Understanding the Expressions of Power and Its Effect on Socioeconomic Outcomes of DIDR Projects

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Abstract

The ability of one actor to influence the behavior or dispositions of other agents is power. Furthermore, the type of power that interests social and political scientists the most is social ability, meaning that an agent's power stems from her social position rather than just her unique physiological and psychological characteristics. It is common to assume that power, in this socially mediated sense, has a broad function in social explanations. For instance, social scientists utilize the idea to explain how social institutions are created, maintained, and altered, how individuals behave, and how social interactions turn out. Insofar as the lack thereof affects these clarifications, power has an explanatory function. More controversially, others believe power is a causative component that may help explain various social events since it is usually independent in a given context. Power is not always understood as a context-independent variable by those who write about it or use it. The aim of this study is to explore the expressions of power and its effect on socioeconomic outcomes of Displacement-Induced Development and Resettlement (DIDR) projects, with a view to delve into how power is understood in development studies; the expressions of power in development studies; and how the socioeconomic outcome of DIDR projects is affected by power.

Keywords: DIDR projects, Development studies, Outcomes, Power, Social ability, Socioeconomic.

1|Introduction

Power is a central concept in social and economic well being and thought. It is often taken to play an important and broad explanatory role. The ability of one actor to influence the behavior or dispositions of other agents is power. Furthermore, the type of power that interests social and political scientists the most is

social ability, meaning that an agent's power stems from her social position rather than just her unique physiological and psychological characteristics.

The laws of social dynamics was have formulated in terms of power. The idea that there are strict social laws will find few contemporary supporters, but the assumption that power can contribute to the explanation of many different social phenomena is still widely shared. The aim of this study is to explore the expressions of power and its effect on socioeconomic outcomes of Displacement-Induced Development and Resettlement (DIDR) projects. This study will delve into how power is understood in development studies, expressions of power in development studies, and how the socioeconomic outcome of DIDR projects is affected by power.

2 | Literature Review

2.1 | How Power is Understood in Development Studies

Power is a complex concept that is understood in many various forms in development studies. While power has been difficult to define, there are multiple ways in which scholars examine the concept of power from a development perspective. For example, traditional examples of the interpretation of power can be identified in the work of [1], who described power, as "the chance of a man or a number of men to realize their own will in a communal action even against the resistance of others who are participating in the same action," and pluralists Dahl, that described power as "A has power over B to the extent that he can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do" [2], [3].

However, according to Barnett and Duvall [4], who argued against this, claimed that Weber and Dahl definitions are united in a general sense because they are both focused on the material underpinnings of power relations; hence, Power to them is "the production, in and through social relations, of effects that shape the capacities of actors to determine their circumstances and fate" [5].

In a general context, within social science and politics, power is expressed when individuals, groups, or institutions are able to influence, control, or exercise authority over others or over decision-making processes [6]. In addition, power is dynamic and a critical component of political systems, which can be a tool for repression and resistance or to transform and collaborate for positive change [7]. Furthermore, some of the main ways in which power is understood in development studies include;

2.1.1 | Structural power

Structural power emphasizes various forms in which power is embedded in socio-economic, and political structures. It recognizes that power relations are not just determined by individual actors but are also shaped by broader social and institutional arrangements [8]. Structural power can manifest through disparities in access to resources, such as wealth, education, or information, which can perpetuate inequalities between different groups [9]. As a result, by altering the structures or the environment, respectively, one can change the positions of the actors. It is no accident that behavioristic approaches' conceptions of power ignore the manipulation of an actor's available extra options by outside parties and capabilities [10].

2.1.2 | Discursive power

Discursive power focuses on the ways in which power operates through language, discourse, and knowledge production [11]. It recognizes that while power can be expressed bydirectly control others, it can also shapen narratives, construct meanings, and influence public opinion. Discursive power can shape development discourses, policy narratives, and the ways in which certain issues are framed, thereby influencing the priorities and approaches adopted in development initiatives [12].

2.1.3 | Political power

Political power refers to the ability to influence or control decision-making processes and policies. It includes formal political authority held by governments and policymakers as well as informal sources of power that may exist within societies, such as influential elites or interest groups [13]. Political power can shape

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development outcomes by determining the allocation of resources, setting development agendas, and shaping policy priorities. Furthermore, in the levels of political power discourse by [7], she talked about different categories such as 'visible power, hidden power, and invisible power.' Visible power is the power that is being used openly and visibly within political structures and procedures. It involves the authority and influence that people or organisations exercise in the political sphere such as through electoral process [14] .

On the other hand, invisible political power is the power that exists within social and political systems but is not readily evident to the average citizen. It analyzes the ways in which power is institutionalized in routines, beliefs, and ideologies. Michel Foucault popularised this idea in his research on the effects of discipline, surveillance, and the production of knowledge on the exercise of authority [15]. Furthermore, political power that is "hidden," is referred to influence that is exercised in secret and kept out of the public eye on purpose. It is the exercise of authority through unofficial channels, in which decisions are made in the shadows and the workings of government are not transparent. Authors like C. Wright Mills, who studied the influence of the wealthy and powerful on governments and economies, delve deeply into this idea [16].

2.1.4 | Power as resistance

This perspective recognizes that power can be contested and resisted by marginalized or disadvantaged groups. It emphasizes the agency of individuals and communities in challenging and transforming power relations [17]. Power as resistance highlights grassroots movements, social mobilization, and collective action as means through which underrated people can advocate for their rights and confront existing power systems. This perspective highlights the role of grassroots movements, social mobilization, and collective action in challenging power imbalances and promoting social change [18].

2.1.5 | Power in global relations.

Development studies also examines power dynamics in the context of global relations. It explores how power is exercised by dominant countries or international institutions and how this influences development outcomes in less powerful nations. It further emphasizes the asymmetrical power relationships in international development and the need to address global power imbalances. The concept of neocolonialism, for example, examines how historical power imbalances continue to shape the economic and political relationships between developed and developing countries [4].

2.2 | Expressions of Power in Development Studies

Power can be understood in different forms that may have positive or negative undertones, and according to [7], there are four expressions of power which include 'power over, power with, power to, and power within.'

2.2.1 | Power over

While thinking about power-over expression of power, it is seen as a win-lose game where the only way to win is by preventing others from winning and establishing dominance, and this is mostly negative, as is the case in most repressive governments and military dictatorships, where they deploy brute force and unleash mayhem on their people, denying them access to basic amenities and social welfare, which invariably exacerbates poverty [7]. While democratic power is the best alternative here, it is clear that groups of people that have been victims of "power over" can become even more repressive when the tables turn and they are made to take on leadership positions [19].

2.2.2 | Power with

This is a more collaborative expression of power. It has shown effective as an empowering expression of power. It emphasise partnership for transformation and shared benefits. It also encourages mutuality and the power of a group in providing lasting solutions to social challenges. According to [20], he associates leadership with enforcing consensus and working towards shared goals however this idea discounts the existence of power over which is largely a coercive, exploitative, and manipulative phenomenon. Argues for power with

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when she said, '[power] far from being the means to an end, is actually the very condition enabling a group of people to think and act in terms of the means-end category' [21].

2.2.3 | Power to

Power to is an individualistic concept that emphasises the power of individuals to contribute to positive changes in their society. It can quickly transform into power with expression when there is mutual trust and respect. Robert Thinks that the measure of power in social engagements is to identify who wins in making decisions.

2.2.4 | Power within

The ability to respect oneself and others while appreciating and valuing one's own individuality is fundamental to a sense of inner power. Power within once unlocked mostly by reflection, can help people understand their power to and power with which they can spur positive action that can bring about meaningful change in one's environment.

2.3 | How Power Affects Socioeconomic Outcomes of DIDR Projects

DIDR refers to the deliberate and often coercive relocation of an entire population to a new permanent location within the same country, often as a result of a government-backed, large-scale infrastructure or land acquisition project that is expected to yield significant economic benefits. For example, in central India, a village known as Botezari with 67% literate population, and average earned income of less than $1 person day and a population of agriculture workers who produce rice to sell for income. Other alternative income sources included illegal bamboo and moha sales, tourism supporters, and, milk products.The government had come up with project 'Tiger' to move the village in 1995, a classical demonstration of "power over" as we would have assumed. This was planned for the conservation of the already depleting tiger population in India. The victims of this planned displacement were the Botezari's whom the government eventually succeeds in relocating to Mul-Chandrapur road. This relocation example has shown that the exercise of power is important in bringing about socioeconomic outcomes in DIDR however, in this case, the exercise of "power over" was not applicable, instead, "power with" was obtainable because study shows that, the villagers were open to relocating, and the presence of NGOs and the press prevented any form of highhandedness from the government, who might have used cohesion to achieve their purpose, and the displacement authority, making them not powerless in this. There were productive exchanges between the community and the displacement authority, making them not powerless in this relocation exercise [22].

Similarly, the Orang Asli community of Pennisuula Malaysia also experienced a dam-displacement in 02/03 and according to [23] who carried out some interviews with some critical informats, he shared valuable ideas that was reflective of the power dynamics of forced displacement and resettlement. Although, the Orang Asli inhabitants saw a major impairments on the access to land and income, this can be largely attributed to the power imbalance that exists during forced displacement, where governments are more powerful, and in this case, the Malaysian government, who argues that their intent for the forced displacement is for the modernization of the Orang Asli territory.

Grabska research argues that the the modernization efforts by the Malaysian government does not really benefit the indigense of Orang Asli instead, their right to land and income is undermined by forced displacement. I agree with him on his argument that it is possible to liken the power relations between the government and the indigenes of Orang Asli to the era of colonialism, where colonialists forcefully took lands and excommunicated indigenous peoples from their lands, and while colonialism may have ended, the guise of modernization by national governments seems to perpetuate this system of practice.

DIDR projects have not always been successful, despite their stated goals. According to studies, in India over the past 40 years, 75% of people who were transferred as part of development projects haven't been able to successfully reintegrate into society. These groups don't appear to have made any discernible economic

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development to date. So it follows that a sizable proportion of economic migrants in India have been forced into poverty.

Given this, it is clear that, mostly as a result of power inequalities, the displaced people may not experience significant gains or obtain just compensation in comparison to the losses they suffer during forced displacement. People who have been displaced may also experience a sense of identity loss. Marginalisation, a frequent result of relocation, frequently results in anomic behaviour, which is characterised by a decline in society standing, a loss of faith in societal institutions, and a growing sense of injustice among persons who have been transferred.

3 | Conclusion

Power is a person's capacity to affect the attitudes or actions of others. One of the main areas of interest for social and political scientists is social ability, which is based on an agent's social position. Power is frequently invoked to explain interpersonal relationships, social structures, and individual conduct. It can, however, also be viewed as a causal element that explains different social occurrences without regard to context. By investigating how power is interpreted in development studies and how it influences the socioeconomic results of development indicative and reconstruction projects, this research seeks to understand how power manifests itself and how it influences these projects' socioeconomic outcomes. With DIDR projects, if power structures are not addressed, it can perpetuate inequalities and hinder the socioeconomic integration of displaced populations.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Data Availability

All data are included in the text.

Funding

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