policy and operational hard questions of how to prevent/reduce impoverishment risks and social disorganization in forced resettlement.

**Education for Operational Work**

Beyond academic knowledge, this course will explain project-design and operational issues in development interventions causing displacements. The aim is also to introduce students to the options and requirements of practical development work in possible future jobs in this domain. The study of real-life “Resettlement Action Plans” of some major development projects is included.

**Course Syllabus:**

**September 8, 2003**

1. **Development and Human Settlement Patterns:**
   The Place of Displacement in the Paradigm of Induced Development.

   The first session will place development-induced displacement and resettlement (DIDR) within the broader perspective of induced development. The ethical challenges will be emphasized together with the reasons for studying the topic. Students will introduce themselves and their reasons for taking this course.

**September 15, 2003**

2. **The Taxonomy of Population Displacement (I)**
   Refugees and Internally Displaced People. The Continuum from Voluntary to Forced Migration.


September 22, 2003


September 29, 2003


Policies to study:

- The World Bank
- OECD Aid Agencies
- ADB
- China
- India
- Private Sector Corporations/IFC


**October 6, 2003**

The IRR Analytical Framework and Its Predictive Functions.


October 13, 2003

6. Structure and Process in Displacement and Resettlement (I)
In-depth Anthropological Analyses of Large-scale Hydropower Projects.

Cases to Study:
- Aswan—Egypt; Narmada
- Sardar-Sarovar—India;
- Yacyreta — Argentina;
- Nangbeto — Togo;
- Arenal — Costa Rica
- Shuikou — China;
- Three-Gorges — China;
- Kali Gandaki — Nepal;
- Bayano — Panama


October 20, 2003

7. Structures and Processes in Development and Resettlement (II).
In-depth Anthropological Analyses of Political Resettlement and Conservation Resettlement.

Continue prior sections’ readings, plus:


October 29, 2003


Prior sections readings, plus:


November 03, 2003


November 10, 2003


**November 17, 2003**


World Bank Resettlement Actions Plans and resettlement plans for projects financed by transnational private corporations. Copies of resettlement action plans will be made available to students. Many RAPs can be downloaded from the World Bank’s website and will be presented and discussed.

**November 24, 2003**

12. Resistance to Involuntary Displacement: Political Dimensions, States, and Civil Societies.

This session will also be dedicated to the presentation/group class discussion of the book: Pandey, Balaji, 1998. *Depriving the Under-privileged for Development* [see reading list]

Pandey, Balaji, 1998. *Depriving the Under-privileged for Development*


**December 01, 2003**

Suggested Themes for the Term Paper

A term paper 20–30 pages is intended to demonstrate how course participants have understood key ideas, concepts, and arguments developed by scholars, researchers, and policy makers working on resettlement, and are able to use them in their independent analyses of empirical data about displacements. Students can select from the list of topics below or, alternatively, propose other subjects with an abstract. Each of the themes, whether proposed below or by the student, must be anchored in ideas presented in lectures during the course. Each paper must cover the issues in-depth and critically, and include independent thinking by the student. Creative personal treatment, including iconoclastic views and “crazy ideas” are encouraged, with supporting argumentation.

For those who want to develop the material in more detail, an upper limit of 40 pages is acceptable.

The paper should be delivered in hard copy, typed double-spaced, between November 15–20, 2003, to allow for class presentation and discussion.

Proposed themes are:

3. Strengths and Fallacies of Compensation Expropriation and Displacement: Secondary Analysis of Empirical Research. (Three or four terms papers are possible on this topic)
   - Africa
   - South Asia (India)
   - China and East Asia
   - Latin America

Note: Three or four students can develop jointly or independently the methodology for secondary analysis and carry out their analyses separately. Findings will be presented for a comparative discussion in a class session.


Note: This topic can be taken up by two or three students, in distinct papers about research in:

- Latin America
- Asia
- USA/Europe
Findings will be presented and discussed in a comparative manner in a class session.

5. Ethics, Law, and Development: A discussion of forced displacement and the “greater good for the largest number” principle in light of John Rawls and Amartya Sen.

Note: If two students are interested, one can focus on Rawls “Theory of Justice,” the other on Amartya Sen’s theory of entitlements and on development as freedom.

Course Readings:


Contact Information for Michael Cernea:

Anthropology and International Affairs
Department of Anthropology and
Elliot School for International Affairs
George Washington University
2110 G Street, NW
Washington, DC 20052
Tele: (202) 994-6075
Email: Mcernea@worldbank.org