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Environmental Opportunities and challenges

Constructing commitment and acknowledging human experiences

Edited by
Matthijs Prins, Hans Wamelink, Bob Giddings, Kihong Ku and Manon Feenstra

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Environmental Opportunities and challenges

Constructing Commitment and Acknowledging Human Experiences

Building community resilience within involuntary displacements by enhancing collaboration between host and displaced communities: A literature synthesis

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Abstract

Improving resilience through empowerment of communities is becoming a much sought after strategy for community level disaster preparedness. Community resilience is the ability of a community to bounce back to its operational equilibrium after a hazardous stress. This ability builds up over time based on many underlying factors such as community's age distribution, food supply, livelihood, population stability, indigenous knowledge, and communication capacity. Often, these factors make communities different from one another and define their level of resilience to disasters and other hazardous stresses.

Involuntary relocations alter the equilibrium position and stress absorbing ability of a community by merging two (or more) communities with different resilience equilibrium positions. In this case, resilience of these communities towards potential disasters could be disturbed. Therefore, when involuntary relocations are to be exercised, maximising the potential and collaboration of the communities is essential to enhance the overall resilience of the communities involved. Accordingly, this paper aims to develop a conceptual model to integrate possible mechanisms to build community resilience within involuntary settlements by enhancing collaboration between host community and displaced community.

This study was conducted through a comprehensive literature review to investigate the research question: 'How involuntary settlements alter the resilience of the communities in Sri Lanka?' It has been found that the operational equilibrium of host and displaced communities would make a shift immediately after relocation, because introduction of a new community will alter the context of all the influencing factors of a community's resilience. That shift would also be higher for the displaced community compared to the host community.

Consequently, the prospects for the people who have been expelled from their habitual residence are often uncertain as they are forced to live in a place among people with different culture and behaviour. Furthermore, economic status, social settings and psychological aspects could also act as stress factors that affect the resilience of the community. It is challenging to build community resilience between two communities, which are different from one another. Besides, time and financial constraints often act as barriers for resettlement planners to consider such aspects during relocation planning. Therefore, an integrated approach to build community resilience needs to be incorporated in the policy design and decision-making of relocations by drawing possible linking mechanisms that facilitate collaboration between communities

Keywords: Community resilience, Involuntary relocations, Host communities, Displacements

1. Introduction

The rate of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) who have been displaced within national boundaries is increasing considerably without drawing much attention of the world. International Organization for Migration (2004) defines IDPs as 'persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border' (pp.32-33). Major reasons for the internal displacements are conflicts, consequences of change in the land usage, and natural disasters (Betts, 2009). People without the ability and/or wealth to move away from any of these three situations are known as trapped population (Foresight, 2011). The government, relevant local authorities, or non-governmental organisations relocate this trapped population to safeguard against the negative effects of disruptive events. In contrast to the voluntary displacements, these involuntary relocations are not self-selected or self-motivated (Cao, Hwang, & Xi, 2012).

Generally, involuntary relocations aim at improving the lives of the trapped population. Also, 'Guiding principles on internal displacements' (United Nations, 2004) states in its Principle 7 that, the authorities undertaking such displacement shall ensure, to the greatest practicable extent, that proper accommodation is provided to the displaced persons, that such displacements are effected in satisfactory conditions of safety, nutrition, health and hygiene, and that members of the same family are not separated. However, involuntary relocation often acts only as a temporary relief and fails to ensure IDPs' long-term modes of livelihood (Perera, Weerasoori, & Karunarathne, 2012).

Immediate consequences of involuntary resettlements have an effect on both displaced community and host community. Host community is defined herein as the community in whose neighbourhood the displaced people are relocated (Kabra & Mahalwal, 2014). For example, social disintegration and severe impoverishment are some of the immediate consequences of involuntary displacements, which affect the economy of the region (Cernea, 1995). According to Cernea (1995), IDPs have higher possibilities to experience eight negative consequences: landlessness, joblessness, homelessness, marginalisation, food insecurity, increased morbidity, social disintegration, and loss of access to common resources (Xi, Hwang, & Drentea, 2013). Therefore, the host community often blames the IDPs for their economic losses.

Further, cultural, regional, and ethnic differences between host and displaced communities often trigger discrimination and racism in their day-to-day life (International Committee of the Red Cross, 2011). Consequently, the prospects for the people who have been expelled from their habitual residence are often uncertain as they are forced to live in a place among people with different, culture and behaviour (Berry, 1997). Furthermore, economic status, social settings and psychological aspects could also act as stressors that affect the resilience of the community.

Every community has a level of resilience towards disasters. In general, resilience refers to the ability of a system to return to its equilibrium position after a disturbance (Proag, 2014). The term community resilience refers to the capacity and the ability of a community to return to its equilibrium position using community resources after unexpected disruptive events (Magis, 2010). Resilience of a community builds up based on many underlying factors over the time. Those factors include the community's age distribution, food supply, livelihood, housing stock construction quality, population stability, indigenous knowledge, infrastructure availability, and communication capacity (Cutter, Ash, & Emrich, 2014). These factors make communities different from one another.

Involuntary relocations make a community to displace involuntarily and another community to host involuntarily (Kabra & Mahalwal, 2014). Operational equilibrium of these communities would make a shift immediately after relocation, because introduction of a new community will alter the context of all the influencing factors of a community's resilience. Also, that shift would be higher for the displaced community compared to the host community. It is challenging to build community resilience between two communities, which are different from one another. Besides, time and financial constrains often act as barriers for resettlement planners to consider such aspects during relocation planning (Perera et al., 2012).

Sri Lanka is a country that experienced all types of displacements (Das, 2008). According to the Ministry of Resettlement Reconstruction and Hindu Religious Affairs Sri Lanka (2015), around 45,000 IDPs are yet to be resettled in Sri Lanka. On the contrary, Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), an international non-governmental humanitarian organisation stated that, as of 2015 around 73,700 IDPs remain to be resettled in Sri Lanka. These figures show that a considerable number of IDPs are yet to be resettled in Sri Lanka, although the actual number has not been established owing to practical difficulties.

A number of case studies in Sri Lanka (Das, 2008; Manatunge, Herath, Takesada, & Miyata, 2009; Perera et al., 2012; Takesada, Nakayama, & Fujikura, 2009) also provided evidence to the effect that the incompatible community integration would affect the community resilience and slow the rate of recovery process. Therefore, the importance of collaboration between the host and displaced communities needs to be drawn upon in addressing the economic, social, cultural and psychological consequences of involuntary relocation projects in Sri Lanka. Furthermore, an integrated approach to community resilience by drawing mechanisms to facilitate collaboration between communities needs to be incorporated in the policy design and decision-making.

2. Literature Review

This study was conducted through a comprehensive literature review to investigate the research question: 'How involuntary settlements alter the resilience of the communities in Sri Lanka?' Peer reviewed journal papers, official reports, conference proceedings, and books have been referred in order to gather the data for this study. Collected data were analysed and synthesised to draw conclusions.

2.1 Disaster-induced relocations

Disasters have been defined in different ways depending on the contexts and disciplines. Combs, Quenemoen, Parrish, and Davis (1999) defined disasters as 'a time and place specific event that originates in the natural environment and the resulting disruption of the usual functions and behaviours of the exposed human population' (p.1125). However, this definition doesn't reflect the severity of the event. United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR, 2009) defines disasters as 'a serious disruption of the functioning of a community or a society involving widespread human, material, economic or environmental losses and impacts, which exceeds the ability of the affected community or society to cope using its own resources' (p.9). This definition represents the same as Comb's with a special emphasis on severity of the event. Drawing from the above definitions, disasters can be defined as disruptions that put the community in need for external assistance for recovery. For the purpose of this research, UNISDR's definition has been adopted as the definition for disasters.

EM-DAT: The International Disaster Database (2015) classifies the disasters based on its technicality as natural disasters and technological disasters. It further subdivides the natural disasters into geophysical, meteorological, hydrological, climatological, biological, and extra-terrestrial. As well as, it subdivides the technological disasters into industrial accidents, transport accidents, and miscellaneous accidents. However, an older classification by Robinson (2003) suites this article more as it is classified based on the time taken for the displacement. Robinson (2003) classifies the disasters into two main types: natural disasters and man-made disasters. It can be further divided into five subcategories (Refer Table 1). Among these types, sudden impact disasters and complex emergencies trigger immediate displacements, whereas the other types of disasters give time for a planned relocation. These categories need to be handled differently, because the people who have been displaced due to sudden impact disasters and complex emergencies might live in temporary shelters soon after the disasters. Therefore, government needs to pay immediate attention in order to reduce their vulnerability and to ensure their wellbeing.

Table 1: Disaster types that induce displacements

Natural Disasters	Sudden impact disasters	Flood, earthquake, storm, volcanic eruption, landslide, tsunami
	Slow-onset disasters	Drought, famine, environmental degradation, deforestation, pest infestation, desertification
	Epidemic disasters	Cholera, measles, dysentery, respiratory infections, malaria
Man-made Disasters	Industrial/technological disasters	Activities that lead to pollution, spillage of hazardous materials, explosions, and fires
	Complex emergencies	War, internal conflict, human rights violation

Source: (Robinson, 2003)

Disaster types recommended by Robinson (2003) can be categorised as shown in the Figure 1 depending on the urgency for displacement. Disaster types that are written in the grey box (Figure 1) could trigger immediate displacement or eventual displacement depends on the severity. People who have been displaced because of disasters that trigger immediate displacement would move to temporary shelters. If resettling in the same habitual residence is impossible, relevant authorities relocate them to another location permanently or semi-permanently.
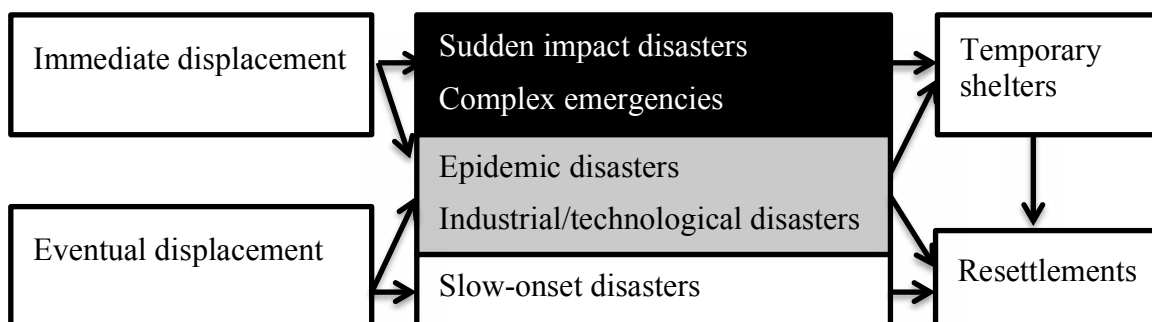

Figure 1: Urgency of displacements and disaster types

However, there are so many challenges associated in planning and implementing relocation programmes. Time is often not sufficient for proactive planning and community consultations, as it requires immediate decisions (Badri, Asgary, Eftekhari, & Levy, 2006). On one hand, living and adopting a new environment is always a challenge for the displaced persons and on the other hand hosting a new community is a challenge for the host population.

2.2 Community Disaster Resilience

Literature on disaster management is intertwined in multi-discipline approach bringing together scholars from different areas (Beggan, 2011). Progressively, the knowledge and practices of disaster resilience have been highlighted in recent past. Community disaster resilience is the ability of a community to bounce back to its operational equilibrium, while retaining its structure and identity, using common resources after an unexpected hazardous stress (Magis, 2010). However, Manyena, O'Brien, O'Keefe, and Rose (2011) argue that, the community will be in the same vulnerable state at which it has already been before the disaster, if the community bounced back to its same operational equilibrium position. Therefore, disaster resilience should be the ability of the community to bounce forward to a better position. Similarly, Aldunce, Beilin, Handmer, and Howden (2014) stated that, bouncing back to the same position is almost impossible, because disasters alter some of the characteristics which determines the equilibrium position of the community. Based on those arguments, community disaster resilience can be defined as the ability of a community to bounce forward and adopt changes within the possible minimum time using common resources while returning its essential attributes after a hazardous stress.

Generally, resilience is a system which build upon several subsystems (Holling, 1973). Similarly, disaster resilience of a community also builds up over time based on several

subsystems such as social, economic, institutional, infrastructure and built environment, and community capital (Cutter, Burton, & Emrich, 2010). Researchers have identified four dimensions (4Rs) of resilience that build the properties of subsystems' resilience (Bruneau et al., 2003; Cimellaro, Reinhorn, & Bruneau, 2010). They are Rapidity, Robustness, Redundancy, and Resourcefulness (Refer Table 2).

Table 2: Four dimensions of resilience

Rapidity	*The capacity to meet priorities and achieve goals in a timely manner in order to contain losses and avoid future disruption*
Robustness	*The capacity to meet priorities and achieve goals in a timely manner in order to contain losses and avoid future disruption*
Redundancy	*The capacity to satisfy functional requirements in the event of disruption, degradation, or loss of functionality*
Resourcefulness	*The capacity to identify problems, establish priorities, and mobilize resources when conditions exist that threaten to disrupt some element, system, or other unit of analysis*

Source: (Bruneau et al., 2003, pp. 737-738)

Proag (2014) illustrated operational equilibrium/ desired functionality level as a steady state in his study. However, functionality of a community is not an outcome but a process (Cox & Hamlen, 2015). Therefore, the community's operational equilibrium cannot always be illustrated as a steady state. Because, the factors that build up the resilience will keep on changing over the time and space. Based on these facts it can be presumed that the resilience of a community cannot be equally distributed among the whole community. Further, Berkes, Colding, and Folke (2003) stated that, considering resilience within a particular time span, a single steady state is impossible whereas multiple stable states are possible. These multiple states can be the level of resilience in different aspects such as economic resilience, social resilience, ecological resilience, and built environment related resilience of a community. Within a given time, the equilibrium of a particular sector of resilience can be a single steady state. It can be illustrated as shown in the Figure 2. The recovery curve that is the equilibrium curve after the disaster can be altered depends on several factors such as intensity of the disaster, availability of resources, construction recovery, and amount of business interuption. Cimellaro et al. (2010) argues that, it is difficult to predict the tendency of recovery as it depends on several factors subject to the type of disaster, level of interuption, and state of the commuinity. Also, any forms of alterations in the community would change the tendency of their recovery.
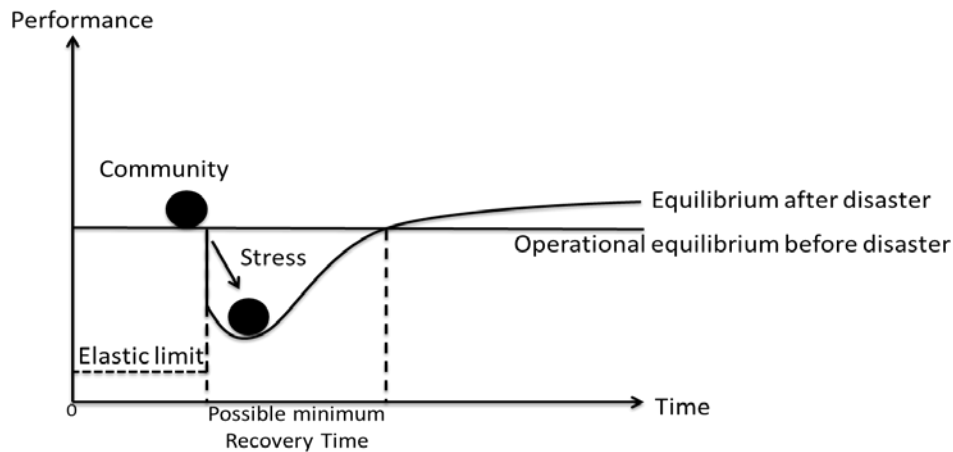
Figure 2: Resilience of a particular sector of a community

2.3 Involuntary relocations and community disaster resilience of Sri Lanka

Involuntary relocation alters the equilibrium position and stress absorbing ability of a community by introducing another community, which has a different equilibrium position. In this case, resilience of these two communities towards potential disasters could be disturbed (Refer Figure 3). Therefore, maximising the potential and collaboration of the communities is essential to enhance the overall resilience of the communities. Therefore, this research focuses on building community resilience within involuntary settlements by enhancing collaboration between host community and displaced community in Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka experienced a variety of displacements. Recent Sri Lankan case studies (Das, 2008; Manatunge et al., 2009; Perera et al., 2012; Takesada et al., 2009) encountered different issues that slowed the process of recovery after involuntary resettlement.
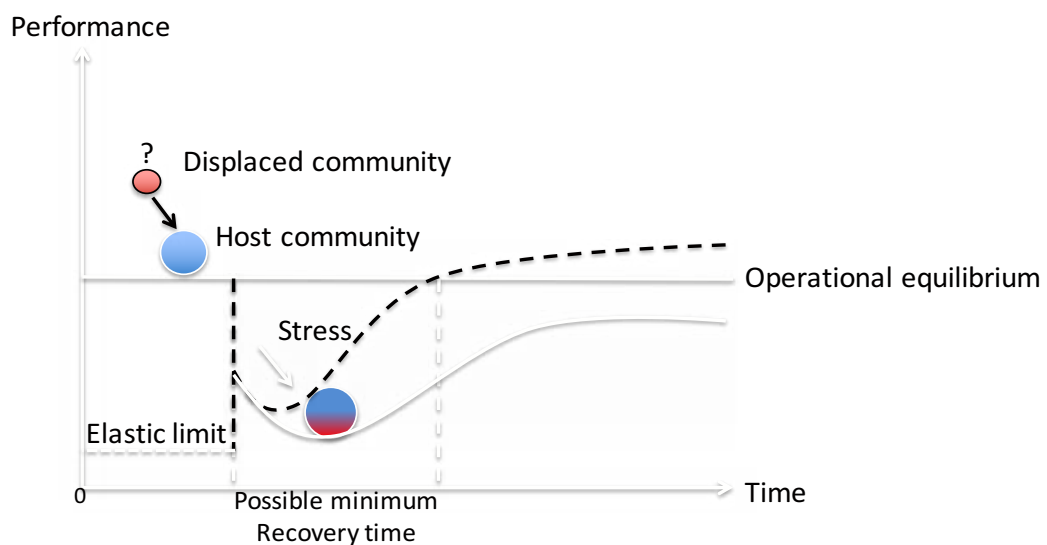

Figure 3: Resilience of a particular sector of a community after the relocation

Case 1

In 1977 the Government of Sri Lanka accelerated the Mahaweli multipurpose project to generate hydroelectric power, store and divert water for irrigation, downstream water regulation for flood control, develop human settlements, and provide physical and socio-economic facilities to settlements. This project forced around 3400 families including 900 families who are from areas prone to earth slips to relocate (Manatunge et al., 2009). However, settlers did not express satisfaction about the arrangements for more than two decades, which is a very slow recovery (Takesada et al., 2009). Takesada et al. (2009) claim that the inequality between host and displaced communities as the obvious reason for the slow recovery. Because, 60% of the settlers received only marginally productive tea plots, inexperience of the settlers within the tea plantation created a big difference in income between non-settlers and settlers shortly after relocation. This difference preventing them from acting as a community and the displaced population expressed dissatisfaction in common engagements.

Case 2

Similarly, in 2005, 1083 Tsunami affected households were relocated in Hambantota under the Siribopura resettlement-housing programme. Perera et al. (2012) stated that the income of the settlers after resettlement did not show considerable improvement. Further, the authors identified that, owing to resettlement as well as market failure generated by the absence of formal land right, 30% of the settlers lost their jobs especially farming related jobs and self-occupation. Moreover, the authors claim that the socio-cultural values were insufficiently linked with the economic and real estate aspects, which is the basis for the sustainable resettlement (Perera et al., 2012). Therefore, account has also to be taken of the change in living environment leading to conflict between the life style of the displaced and the changed environment in which they have been relocated.

Case 3

Recently, the Government of Sri Lanka entered into an agreement with the Government of India to build a coal power plant in Trincomalee and it is expected to be completed by 2017 (Ceylon Electricity Board, 2013). The project requires around 2795 acres of land, which may contribute to involuntary relocations in future, of which a substantial fraction could be in new and hitherto unfamiliar built environments.

3. Discussion

Case studies show that Sri Lankan resettled communities experienced certain issues that slow the process of their recovery. According to the case studies, the major reason is incompatible community integration. Consequently, this affects successful community integration and community resilience. However, the relocating agents have often overlooked these issues owing to time limitations, drawbacks in the policies, and financial unpreparedness (Magis, 2010). Also, potential future relocations identified in Sri Lanka through recent statistics (IDMC, 2015;

Ministry of Resettlement Reconstruction and Hindu Religious Affairs Sri Lanka, 2015). Therefore, need exists within Sri Lankan context to integrate compatible community collaboration to build community resilience. Government of Sri Lanka made several legislations and policies to execute the relocations legally and effectively. However, governments/relocation agencies adopt a top down approach by following certain procedures considering the laws, regulations, and expectations from the communities. These procedures do not include any measures to ensure the resilience of the community as a whole.

Cernea (1995) described eight economic consequences of displacements, which leads to impoverishment of the displaced persons. They are landlessness, joblessness, homelessness, marginalisation, increased morbidity, food insecurity, loss of access to common property, and social disarticulation. However, in planned relocation programmes relocating agents provide land and houses for the re-settlers. Therefore, landlessness and homelessness problem cannot exist in this context. The likely occurrence of other problems is subjective to specific cases. However, the poverty of the displaced persons cannot be denied. As Maldonado (2012) stated, IDPs suffer economically, even though all their losses have been restored.

From the study conducted by Nicassio and Pate (1984) based on the relocation of Indochinese refugees, some of the severe social problems of re-settlers can be related with planned relocations. They are, painful memories of disaster and departure, job skills and placement related issues, lack of ethnic support, cultural difference, and difficulty in practicing religion. These issues for the IDPs cannot be as severe as identified by refugees. However, it is relevant up to a certain extent depends on the level of difference between both the communities.

In some cases displaced community's economic, social characteristics affect the host community. In 1990, around 100,000 people from a particular ethnic community have been expelled from the north of Sri Lanka to the district called 'Puttalam' due to ethnic strife. Over the time, some cultural and social practices of the IDPs such as dowry system, dressing styles, have begun to influence the host community (Thalayasingam, 2009). Thalayasingam (2009) further states that the educational performance of IDP children was higher compared to the host children. Also, IDPs of Puttalam gave more importance to the education and that encouraged the local host community children to follow secondary and territory education.

However, displaced and host communities developed some clashes among themselves and displaced community has been marginalised by the host community out of fear of losing resources, government job allocation and educational quota (Brun, 2009). A common tendency can be observed based on the case studies (Brun, 2009; Thalayasingam, 2009) is, host community welcome the displaced persons at the beginning and by the time they withdraw their assistance owing to the fear of loosing resources. The reason being, migration process can be a benefit for a certain group and a loss for another group. It is difficult to identify the people who are vulnerable and who are in need. Therefore, all the assistance and benefits are given for all the displaced persons without any discrimination. This might create an imbalance in the society and lead to tension and jealousy among local people (Brun, 2009). These issues restrict both communities to act as a community and make them vulnerable to future disasters. Furthermore,

disaster resilience of the community in terms of availability of temporary shelters, food supply, and evacuation plans might get affected and make both communities vulnerable to future disasters.

4. Conclusions

Disasters sometimes make lands unfit for human habitation and forces its residents to move away from it. It is government's responsibility to relocate the trapped population to another safe environment. Disaster-induced involuntary relocations are rather common in Sri Lanka. However, displaced and host communities face many problems related to economic, social, and cultural incompatibilities that could slow the recovery process. (Das, 2008; Manatunge et al., 2009; Perera et al., 2012; Takesada et al., 2009). Also, this can alter the equilibrium level of the community and disturb the disaster resilience of the community. Governments/relocation agencies adopt a top down approach by following certain procedures considering the laws, regulations, and expectations from the communities. Whereas, the ideal approach is the bottom up in which communities engaged in the decision-making. Following the ideal approach is often not practical as the government is given only limited time and resources. Therefore, finding a middle ground by connecting both the mechanisms is necessary to reduce relocation failures and to enhance quick recovery.

A conceptual model (Refer Figure 4) was developed integrating the top down and the bottom up approaches in order to find out the middle ground.
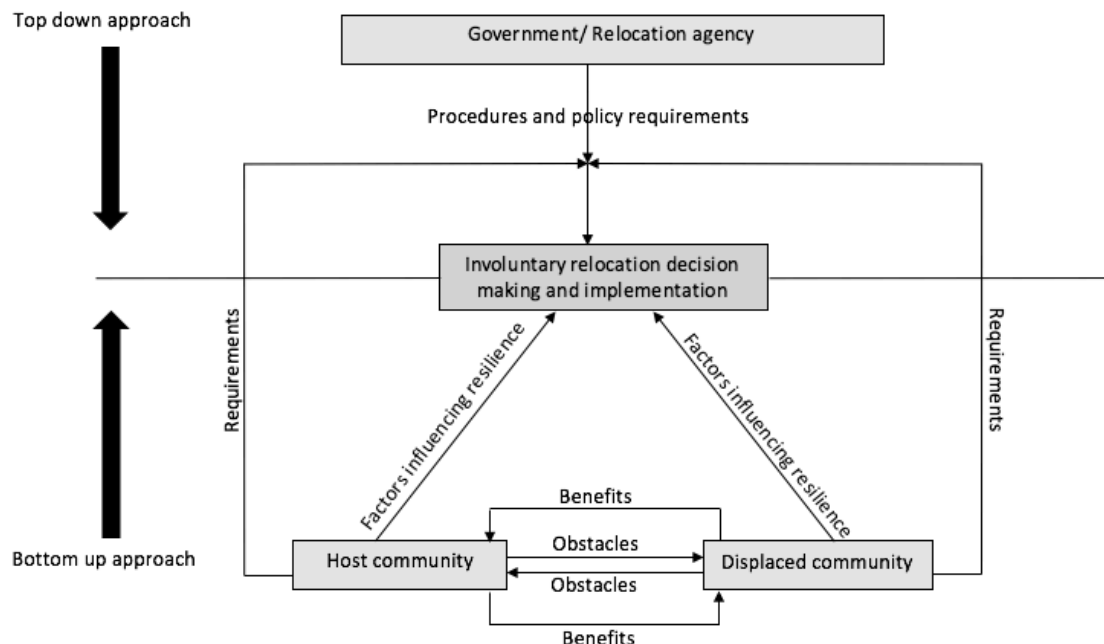

Figure 4: Conceptual model

The model shows that how relocation decision has been taken (top down approach) and how it is expected (bottom up approach). The government or the relocation agencies usually have

procedures and policy requirements that needed to be followed during relocations. Also, they will consider the requirements of the communities up to a certain extend as the time and financial constraints restrict them. Similarly, host and displaced communities may have their own expectations towards the government. Also, they may have benefits and obstacles for having another community in their midst. Both the approaches have their own pros and cons. In order to achieve the benefits of both the approaches, a middle ground approach, compromising both the parties, need to be taken for a successful implementation of relocations, and to build a resilient community.

Acknowledgement

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