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## **Dams and Displacement: Raising the Standards and Broadening the Research Agenda**

### **Brooke McDonald-Wilmsen**

Research Fellow, La Trobe Refugee Research Centre, School of Social Sciences, La Trobe University, Victoria, Australia; [b.mcdonald@latrobe.edu.au](mailto:b.mcdonald@latrobe.edu.au)

### **Michael Webber**

Professorial Fellow, Department of Resource Management and Geography, The University of Melbourne, Australia; [mjwebber@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:mjwebber@unimelb.edu.au)

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**ABSTRACT:** The World Commission on Dams provided an analytical overview of the cumulative effects of years of dam development. A lack of commitment or capacity to cope with displacement or to consider the civil rights of, or risks to, displaced people led to the impoverishment and suffering of tens of millions and growing opposition to dams by affected communities worldwide. However, after the WCD, little has changed for the better in terms of resettlement policies. In fact, the standards of key agencies, like the Asian Development Bank, have been lowered and diluted compared to prior policies. Dam-induced development and displacement are stifled by a 'managerialist' approach to planning, in which solutions are sought internally and subordinated to the economics that underpins the existence of the project. The aim of successful resettlement is to prevent impoverishment and to enable displaced people to share in the project's benefits. Within the field of dam-induced resettlement, this is a lofty goal rarely achieved. However, in other fields of resettlement, such as refugee studies and adaptation to environmental change, such a goal is regarded as a minimum standard. In this paper we seek to broaden the research agenda on dam-induced resettlement and to raise the standards of development projects that entail resettlement. We do this by importing some of the considerations and concerns from practice and research from the fields of refugee studies and adaptation to environmental change.

**KEYWORDS:** Development-induced displacement and resettlement (DIDR), World Commission on Dams (WCD), refugee studies, environmental change

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The World Commission on Dams (WCD) provided a valuable overview of the cumulative effects of years of dam development. It was also among the first major public documents that embraced the Impoverishment, Risks and Reconstruction approach (discussed later) which links impoverishment risks to people's civil rights. The WCD found that a lack of commitment or capacity to cope with displacement led to the impoverishment and suffering of millions of affected people and growing opposition to dams worldwide. It called for a reduction in negative impacts by increasing the efficiency of use of existing assets; avoiding and minimising ecosystem impacts; engaging in participatory, multi-criteria analyses of development needs and options; ensuring that displaced and project-affected peoples' livelihoods are improved; resolving past inequities and injustices, and transforming project-affected people into beneficiaries; conducting regular monitoring and periodic review; and developing, applying and enforcing incentives, sanctions and recourse mechanisms.

Although the recommendations of the WCD were at first greeted enthusiastically by nations, institutions and sectors, the recommendations have not been taken up widely and applied to the

policies and practices of involuntary displacement. National laws rarely recognise social issues (Price, 2009). Moreover, the outcomes for people displaced by large dams have not improved: impoverishment continues as before the WCD (see later discussion for examples). Elsewhere, Webber (2010) examines why this might be, arguing that costs of a programme of displacement and the difficulties of finding vacant land are generally underestimated to facilitate approval of the project; local officials misappropriate funds allocated to peasants or spend them unwisely; structures of governance make it difficult to monitor how local officials treat displaced people; and long time lines between planning and construction mean that the conditions anticipated are commonly not those that must be faced in practice.

Here we argue that the research agenda about dams and displacement must be broadened so as to raise the standards with which displaced people are treated. In particular we draw on approaches from the fields of forced migration and (to a lesser extent) environmental change to demonstrate that the debate about dams and displacement sets only minimal goals for developers to meet. Those who set the standards for the treatment of displaced people, such as planners and financial institutions, those who advocate for them and those who research policy and practice must broaden their horizons of evidence to avoid the pathologies of the past.

This paper is organised into nine sections. Following this introduction, section two presents the Strategic Priorities of the WCD that are relevant to involuntary resettlement. Section three explores the uptake of the WCD recommendations by the large financial institutions and national governments. The relationship between impoverishment and involuntary resettlement is explored in section four. Section five presents the important theoretical foundations of development-induced displacement and resettlement (DIDR) and suggests that the models and approaches of broader forced migration studies may be complementary. Sections six to eight unpack some of these key lessons from conflict-induced displacement and displacement caused by environmental change. By way of conclusion, section nine calls for the standards against which effective involuntary resettlement is judged to be raised.

## THE STRATEGIC PRIORITIES OF THE WCD

When the WCD released its Report, *Dams and Development*, on 16 November 2000, it outlined seven Strategic Priorities that formed a "new framework for decision-making". In addition, the Report suggested 26 Guidelines as advisory tools to be considered within the framework of existing international guidance and good practice. Although they addressed more than the human impacts of large dams, the directions were relevant to involuntary displacement. In summary, the Strategic Priorities were:

### 1) *Gaining public acceptance*

Public acceptance of key decisions is essential for equitable and sustainable water and energy resources development. Acceptance emerges from recognising rights, addressing risks, and safeguarding the entitlements of all groups of affected people, particularly indigenous and tribal peoples, women and other vulnerable groups.

### 2) *Comprehensively assessing options*

Development needs and objectives must be clearly formulated through an open and participatory process before identifying and assessing options for water and energy resource development. In the assessment process, social and environmental aspects have the same significance as economic and financial factors. The options assessment process continues through all stages of planning, project development and operations.

### 3) *Addressing existing dams*

Long-term comprehensive post-project monitoring and evaluation processes should be introduced; any outstanding social issues should be remedied with mechanisms developed with affected communities;

and any re-planning, re-licensing or decommissioning of existing dams should involve a full feasibility study of the social impacts.

*4) Sustaining rivers and livelihoods*

A basin-wide understanding of the ecosystem's functions, values and requirements, and how community livelihoods depend on and influence them, are required before decisions on development options are made. Avoiding impacts through good site selection and project design is a priority. Releasing tailor-made environmental flows can help maintain downstream ecosystems and the communities that depend on them.

*5) Recognising entitlements and sharing benefits*

Joint negotiations with adversely affected people should result in mutually agreed and legally enforceable mitigation and development provisions. These provisions recognise entitlements that improve livelihoods and quality of life, so that affected people become beneficiaries of the project.

*6) Ensuring compliance*

A compliance plan is to be prepared for each project prior to commencement, spelling out how compliance will be achieved, including relevant criteria and guidelines as well as binding arrangements for project-specific technical, social and environmental commitments.

*7) Sharing rivers for peace, development and security*

For the development of projects on rivers shared between political units within countries, the necessary legislative provision is to be made at national and sub-national levels to embody the WCD's Strategic Priorities of "gaining public acceptance", "recognising entitlements" and "sustaining rivers and livelihoods".

## **WCD AND INVOLUNTARY RESETTLEMENT POLICIES**

Given the scale and breadth of the WCD review – the social, environmental and economic impacts, assessment of options and institutional processes in 150 dam projects were investigated – the Report was invaluable. Since the Strategic Priorities and Guidelines were not legally binding, the real test of the Report's value was its potential uptake by global financial institutions like the World Bank (and such governments as China that could finance their own large dam projects). For many years, the World Bank had been the largest financier of large dams and had pioneered involuntary resettlement guidelines (Dingwerth, 2005; Scudder, 2005). Given the considerable influence that these large financial institutions wield over at least some of their client governments, the adoption of the Strategic Priorities, Criteria and Guidelines by such institutions would have been a critical first step to their broader inclusion in the policies and processes of countries that build dams.

Upon the release of the Report, many organisations looked to the World Bank for guidance and leadership on how to respond (Gleick, 2002). Despite an initial warm response and endorsement of the Strategic Priorities, the full report and its 26 Guidelines were never officially accepted by the World Bank (Dubash et al., 2001; Fujikura and Nakayama, 2009). Moreover, as internal evaluation progressed, the World Bank hardened its stance against any major reaction (Dubash et al., 2001). Instead, after a decade-long suspension of large dam construction, in a 2003 water strategy paper the Bank indicated its intention to recommence financing large dams (Goodland, 2007).

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) also never fully endorsed the WCD Report (Dubash et al., 2001). However, it did publicly release a gap analysis comparing the Report against its own involuntary resettlement policy (ADB, 2002). It concluded that of the 26 Guidelines, 17 conformed to ADB practice, three partially conformed and six did not currently conform as they were not incorporated into ADB Guidelines and/or were not in accordance with its member countries' policy and practice (ibid). The ADB was generally dismissive of the Guidelines because they did not currently apply as being the "responsibility of the client government", "not really relevant" or "possible but not currently practised"

(ibid). Instead of focusing on revising its own policy to lay the foundation for improved future practice, it assisted the WCD to disseminate the Report to its member nations at a workshop in Hanoi in February 2001 (ADB, 2001).

The ADB had set out on a difficult task. As Scudder (2005) notes, the big resettlement nations, China and India, quickly rejected the Report. And even if the ADB had actively supported the Report's priorities and Guidelines, whether it would have ultimately influenced the safeguard standards of its member nations beyond those projects it finances is questionable.

There are a number of reasons why the Guidelines were not actively taken up by the World Bank and the ADB. The first pertains only to the World Bank. The WCD broadly represented a cross-section of agencies, movements and interest groups internationally (Dubash et al., 2001). According to Fujikura and Nakayama (2009), that the World Bank was not centrally engaged in the process was at the root of its failure to adopt the Report. During the development of the WCD the original scope was expanded beyond Bank-funded projects and the World Bank lost its stake in the review (ibid). On the other hand, the WCD has been criticised for focusing on World Bank projects rather than reviewing a representative sample of dams (Gagnon et al., 2002). Furthermore, by not including World Bank staff in the Secretariat or as Commissioners, the WCD provided the Bank with an excuse not to accept the recommendations (Fujikura and Nakayama, 2009). However, this may have enabled the WCD to remain independent of the Bank.

However, there have also been a number of criticisms of the Report that help explain the refusal of international financial institutions to take them up. First, the WCD made an excessive number of recommendations that were difficult to apply (Fujikura and Nakayama, 2009; Navalawala, 2001). Some of these required the consent of local indigenous populations for dam building. Although some commentators perceive that this is fair, others perceive that it would have allowed a direct veto on building dams in these areas – a provision that many governments are unlikely to accept. Second, the character of the recommendations was not clearly explained in the Report, giving stakeholders unrealistic expectations (Fujikura and Nakayama, 2009; Gagnon et al., 2002). Third, the Report has been criticised as failing to address some of the crucial technical aspects of dam building, such as the implications of dams built in water-rich but fragile mountain environments (Bandyopadhyay, 2002). Fourth, although they took a rights-based approach, the recommendations did not give adequate consideration to the rights of communities to benefit from irrigation water, flood control or electricity (Gagnon et al., 2002). Fifth, the stakeholders who were identified and included in the process did not represent actual patterns of affectedness; in particular, women were not well represented (Dingwerth, 2005). Sixth, Scudder (2005) states that indifference about the extent and seriousness of the impoverishment effects on the tens of millions of displaced people led to a 'business-as-usual' approach, which prevailed because of the powerlessness and marginalised position of these people.

Perhaps what has been most disappointing since the release of the WCD Report is the weakening of the policies of the World Bank and ADB.<sup>1</sup> The World Bank's current policy, OP 4.12 was adopted in 2001 and is considered by some as weaker than its predecessor (OP 4.30) (Downing, 2002; Goodland, 2007). OP 4.12 has been criticised as institutionalising a system that potentially violates human rights (Downing, 2002). Under the previous operational policy, involuntary resettlements were to be treated as development programmes in their own right (ibid), although in practice the World Bank rarely lived up to this prescription of its own policy. Under the revised version, this definition was completely omitted. In July 2009, the ADB's Board approved its revised Safeguard Policy Statement, which represents a major dilution of its involuntary resettlement policy. The revised policy continues to invoke the same flawed economic assumptions that Cernea (2003) and others (Picciotto et al., 2001) have been criticising for years. The ADB policy aims to "enhance or at least restore the livelihoods of all affected peoples in real terms relative to pre-project levels and improve standards of living of the

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<sup>1</sup> It is important to note that policies of the World Bank and ADB and practices of people on the ground are two different things.

affected poor and other vulnerable groups". This weakening occurred in spite of the efforts of safeguards staff who championed policy strengthening. Downing and Scudder (2008) state that this policy will create, not reduce poverty, among those who find themselves in the way of ADB investments.

Based on the unfavourable responses of the World Bank and ADB, it is, therefore, not surprising that proposals for the development of new dams in China appear to reflect little of the WCD Report. Brown et al. (2008) provide details on 12 hydropower bases along China's major rivers, including the Jinsha (upper Changjiang river, upstream of the Three Gorges project). In addition, there are plans for a cascade of dams along the Nu (Salween) river in Yunnan and Tibet, which are described by McDonald (2007); these plans seem to reflect the same kind of developmentalist, environment-neglecting and resettler-marginalising processes as did planning for the Three Gorges project (see McDonald, 2006). The plans for the Nu river are presently on hold, following an intervention by Premier Wen Jiabao, principally for environmental reasons (Shi, 2009).

### **INVOLUNTARY RESETTLEMENT AND IMPOVERISHMENT**

Given that nation states and the key financial institutions that fund dams did not take up the Report or its recommendations about addressing the social impacts of dams, it is not surprising that dam-induced displacement continues to be conducted poorly. Throughout the world there are plenty of current examples of dam-induced displacement and resettlement that continue to be mismanaged. In 2008, Germany, Austria and Switzerland withdrew their export credit guarantees from the Ilisu dam in Turkey due to the failure to properly resettle the 55,000 people forcibly displaced by the project (INDR, 2009). In a 2009 Expert Panel Report involving 42 researchers from Brazil and elsewhere, resettlement planning for the Belo Monte dam was criticised for attempting to bribe the indigenous people with mitigation programmes and compensation instead of giving them an equal voice and respecting their rights, with "extremely grave environmental and social consequences" (Magalhães and Hernandez, 2009). Similarly, there has been an absence of meaningful consultation with the indigenous peoples who will be affected by the proposed Tipaimukh high dam in India (Ranjan Singh, 2009). The Gibe III dam in Ethiopia (under construction since 2006) has come under criticism for inadequate planning and consultation with affected people and for reportedly violating the policies of its major funder, the African Development Bank (AfDB) (Hathaway, 2008). Indeed, there is little to suggest that the impoverishment so comprehensively documented in the 1990s and 2000s in relation to large dams (Horowitz, 1991; Li et al., 2001; McCully, 1996; McDonald, 2006; Scudder, 1996) has changed in the last decade since the publication of the WCD Report.

That impoverishment remains a legacy of displacements from large dams suggests there are fundamental flaws in the way involuntary resettlement is carried out. Mohan Mathur (2006) cites lack of management and inadequate planning as the faults underlying poor resettlement outcomes. However, we argue that for the most part, over the last ten years, improved dam-induced development and displacement have been stifled by a managerial approach to planning by the leading financial institutions, the private sector and sovereign states that looked for technical solutions to a complex process of social transformation.<sup>2</sup> Dwivedi (2002) calls this the "reformist-managerial approach" which

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<sup>2</sup> It is important to distinguish a managerialist approach from management. All projects should be managed well. Undoubtedly, poor management has afflicted development-induced displacement and resettlement, as Mathur states. However, our claim is that planning for dam-induced development and displacement is managerialist – that is, it is focused *only* on managing a given level of displacement. Managerialism takes a reductionist view of social life, and it uses the lens of policy and procedures to simplify the experiences and interests of those displaced. A non-managerialist approach to dam-induced development and displacement would begin by seeking to minimise displacement in the first place (by questioning the need for or finding alternatives to the dam), incorporating affected populations within the planning process and taking a long-term approach that considers not only the physical displacement and remuneration but also the complex social transformation that occurs during settlement.

treats development and therefore displacement as given and in which the main concern is minimising the adverse outcomes of displacement at least cost, rather than by minimising the displacement in the first place. Driven by the economics that legitimises the existence of the project, solutions have been developed internally to minimise costs. The goal of successful resettlement – to improve or at least restore livelihoods and living standards and to enable displaced people to share the benefits of the project – remains a goal rarely achieved. The large financial institutions encouraged and demanded developing nations enact their own resettlement and rehabilitation policies. However, by way of guidance they offer generic Guidelines and tick-box approaches that have provided little inspiration or freedom for national governments to explore locally appropriate initiatives. This managerialist approach fails to consider the political and ethical context within which displacement occurs (ibid).

To reduce the costs of projects, dam-induced displacement and resettlement are conducted hastily, often within the time frame of project construction and subordinate to construction processes (Eriksen, 1999). Support packages consider the quantifiable impacts of involuntary resettlement on the household – counting losses and calculating compensation. Management and mitigation of resettlement 'problems' are emphasised over longer-term planning and integration; there is little consultation. Beyond the initial relocation, project-affected people are left to navigate their own settlement. More recently, livelihood restoration and improvement activities – skills training, job placement in project-related activities, access to small-scale credit and cash loans – have been included in resettlement plans, but are generally implemented after the physical relocation occurs and only supported within a limited transition period.

Reflecting on involuntary resettlement more broadly over the last 30 years, Cernea (2008) wrote: "unevenness and the high frequency of failures keep forced displacement on the global agenda of the development's unsolved pathologies. Hence, the need to rethink the very foundation upon which planning and execution of involuntary resettlement is [*sic*] predicated". Given that the WCD did not inspire the hoped-for change in the policies and practices of the large international financial institutions, this paper explores these foundations and looks to other fields that involve forced migration so as to identify other lessons and means of effecting positive outcomes for displaced people more broadly.

## **FOUNDATIONAL MODELS OF DEVELOPMENT-INDUCED DISPLACEMENT AND RESETTLEMENT**

Scholarship on DIDR has been underpinned by two key models: the Scudder-Colson model developed in 1982 and the Impoverishment Risks and Reconstruction (IRR) model developed in the early 1990s. The Scudder-Colson model was formulated as a frame of reference for the study of populations undergoing forced relocation (Scudder and Colson, 1982). Data were taken from a number of dam resettlements and used to construct a predictive model of how communities, households and individuals respond to resettlement (ibid). The model identifies four stages of relocation: recruitment, transition, preferential development and handing over/incorporation.

The Scudder and Colson model is the earliest attempt at modelling involuntary resettlement.<sup>3</sup> However, it did not escape comment. Partridge (1989) questions the reasoning behind the model and is unconvinced by the assumption that all resettlers are part of an open society and possess open-ended coping mechanisms. He argues that "far from being open-ended coping systems, (communities) are directly controlled by elites at local, provincial and state levels" (Partridge, 1989). Cernea (1997) comments that the resettlers' steady movement through the four stages is the exception rather than the norm. Muggah (2000) extends Cernea's contention: if the resettlers move through such a continuum, it is a complex process of negotiation that is highly politicised.

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<sup>3</sup> In 2005, the Scudder-Colson model was updated to combine Cernea's IRR model (discussed below; see Scudder, 2005 for discussion).

In the early 1990s, Cernea formulated a new model, focused on the nature and content of displacement and resettlement and introducing two pivotal concepts: 'risks' and 'impoverishment': the IRR model. This model deconstructs the multifaceted process of displacement into its principal risks: a) landlessness – the loss of land (the main foundation on which people's livelihoods are constructed); b) joblessness – loss of wage employment; c) homelessness – loss of housing or shelter; d) marginalisation – displaced people cannot regain previous social standard of living; e) food insecurity – calorie-protein intake levels are below the minimum necessary for normal growth and work; f) increased morbidity and mortality – serious declines in health and even death; g) loss of access to common property resources – loss of property assets that belong to relocated communities (forested lands, water bodies, grazing lands, burial grounds); and h) community disarticulation – disruption of social fabric (social organisation, interpersonal ties, kinship groups and informal networks) (Cernea, 1997).

The model captures the socio-economic content of both the displacement event and the reconstruction of livelihoods (*ibid*). Practitioners and researchers can use the model as 1) a diagnostic tool – it diagnoses the recurrent pathologies of forced displacement; 2) a predictive tool – it provides warning about the adverse effects before the displacement occurs; 3) a problem-resolution tool – it is oriented towards action; and 4) a research guidance tool – it can be used as a conceptual framework for hypothesis formation (*ibid*).

The IRR model is arguably the most influential contribution to contemporary resettlement studies. This is perhaps best reflected in its uptake by the WCD. The IRR model was incorporated and used by the WCD to link the impacts of displacement with human rights. In particular, the recommendation that decisions on dams should take place within a framework that recognises the rights and the risks to all stakeholders has been regarded as shifting the dams debate onto a new plane (UNEP, 2001). It was based on this approach that the WCD developed its Strategic Priorities and the Guidelines.

The IRR model has also stimulated broad discussion and suggestions for additions and expansions of the basic model. For example, Muggah (2000) notes that by concentrating on the collective risks of impoverishment, the model fails to highlight both the vulnerabilities and capabilities of those displaced. Others have commented that the model is an incomplete representation of the resettlement experience. Mahapatra (1999) suggests that the IRR model be expanded to include education loss as another major impoverishment risk. Similarly, Mohan Mathur (1998) recommends that loss of access to basic public services be added to the eight recurrent risks and Horgan (1999) suggests the inclusion of yet another risk – failure to implement. More generally, de Wet (2001) concludes that the model's assumption that resettlement problems can be erased by improvements in planning is overly optimistic. He advocates recognising the complexities inherent in the resettlement process (*ibid*).

Recently, Downing and Garcia-Downing (2009) developed a theory about the psycho-socio-cultural disruptions of involuntary resettlement and ways to mitigate them. This theory concentrates on the disruption to social life and the chaotic implications for culture which shifts from routine to dissonance. The authors' aim is to limit dissonance and to facilitate the emergence of a new routine culture.

### **LOOKING FOR LESSONS FROM OTHER FIELDS**

The contributions of the Scudder/Colson and Cernea models and the Downing/Garcia-Downing theory cannot be overstated. However, there is much to be gained from broader studies of forced migration that have had a direct relationship to public policy and even the design of service models. This section unpacks the relationship between DIDR and forced migration studies and draws lessons to complement the scholarly foundations of DIDR.

The research on displacements caused by conflict, development and disasters has been criticised as occurring in isolated research communities. Cernea (1990) calls this "an unjustified dichotomy" that disconnects the study of refugees from the study of persons displaced by development projects such as large dams. Twenty years ago, Cernea (1990) argued that this dichotomy must be overcome and that both bodies of literature stand to gain conceptually and methodologically by speaking to each other. A

number of scholars have attempted to bridge this divide – Cernea (1990), Muggah (2000, 2003), and Voutira and Harrell-Bond (1995). Cernea and Muggah note that there are a number of central distinctions between conflict-induced displacement and DIDR: the causal agents of displacement (Cernea, 1990); the immediacy of conflict-induced displacement compared to the protracted nature of DIDR; and the randomness of conflict-induced displacement, compared to the targeted nature of DIDR (Muggah 2000). They also argue that there are similarities, for example, the consequences (including abrupt destitution, residence loss, loss of economic self-sufficiency, cultural separation, identity deprivation, and socio-psychological stress) (Cernea, 1990); the risks of impoverishment by DIDR (landlessness, joblessness, homelessness, marginalisation, food insecurity, increased morbidity and mortality, loss of access to common property resources, and social disarticulation) are essentially the same in conflict-caused displacement (Cernea, 1997; Muggah, 2003); and the policy arenas (their political economy and their institutional and bureaucratic logic). Finally, both conflict-induced displacement and DIDR are deliberate and represent explicit violations of human rights (Muggah, 2000).

Studies by Cernea and Muggah are unique and invaluable. However, they are largely focused on the displacement event and on emergency responses to refugees displaced by conflict, respectively. There is a dearth of literature comparing the experience of settlement in a third country of refugees and asylum seekers, and displacement through environmental change and DIDR. The longer-term processes of settlement and integration (in addition to displacement and resettlement) and the adaptation and resilience of communities are central to refugee studies and environmental change. There is much that studies of DIDR can gain from such approaches as it is during settlement that a place becomes home – a place of belonging, where displaced people lay down roots and build their futures. The literature examining refugee settlement provides thick descriptions and analytical frameworks for conceptualising and providing for longer-term integration into the 'host community'; we now explore the relevance of this literature to, and its lessons for, DIDR.

Resettlement to a third country is one of three durable solutions for refugees displaced by conflict of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and is only used when a refugee cannot return home or be reintegrated into the local community. Through the formal UNHCR resettlement programme, the United States, Australia and Canada resettle the largest number of refugees. This paper will not describe the specifics of their resettlement programmes, but will instead consider the concepts underpinning such programmes as a point of comparison and learning for dam-induced displacement and resettlement.

Refugee resettlement is an organised programme involving selection by a country of first asylum, transport and scheduled arrival in a country of settlement (Valtonen, 2004). Likewise, dam-induced displacement and resettlement are generally undertaken using not only a resettlement plan that includes arrangements for the displacement event but also plans for house building and livelihood reconstruction. However, in the case of refugee resettlement, after the initial resettlement event, the focus of government and service providers quickly shifts to facilitating settlement. This is a longer-term process supported by a range of initiatives that include initial financial assistance; private sponsorship support; education to enhance employment opportunities, assistance in securing housing and other social support and community-building services; and trauma counselling (if relevant). By contrast, DIDR usually merely includes financial assistance in the form of compensation and – depending on the policy framework under which the proponent falls – support with housing construction and livelihood restoration. This is where planning and support end for DIDR.

Refugee settlement does not aim for a bare minimum, but instead works towards building a socially integrated and stable community. The settlement process is conceptualised as a continuum extending from resettlement to integration.<sup>4</sup> Integration is defined as "an ongoing quest for emancipation, parity, interdependence and cultural integrity" (ibid). It is a multi-directional process involving a range of

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<sup>4</sup> The term integration is not to be confused with the concept of 'assimilation', in which the minority group is expected to adopt the customs and attitudes of the majority group.

actors, agencies, logistics and rationalities (Sigona, 2005). Governments and service providers take a holistic approach that considers the entire process of social transformation, human agency, community engagement and human development. It is not just a matter of ensuring that, on average, displaced people are not impoverished.

By contrast, DIDR often sets a bare minimum standard. The involuntary resettlement policies of large financial institutions, which guide the resettlement of persons displaced by the dams they finance, have evolved within the last 30 years into their current forms.<sup>5</sup> The common policy objective is to improve or at least restore livelihoods and standards of living to pre-displacement levels. Improvement of livelihoods is seldom achieved and so the Banks provide a minimum standard in order that their client governments can meet their borrowing obligations (that is, in order that there are eligible projects for the Banks to finance). However, impoverishment is the inevitable outcome of setting the bar so low. As the WCD rightly noted, large dams are constructed in areas inhabited by people who are already poor, are often minorities and are too often marginalised from broader society. Large dams will have been proposed long before construction begins and during this time governments and residents stop investing in the region that might subsequently be flooded. The living standards of project-affected people are therefore already below what they would have been had the project never been proposed. By endeavouring merely to restore living standards, the project proponent is merely committed to reinstating the level of impoverishment that existed before displacement.

In its Report, the WCD emphasised the social impacts of large dams, namely "that the negative effects were frequently neither adequately assessed nor accounted for and that the range of these impacts is substantial including on the lives, livelihoods and health of the affected communities dependent on the riverine environment" (WCD, 2000). These findings were in addition to the already thick accounts of social disarticulation documented by anthropologists and sociologists (Fearnside, 1999; Rosenberg et al., 1995; Vanden Berg, 1999). Time and time again DIDR has been shown to unravel the underlying social fabric of communities (Downing, 1996). Resettlement plans and associated initiatives do not give adequate consideration to the social impacts of dam-induced displacement and resettlement. The only form of social disarticulation recognised by large financial institutions such as the World Bank is the risk to the sense of community, which leads to the policy to preserve and respect resettlers' preferences with respect to relocating in pre-existing communities and groups. This ignores the broader pattern of social transformation that underpins settlement after displacement. It ignores the cultural dimensions of the settlement locale and of the encounter between original residents and resettlers. In general, the policies of the large financial institutions are heavily biased towards economic impacts and are less concerned with the social domains of resettlement. It is assumed that social impoverishment, like other forms of impoverishment, can be mitigated through re-establishing disrupted productive activities (ibid).

## DOMAINS OF INTEGRATION

Dam-induced displacement and resettlement are about the client government mitigating the impacts directly associated with its project on a least-cost basis. The focus is on the household. The sustainable settlement of communities beyond livelihood reconstruction and the concept of integration are not given much weight. Access to employment and housing are conditions of the policies of large financial institutions; however, it is a case of providing 'access to' rather than 'achievement of' these markers and means. With respect to housing, all too often the compensation provided does not meet replacement value and displaced people must meet the shortfall (Cernea, 1996; McDonald, 2006). Large financial institutions require that project-affected people are beneficiaries of the dam and that livelihood restoration and improvement initiatives are provided. However, providing opportunity does

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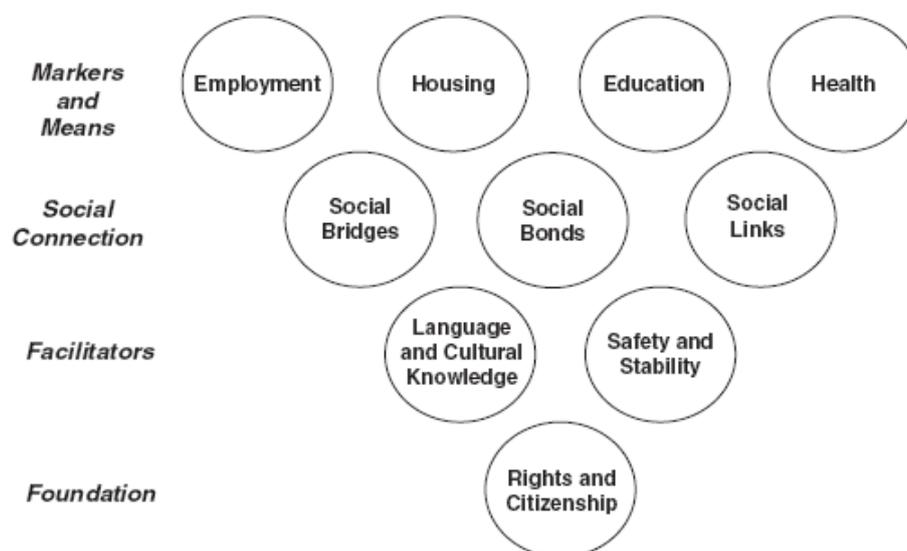
<sup>5</sup> Some are older than others. For example, the World Bank policy was first introduced in 1980 whereas the first ADB policy was instated in 1995.

not guarantee its productive use (McDonald et al., 2008). The domains of education and health; citizenship rights; and social connection related to language, culture and the local environment are not addressed.

By contrast, the literature and policy discourse of refugee settlement pay particular attention to the social domains of displacement and settlement through what Colic-Piesker and Tilbury (2003) term the *social inclusion approach*. This focuses on social adaptation and integration, emphasising the empowerment of refugees and their communities, their ability to actively approach acculturation and integration, as well as opportunities for social inclusion into the wider society (ibid). Such considerations are closely aligned with national rhetoric such as nation building, national security and social cohesion. What facilitates refugee settlement has received a great deal of attention from academics, settlement practitioners and government. The UNHCR has even published a resettlement handbook to guide refugee reception and integration (UNHCR, 2002).

Despite the great deal of discussion on facilitating settlement, it was only recently that an attempt has been made to map what constitutes 'successful' settlement. Ager and Strang (2008) devised a conceptual framework to evaluate the degree to which programmes in the United Kingdom effectively integrated refugees. It illustrates the centrality of the social domains in approaches to refugee settlement (figure 1). According to the framework, four overall themes describe the domains of integration: achievement and access across the sectors of employment, housing, education and health; assumptions and practice regarding citizenship and rights; processes of social connection within and between groups within the community; and structural barriers to such disconnections related to language, culture and the local environment (ibid). This paper will not critique the framework but instead explore how it could be used to expand the research and policy agenda for DIDR to better reflect the complex processes underlying the long-term sustainability of communities displaced by large dams.

Figure 1. A conceptual framework defining core domains of integration (Ager and Strang, 2008).



### Rights and citizenship

The foundation of the framework of Ager and Strang (2008) is *rights and citizenship*; that is, the extent to which refugees are provided with the basis for full and equal engagement within society. According to the framework, measures of this domain could include "mean length of asylum procedures for successful claimants", "utilization of legal and welfare benefits advice", "reported sense of equity in

access to services and entitlements" and "rates of application for citizenship of refugees". Clearly, these measures reflect the specific circumstances faced by refugees seeking asylum in a third country. Unlike refugees resettling across international borders, people displaced by large dams usually remain within their country of citizenship. Nonetheless, ensuring full and equal engagement within society should underpin DIDR. This is supported by the first of WCD Strategic Priorities for decision-making, *gaining public acceptance*. According to the WCD this includes recognition of rights and assessment of risks as the basis for identifying and including stakeholders in decision-making; access to information, legal and other support to enable informed decision-making; demonstrable public acceptance through agreements negotiated in an open and transparent process and decisions affecting indigenous and tribal peoples are guided by free, prior and informed consent (WCD, 2000).

In a practical sense, the dam proponent should attempt to provide full and equal engagement through its consultation process. However, in India and Latin America, consultation is found to be either absent (Mahapatra, 1999) or limited to a small group of local authorities and state agencies (Mejía, 1999). There has been no consultation with the people who would be displaced if any of the Nu river dams are constructed in China (McDonald, 2007). Nevertheless, the WCD observed that consultation processes have improved in some places. For example, in Uganda the canals associated with a hydropower project were relocated after consultation with communities (WCD, 2000). Despite these improvements, Koenig (2006) states that consultation and the consideration of views of project-affected people in planning need to be more regular.

Like Koenig (2006), we argue that full and equal engagement with society should go beyond consultation, by drawing on the central elements of democratisation. In this sense we recognise two key rights – the right to contestation and the right to participation. The former requires that governments uphold the rights of their nationals through their legal structures; for example, ensuring timely processing of compensation claims and recognition of land rights (even when certification of legal land tenure cannot be shown) and an accessible and fair avenue of grievance redress. The latter should include equal representation within political structures and capacity building to ensure meaningful participation of representatives. Regional and national governments can then devolve decision-making to the local level, particularly with regard to matters that have a direct impact on the community.

### **Removing barriers to integration**

Ager et al. (2008) identify two "facilitators" which remove barriers to integration: language/cultural knowledge and safety/stability. They also recognise the important role of social connections in driving the process of integration at the local level. In accordance with the work of Putnam (1993) and Woolcock (1998) social connections are observed in three tranches – social bridges (with other communities), social bonds (with family and co-ethnic, co-national and co-religious people) and social links (with structures of the state).

In the case of dam-induced displacement and resettlement, governments and proponents endeavour to relocate people as near to their homelands as possible. The cultural and language differences between the displaced people and hosts are not as apparent as in refugee resettlement, which generally takes place across international borders. Nonetheless, displacement does destroy or disrupt attachments to place (Jing, 1999; Rogers and Wang, 2006). The environment can be unfamiliar and although hosts may be fellow nationals, they may be of a different ethnicity and observe a different religion and culture. If long-distance resettlement is required, the language or at least the dialect of the resettlement area may also be different (as has been the case for resettlers from Three Gorges to Chongming Island in Shanghai). For displaced people to settle and take root in the new locale, there is a need to traverse these barriers by building social connections.

### Building social connections

Critical to rebuilding social connections is the re-imagining of community by both the displaced people and the 'hosts'. Important to building social links and social bridges is for the host government policies to include the opportunity for naturalisation (Kibreab, 1999). This builds on the rights and citizenship domain and solidifies democratisation. At the village level this would include building shared institutions and structures to ensure equal agency of displaced and 'host' people in local decision-making. Also fundamental to community building is that host populations accept or 'imagine' refugees as their own (ibid). In the case of dam-induced displacement and resettlement this means that a significant shift must take place whereby the displaced person is no longer considered the 'hosted' and the existing community the 'host'. Resettlers are a permanent part of the community in the new locale and not transitory guests. Community development initiatives which provide equal opportunities and equitable investment to the community as a whole would avert instability and contribute to the imagining of a shared future. Similarly, the displaced people must be willing to be naturalised or to 'imagine' themselves as part of host societies (ibid). By recognising loss and reconstructing memory as a social process (Jing, 1999), and by ensuring continuity of relationships through close attention to planning of housing locations and supporting community-building activities, social bonds and bridges can be strengthened in the new locale and displaced people can begin to imagine themselves as part of their new community. Settlement can only be facilitated through a 'whole of community approach' that ensures structural factors are sufficiently favourable to enable displaced people to work towards self-sufficiency.

### Stressors

In addition to the social inclusion approach to refugee settlement, there is what Colic-Piesker and Tilbury (2003) term the *medical approach*. This approach views psychopathology as an inevitable consequence of the experience of forced migration, which must be dealt with before other more practical concerns can be addressed (ibid). The refugee experience is considered to cause post-traumatic stress disorder, which is addressed by Western mental health interventions (ibid). However, this approach has been criticised as pathologising refugees as 'mentally ill' or 'traumatised', which in turn creates passivity and learned helplessness (ibid; Gozdzia, 2004; Harrell-Bond, 1999; Watters, 2001). Nonetheless, the stressors that can potentially undermine settlement are important.

Like refugees fleeing conflict, people displaced by large dams experience significant losses – the loss of homelands, assets, identity, belonging, agency and self-sufficiency. Dam-induced displacement can be associated with the use of force and violence (Morvaridi, 2004), as at the Three Gorges (Shi, 2006). The experience of displacement and its associated losses are widely recognised as significant sources of stress. Scudder and Colson (1982) observe this stress as multidimensional, with physiological, socio-cultural and psychological ramifications. Physiological stress refers to the various health impacts of dam-induced displacement and resettlement – communicable diseases, water-borne diseases, vector-borne diseases and malnutrition (Scudder, 2005). Socio-cultural stress is a result of the economic, political and cultural effects of relocation (Oliver-Smith, 2005). Dam-displacement disperses or breaks up communities and neighbourhoods and their mutual support networks (Van Wicklin III, 1999). Psychological stress manifests as trauma, guilt, grief and anxiety (Oliver-Smith, 2005). Scudder (2005) identifies two aspects: first, "grieving for a lost home syndrome" whereby the loss of community in the widest sense and the surrounding landscape can trigger a psychological downturn; and second, "anxiety over the future". However, few researchers have documented the psychological impacts of dam-induced displacement and resettlement. Those who have, find displacement to be a predictor of mental stress; social and psychological resources are indirectly weakened (Hwang et al., 2007).

Although researchers widely recognise the stressors caused by DIDR, large financial institutions do not include guidelines for their client governments to mitigate such impacts. The multidimensional stressors are largely ignored. Client governments are expected to carefully prepare pre-project

demographic and socio-economic surveys. However, the physiological impacts are treated cursorily, as health-impact assessments are uncommon (Lerer et al., 1999; Scudder, 2005). According to Sleight and Jackson (2001), the WCD did not adequately address health impacts either. Measures to alleviate socio-cultural and psychological stressors are reliant on specific guidelines that require the client government to respect resettlers' preferences with regard to relocating in pre-existing communities or groups (World Bank, 2001), to undertake meaningful consultation which incorporates the views of affected people (ADB, 2009; World Bank, 2001), consider physical and cultural resources (World Bank, 2001; ADB, 2009) and prepare additional plans and measures with regard to indigenous peoples (World Bank, 2001; ADB, 2009).

Traditionally, the stressors associated with refugee resettlement have been addressed through specialised trauma services that counsel those who have survived torture and trauma. However, there has been a recent shift towards community-driven development (CDD) methodologies which build capacity within refugee communities by integrating and valuing their knowledge within programmes and service responses. They unlock the resources within communities that have been underutilised (for instance, due to marginalisation) and transform human, social and cultural capital rather than attempting to restore past structures (Ager et al., 2005). At its core is the notion that displaced communities are resilient and are able to grow and increase competence within an unfamiliar environment.

CDD responses that have been rolled out in resettlement countries support and empower communities. For example, the 'one life: two cultures' project run by the Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture in Australia nurtured dialogue between cultures in a deliberate attempt to support people who felt culturally and socially marginalised (Mitchell et al., 2006). This reduced levels of anxiety and provided a sense of control over lives where previously there had been uncertainty and threat (ibid). Similarly, a project in Yemen among Somali refugees assisted them to plan and implement activities to raise awareness of self-reliance and self-sufficiency (COMSICCA, 2005). Activities included information-sharing about education and income generation, skills development in areas where there were opportunities to generate income and also traditional counselling (ibid). These approaches feed back into the model of integration of Ager and Strang (2008). In particular, community-development responses restore a sense of safety and agency; strengthen connections within communities; and rebuild the attachments so vital to the recovery of people whose community bonds have been destroyed (Mitchell et al., 2006).

Adopting the first principles of CDD as a means of addressing the multiple stressors associated with dam-induced displacement should not be difficult for large financial institutions. Most of the World Bank's operational work in East Asia and the Pacific is focused on CDD projects (World Bank, 2009). Although on a more limited scale, ADB has also been involved in a range of CDD projects (ADB, 2006). Despite some shortfalls in such projects (including capture by elites, mis-targeting, lack of institutionalisation and sustainability), these projects enhance participation and give control over decisions and development resources to local groups (ibid). Moreover, a CDD approach to alleviating stressors would also address the practical aims of restoring and improving livelihoods and would provide a basis for building long-term sustainability. This is in line with the argument of Colic-Piesker and Tilbury (2003) that social inclusion is necessary for healing the traumas of forced migration.

## **COMMUNITY ADAPTATION TO ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE**

Research on, and the practice, of DIDR also generally ignore what is known about displacement in response to environmental change. Though presently there is a lot of debate on the potential for climate change to force people to migrate, there is in fact a long history of population displacements on account of environmental changes more generally. The literature about such displacements offers both a broad range of concepts for the analysis of displacement and an understanding of movement as

simply one element in a range of potential responses to environmental change (Barnett and Webber, 2010).

The fundamental concepts of resilience (the capacity to cope with, adapt to and shape change) and vulnerability (susceptibility to harm from stresses combined with inability to adapt) underpin much research on adaptation to environmental change (Adger, 2006; Folke, 2006). These are applied at a variety of scales (individual, household and community are relevant to resettlement) to conclude that vulnerability is a different thing at household and community levels, and that differences in levels of vulnerability to change are extremely local, and depend on the interaction of stresses, the effects of land tenure, the implications of general social and economic policies and such personal circumstances as wealth and age (Hutton and Haque, 2004; Kothari, 2003; McLeman and Smit, 2006). By contrast, in such very large-scale dam-induced resettlements as at Three Gorges, a uniform national policy was offered to counties as a framework for resettlement, which then treated households uniformly and made no provision for the effects of changes in other policies that would affect the resettled people and communities.

The recognition of different scales of analysis – individual, household and community – also enables researchers on environment-induced displacement to identify the manner in which individuals may differentiate their strategies in order to build household and community resilience. The most obvious example of this is labour migration. In DIDR the practice of long-distance displacement – as at Three Gorges – has been to move whole households together and displace them in groups of two or three households in each host community. By contrast, the adaptive capacity of communities and households is enhanced by the long-distance migration of one or two individuals from each household (Barnett and Webber, 2010), in particular through the flow of remittances (Erza, 2001) and investment in public goods (Gammeltoft, 2003; Sørensen et al., 2003). Migration of individuals expands the social networks of households and communities, reducing the risks associated with DIDR. Migration also boosts incentives to pursue education, which is a determinant of success in moving, and so migration increases the educational attainment of sending populations (Katseli et al., 2006). Migration also reduces per capita demands on resources in the host community. It can increase the acquisition of new technologies (Kothari, 2003), and migrants are often early adopters of information communication technology (de Haas, 2005). In other words, there is scope for DIDR to encourage and facilitate long-distance migration or migration to large cities by individuals as a means of social and economic development within households and communities. Though policies for DIDR emphasise resettlement locally, in fact careful and coordinated policies can minimise the potential costs and maximise the potential benefits of such long-distance migration by individuals (Barnett and Webber, 2010).

Researchers on, and advocates for, people displaced by environmental events also reinforce some of the arguments made in refugee studies. For example, the specific nature of adaptation responses in any given location depends critically on the social and ecological systems in which people live, and the needs, rights, and values of people and communities (Barnett, 2008). Importantly, adaptation must accommodate people's rights and aspirations for the future (Adger et al., 2003). Adaptation responses are not universal, and must be determined through participatory processes, for which there are numerous guides (Few et al., 2007; Lim and Spanger-Siegfried, 2004; UNFCCC, 2005). Furthermore, the ingredients required for successful re-establishment of livelihoods differ by location and group. In many cases, secure access to land is critical (Jacobsen, 2002). Finally, the benefits to displaced people are maximised when they are entitled to the same freedom and opportunities as people in their host community. Interventions will be most successful when they support migrants to establish new livelihood strategies. When international agencies are involved in such efforts, partnering with organisations that understand the local social, economic and environmental context is critical (*ibid*). Local hosts need to be encouraged to see the benefits of new migrants, and to provide them with the same rights and freedom as local people. Services that can help migrants and host communities develop include short-term job creation to assist with immediate needs, micro-finance, skills training, health care, and agricultural extension (Hill et al., 2006).

Perhaps the most important lesson from studies of adaptation to environmental change is the conclusion that people be allowed to decide whether to leave their threatened home or to stay. The principle that people should be free to exercise the right to stay home in their customary lands is as important as the principle that they should be free to move if they so choose (Bacon, 2008). In this sense, DIDR really ought to be a last option in development policy; this means that dams must also be thought of as a last option. The principle that people should be free to choose reflects a broader underlying assumption in studies of adaptation to environmental change: people are not passive actors to whom things happen; rather they bring skills and capabilities that assist them to navigate changes and to participate in the processes of adaptation. Moreover, those skills and capacities are different from one person, one household or one community to another.

## CONCLUSION

Arguably, the three critical elements of the WCD Report are its emphasis on participation, recognition of entitlements and a broad analysis of options. For a variety of reasons, the Report has not led to improved practice in addressing the social impacts of dams within international banks or national agencies. Yet the Report and the subsequent debate about, and practice of, DIDR reflect an impoverished view of the standards that *resettlement* should meet. This impoverishment reflects, in large part, a disregard for similar work on displacement and resettlement within the fields of refugee studies and adaptation to environmental change, which sets a higher goal for resettled people to achieve full integration with their new host community and improved standards of living. This paper has sought to initiate some cross-fertilisation of these fields.

Studies of refugee settlement have approached resettlement from a broad standpoint. The size of refugee intakes, the expenditure on resettlement and the income of migrants all remain important. However, when resettling people from refugee backgrounds it is an inclusive and socially integrated community that is the aim. For example, in refugee settlement studies, resettlement is viewed as the initial move, and settlement as the long-term process through which people need to be supported both financially and socially. This is in contrast with the practices in many dam-induced displacements, which are mostly focused on the displacement, with subsequent settlement remaining absent from policy or practice. Again, within dam-induced resettlement, the sociological aspects of resettlement, such as integration and building social networks, are largely ignored in the design and practices of most development projects that cause displacement, whereas in the facilitation of refugee settlement, the social aspects of integration are fundamental. Hosts sit outside the resettlement process; however, they are expected to accept the newcomers without question. There is no consideration that the hosts are an important aspect of the success of the resettlement and longer-term settlement, or that they are active participants in the process. Finally, dam-induced resettlement generally ignores the multiple stressors of being removed from ancestral lands in the design and practice of resettlement. By contrast, in refugee settlement, this issue is often the main focus and it plays an important role in studies of adaptation to environmental change in small island states.

As well as reinforcing some of the arguments made in refugee studies, the emerging literature on adaptation to environmental change offers additional insights. These include the precise concepts of resilience and vulnerability, which are applied at a variety of social scales. One application of these ideas occurs in analyses of the links between individual strategies of adaptation, such as migration, and the resilience of households and communities. Another occurs in analyses of the need to understand strategies of adaptation as local processes, organised in a participatory manner. Most fundamentally, though, the emerging literature on adaptation to environmental change could further broaden DIDR's conceptualisation of displaced people as active participants in a process to create their future rather than merely (undifferentiated) victims.

As Cernea (2003) has argued, a focus on compensation is one of the reasons for the failure of DIDR. We have attempted to provide in this paper both an analysis of some of the failings of present

approaches to dam-induced displacement amongst the large financial institutions and a menu of approaches that have been used in other categories and types of displacement to provide richer and more diverse options for people who are displaced. Such approaches would set higher standards that DIDR should aim for – and, hopefully, reach.

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