

Report on Plenary Session II  
Northern Research Forum  
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### Innovation in Northern Governance

This session was chaired by Oran Young who opened by reminding us all that governance is one of the great issues of our time. There were four themes that emerged as central during this session of papers and discussion.

First, from the case presented by Johnny Adams of the Katavik experience, we pondered the question, “What does it take (to have such successful local/ regional governance)?” and also, “Is this a unique case or can it be replicated in other northern contexts?” In short, are successful innovations in northern governance transferrable and, if so, what does it take?

A second theme, brought out by Benedict Jonsson’s talk, was the issue of globalization: how it affects the North and how the North can respond to take advantage of the possibilities of globalization so it can be a positive process. Similarly, what strategies or policies are available to Northern regions to ensure that globalization is not a danger but an opportunity.

This concept of transforming problems into opportunities extended into the third central theme of the session, which was the need to reframe the phenomena of borders and trans-boundary regions from being divisions and problems to being opportunities for cooperation and synergy. This concept came up in presentations by Tarja Cronberg, Alvydas Medalinskas, and Jeroen Dubois.

Lastly, John Brown’s paper on Magadan, Russia, reminded us that the problems and opportunities of governance occur at all levels—county, province, oblast—from local to global.

Our two concluding points are the 1) Governance is a more and more important issue for the North and for the rest of the world, and 2) That the challenges of governance are across all levels from local to global with the fate of each level affected by the state of the rest. Accordingly, we need to be sensitive and attuned to what is going on at all levels.

A final comment is that there is a sense from the steering committee that the questions of globalization may well emerge as a theme for the next NRF—and this session served to underline the extent that globalization is on people's minds.