Isabelle Côté and Yolande Pottie-Sherman, editors. *Resettlement: Uprooting and Rebuilding Communities in Newfoundland and Labrador and Beyond*. St. John's: ISER Books, 2020. ISBN 978-1-894725-68-2

From ancient times to our own, forced population movements have been part of the human experience. The Atlantic slave trade and the Holocaust are odious historical examples, and with each passing day the Syrian civil war adds to the millions already driven from their country or internally displaced. Although the government-assisted resettlement of 29,614 Newfoundlanders between 1954 and 1977 (in hopes of improving their lives) pales in significance, that has not deterred hand-wringing by the province's chattering classes. Writer Ray Guy called resettlement "one of the greatest crimes committed against the Newfoundland people" — apparently there were many—and the *Evening Telegram* shamelessly likened it to the Holocaust. Critics seemed blind to the fact that thousands of Newfoundlanders were abandoning the province every year for greener pastures in mainland Canada, an exodus that resettlement's proponents hoped it might stop.

Despite important recent work by Tina Loo and Raymond Blake, there is no monograph on the province's encounter with resettlement. To help tide us over, there is now this interdisciplinary collection edited by political scientist Isabelle Côté and geographer Yolande Pottie-Sherman, both of Memorial University. It comprises an introductory chapter, three chapters on Newfoundland and Labrador, and one each on Greenland, Ireland, and the Canadian Arctic. Owing to space limitations and this journal's mandate, I will limit my remarks to the Newfoundland and Labrador material.

In any multi-author collection, the editors' job is to communicate their goals, provide context, and ensure consistency. In their introductory chapter "Resettlement in Newfoundland and Labrador in Comparative Perspective," Côté and Pottie-Sherman (with help from Rebecca LeDrew) declare that they aim "to place Newfoundland and Labrador's ongoing experiences with resettlement in conversation with the broader field of resettlement studies" (3). Although I was unaware that

resettlement had become a field, I do know what a field is. I do not, however, know what it means to put experiences "in conversation with" a field. Alas, the editors' use of arcane language is unremitting, and ranges from repeating Tina Loo's risible "neo-resettlement" (12) to describing resistance to resettlement as "a form of counter-territorialization" (23). This is not communication; it is encryption.

After rightly portraying resettlement as a modernization project with parallels elsewhere in Canada and the world, the editors quote a lengthy definition by geographer Frank Vanclay. Its salient points are that resettlement differs from other forms of relocation in that it affects entire communities, involves financial compensation, and is meant to be more or less permanent. To demonstrate, they offer myriad examples, including "conflict-induced" (10) resettlements in China, Sudan, and Cambodia. Since war refugees are neither consulted nor compensated, resettlement must be broader than Vanclay's definition, which begs the question of why a more suitable one was not used here.

Where Newfoundland and Labrador are concerned, they vaguely inform us that "[o]fficial accounts of resettlement … begin with the 1954 centralization policy" (5). If, by "official accounts," we can include the entry in the *Encyclopedia of Newfoundland and Labrador*, then it traces resettlement's roots to 1865. In *Lost Country*, Patrick O'Flaherty dates it even earlier, to the late 1840s. In those times, people used the word "removal"; "resettlement" per se was first used in Newfoundland in 1940, when it appeared in Commissioner J.H. Gorvin's rural reconstruction scheme. There is no mention of that here, nor do the editors place resettlement in the context of Newfoundland's pursuit of progress, whose roots, again, extend to the nineteenth century.

As for consistency, there is confusion throughout the book on such fundamentals as the names of the different resettlement programs. The editors call the 1965–70 version the Fisheries Household Resettlement Program, while in his chapter George Withers calls it both that and the Fisheries Household Resettlement Plan. The correct name, embodied in the federal–provincial agreement of 16 July 1965 that created it, is the Newfoundland Fisheries Resettlement Programme.

Similarly, in the introductory chapter the editors refer to the current iteration, which was introduced in 2009, as both the "Community Relocation Policy" and the "Community Relocation Policies." Tina Loo employs the singular form in her chapter, but in Chapter 4 Côté and Pottie-Sherman revert to the plural.

As indicated by her coinage of "neo-resettlement," Loo is fond of invented hermetic dialects (to paraphrase John Ralston Saul). That said, her 2019 book *Moved by the State: Forced Relocation and Making a Good Life in Postwar Canada* is an excellent comparative study which includes Newfoundland and Labrador and coheres in a way that this collection does not. Her chapter "Development's Travelling Rationalities: Contextualizing Newfoundland Resettlement" synthesizes material from that book and compares Newfoundland's experience with contemporary relocations of Inuit in the central Arctic and poor whites in eastern Quebec.

The title and contents of *Moved by the State* reflect scholarly interest in that nebulous entity "the state." Here, Loo claims that resettlement "extended the reach of the state and intensified its power, helping to create particular political subjectivities that were crucial to the liberal project of rule" (46). The state, then, is not only nebulous, but also sinister. To be sure, resettlement was frequently mismanaged and had negative impacts on many people's lives. But a survey conducted in 1969, by which time the majority had been moved, revealed that two-thirds of them were satisfied. Notwithstanding her penchant for vilifying the state, Loo concedes that the resettlement programs in Newfoundland, the Arctic, and Quebec were at least "based on an expansive understanding of the state's responsibilities to its citizens" (72). Unable, however, to resist a parting shot, she claims that today's Community Relocation Policy reflects a neo-liberal order in which the state's earlier expansiveness is absent.

George Withers, whose own family was resettled, brings a unique perspective to his chapter "Not Just Pawns in a Board Game: Local Actors in the Newfoundland Fisheries Household Resettlement Program, 1965–1970." Drawing from his 2016 PhD thesis, this account

teems with insights and telling details. He reminds us that the program was based on the persuasive argument that an outport economy that continued to rely on the traditional fishery "could never provide producers with a decent standard of living" (81). And it was not only bureaucrats who thought so, because requests for information "poured into the Premier's office" (82) even before the federal–provincial agreement had been signed. Although Withers devotes more space to mismanagement than to "agency," he contends that those who were affected by the program were "not pawns … but contested resettlement and negotiated moves" (79). As a result of their efforts, after 1970 resettlement became more flexible and less coercive, and financial assistance was increased. The state was listening.

Côté and Pottie-Sherman return with "Should We Stay or Should We Go?: Mobility, Immobility, and Community Closure in Newfoundland and Labrador, 2009–2018," which examines the Community Relocation Policies (or Policy). After claiming that resettlement studies tend to neglect the decision-making process within communities, they set out to address the deficiency. Regrettably, they continue to shroud the obvious in an academic fog. Everyone knows that people move or stay for different reasons, but only initiates would understand Vickie Zhang's explanation, cited here, that the decision-making process is "a conceptualization which marks a clear break with theories of migration as downward diffusions of structural power" (116).

With Zhang as their guide, Côté and Pottie-Sherman apply a "migration-decision approach" to communities with "failed" resettlement votes. (To qualify for assistance, 90 per cent of a community's permanent, voting-age residents must vote to relocate.) As ingenious as their focus on staying is, I am skeptical of their claim that it "may provide valuable insight on rural sustainability" (117). The coasts and adjacent islands of Newfoundland and Labrador are littered with abandoned communities, and if any of those now on the bubble manage to reverse history's tide, it will be small consolation for the ones that disappear. Also, since staying is the opposite of leaving, is this

even a valid subject for resettlement studies? If it is, then "resettlement" needs to be redefined.

Emulating Loo, the editors maintain that while the earlier programs tried to steer people into designated areas, the present one takes a neo-liberal, "[s]mall government" (123) approach that lets market forces determine where they end up. Accordingly, where Tina Loo, Isabelle Côté, and Yolande Pottie-Sherman are concerned, the state is damned if it does and damned if it doesn't, being either too coercive on the one hand or not coercive enough on the other. And I am puzzled as to how the current assistance of $270,000 per household denotes small government or is less expansive than earlier programs. Even if that sum were adjusted for inflation, it would dwarf the amounts that were granted under those programs.

This bumpy collection underscores the need for a monograph on resettlement in Newfoundland and Labrador. Perhaps ISER Books could assess George Withers's thesis to see if it has book potential. I pray that it does.

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