

## Theme Project Group 2: Economies in the North

Group 2, Thursday, September 25, 2008

Rapporteur: Elena Piterskaya

Theme project group “Economies in the North – Migration” was chaired by Lee Huskey (University of Alaska Anchorage) and Steven Bigras (Canadian Polar Commission). The main focus of this discussion was migration, its reasons, process and the role of government of Arctic states in the relocation of settlements and facilitating the migration policy.

**Professor Southcott** opened the Theme Project Group meeting and focused on two patterns in the concept of migration in Canadian Arctic. He compared the indigenous and non-indigenous migration patterns in the post WWII period and defined features peculiar to these patterns:

For indigenous migration it was mainly:

- Increasing role of state
- Migration vs. relocation
- Response to the demand of indigenous population
- Desire to stay closer to the areas of traditional activities
- Land use issue

For non-indigenous migration it was:

- New partnership in the North between the state and resource industries that created more attractive employment conditions due to mining and oil industries

Presentation of **Peter Schweitzer** “Moved by The State: Perspective on Relocation and Resettlement in Circumpolar North” focused on a number of projects of forced relocation and the concept of “creation of a place”. He stressed the necessity of ethnographic research while addressing the issues of community sustainability in migration conditions. Case studies presented by Prof. Schweitzer described the situation in Chukotka where the same community was relocated twice and whose former settlement is now used as a temporary hunting camp. Another example was that of Greenland and Nunavut where like in other places the main trend in relocation policy was to unite smaller nomadic groups into the one settlement creating better conditions for the centralized governmental policy.

In her presentation “Moving a Village, Relocation a Home: Understanding the Struggle for Local Control in Environmentally Induced Relocation” **Elizabeth Marino** told about migrations caused by constant exposure of communities and settlements to natural disasters like flooding, massive soil erosion and permafrost melting. The main focus was the results of her research in a remote community Shishmaref with population of ~600 people. Ms. Marino made a comparative study of possible economic costs related to erosion protection, relocation of people and the period during which people could possibly stay at the place of their current settlement.

**Lance Howe** in his presentation “Patterns of Migration in Arctic Alaska” focused on geographic patterns of arctic indigenous migration. His conclusion was that about 27% of indigenous population moves within the villages, while 90% of them move within the villages of the same census area. The main tendency as noted by the presenter is hierarchical “step wise” migration - moving from Arctic villages to Arctic regional centers (highest level of migration) and only then to Arctic towns.

The main topic of **Stephanie Martin’s** research included the reasons and the structure of indigenous migration patterns. She studied governmental policy towards migration in different Arctic areas. Among the leading reasons for high rate of migration she defined search of employment and better life conditions, in some areas (Chukotka) home physical violence was also among the reasons of female migration. Among the reasons why other people don’t want to migrate was that women want to stay with their families and men were concerned about an opportunity for hunting and fishing in the new area.

Though presentation of **Andrey Petrov** on comparison of economic development policies in Russian and Canadian north was not really close to the general topic of the discussion still it helped the participants to get a deeper understanding of governmental policies in Russia and Canada starting from early Soviet years up to contemporary days. Mr.Petrov also focused on the perception and attitude of federal governments towards the Northern areas whether they were just considered as resources rich extension to the main land that can provide immediate economic benefit, or whether they was totally alien to the developed southern regions like in Canada.

Each of the abovementioned presentation was followed by discussion which helped participants of the Project Group to come up with conclusions regarding the nature and the reasons of migration. Main drivers of intensive migration process in the Arctic identified by the participants included:

- search of employment and better economic conditions and
- to a lesser extend climatic and environmental changes.

Another conclusion resulted from the discussion was that Arctic governments should pay considerably more attention to the problems of migration in the Arctic and be more aware and prepared to facilitate and effectively manage the process.

The topic of Arctic economies and economic development in Northern areas was the central focus of the Roundtable discussion arranged September 27 which was based on the Theme Project Group “Economies in the North - Migration”.

Economic development and the level of well-being of Northern areas and communities is by far the most important issue of the contemporary governmental policy in the Arctic states. A large number of large-scale projects are being developed in the north and more and more issues should be brought to the open discussion.

Considering the vital importance of economic development for the overall prosperity of the Arctic states, during the roundtable discussion it was suggested to bring the issue of economic development to a higher level of a separate sub-theme for the next NRF. It was suggested that several workshops within this topic will focus on certain aspects of northern economic development. Preliminary name for the sub-theme was advised as “Economic Conflict and Cooperation”. Topics suggested for the discussion might include (not limited to):

- Sustainable development. It was occasionally discussed during the forum along with other development aspects of northern communities, but due to the importance of this issue it is necessary to focus on it separately.
- Native participation in the local economies. This issue should draw closer attention of both the policy makers as well as community leaders and help to develop integrated policy for building new sustainable communities.

- Natural resources exploitation. This issue is by far the most significant in the whole spectrum of economic and social problems in the contemporary North. It will be useful to discuss the successful stories of mutually beneficial cooperation between business enterprises and native communities and look at viable development options other than extraction and sell of mineral resources with no added value.
- Land claims. The issues of landownership and the basis for benefit from landclaims both on individual and corporate level should be discussed in a wide circle of politicians and community representatives in order to develop effective development approach.

The target participant group of the sub-theme should include researchers, policy makers, community representatives and more businessmen so that they all can bring the whole variety of their issues for the open discussion which will help to cover all sides of economic development: both case studies and general projections.

Participants of our round table discussion actively supported the idea of position papers being distributed to the participants of the forum prior to its beginning. This step makes it possible better involvement of many participants, stimulate active discussions and promote comparative studies that can enrich the discussion and help formulate effective conclusions and recommendations.