

Social Dimensions of Economic Development - What is needed for community well-being?

Summary for research priorities

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1. **What is the net historical benefit of resource development?** Much research on resource development is associated with the predictive phase of environmental assessment; more retrospective research (including lessons learned) is required.
2. **What is the net economic benefits/disbenefits evidenced by specific/many projects at a community, regional, territorial scales?** Although much discourse is on the economic opportunities (employment, business) of mining and oil/gas activity, little third party economic analysis has been undertaken to determine the net benefit and how such benefits are distributed across regions, communities and households. In addition to calculating the short term benefits (i.e. how many people are employed during the 10 year life of the mine), better understanding of the long term economic implications of resource development is needed. It would be useful, for example, to track problems or symptoms of the "resource curse" (i.e. what kinds of incentives, disincentives are created for education, training, employment, savings, investment as a result of a short term economic boom). On the flip side, how do northern communities with strong subsistence / government economies absorb or ride out the up and down swings of development as has been theorized by Duhaime, Usher, Abele and others.
3. **What are the trends in industry driven training and education? What are the socio-economic advantages / disadvantages?** Educational attainment rates (i.e. high school graduation) rates are very low across northern regions with theories of decreasing availability of traditional knowledge and skills compounding the education challenge for a growing youth population. The trend in some regions of the Northwest Territories has been to create industry specific training and education opportunities however, there has been little research on the benefits of such programs or their implications for northern economies.
4. **What are the best mechanisms for capturing Infrastructure benefits of resource development (i.e. housing, recreational complexes);** Some of the biggest challenges in northern communities are infrastructure related. The statistics on over-crowded housing, lack of recreation and education facilities have drawn international attention and criticism. Resource development booms have historically compounded housing shortages and increased the cost of living and services. What kinds of infrastructure solutions might be available in the context of increased resource development in specific case study communities and territory wide.
5. **What kind of similarities and differences are there in northern regions facing boom bust development when compared to other circumpolar nations, countries where mining, oil and gas activity has had significant impact on indigenous peoples?** The resource development issues facing northern indigenous peoples are somewhat unique to northern Canada. However, more lessons could be learned and/or shared with other circumpolar regions and countries such as Australia where the body of research on mining and indigenous peoples is significant.
6. **How does the experience of resource development differ by socio-economic position, cultural group etc. (i.e. Aboriginal, non-Aboriginal, residents, temporary workers etc.)?** Aboriginal people have been a major focus, driver and collaborator in many kinds of studies related to resource development. More research is required regarding the experience of non-Aboriginal people in urban and small communities (i.e. new Canadians).
7. **What is the adaptability and resilience of communities to the negative impacts of development? How resilient are arctic social-economy institutions (ie. norms of sharing, food banks) to booms and busts of development?** Building on the outcomes of the Social-Economy Network of Northern Canada, more research is needed on the impacts of resource development

on social-economy organizations (formal/informal) and their role in protecting well-being of northern communities.

8. **What are the lived experiences of resource development?** Much of the "data" on the effects of resource development on northern communities is quantitative; however, many changes in well-being cannot be expressed in statistics. More qualitative research on the experience of individuals and families would be useful particularly if it focuses the socio-economic and cultural impacts of major projects (i.e. Voisey's Bay, Diavik Diamond Mine etc.) which are now 5, 10, 20 + years old.
9. **What does Traditional Knowledge (IQ, Metis Knowledge, Innu Knowledge etc.) tell us about change in well-being in the context of development? What are some culturally grounded frameworks / indicators for measuring changes in well-being (use of traditional knowledge and well-being)?** The idea of "well-being" is synonymous with indigenous conceptualizations of self, family, community and environment. It is also a common term used in environmental assessment processes such as the review of the proposed Mackenzie Gas Project. More research is needed on its use by communities, government and industry in order to more fully understand its relevance and significance.
10. **What is the influence of resource development on local, regional, territorial processes of social change?** Much of the social science research carried out in northern Canada has been precipitated by a particular resource development event or process leading to the over-characterization of northern communities as vulnerable and "impacted". What are the means by which northern communities and organization are involved in directing northern development (i.e. co-management, land use planning) and to what extent are these institutions and processes effective in ensuring a "voice" in decisions at the planning, management, monitoring etc. phases.
11. **What are the contributions of resource development to "human security"?** Human security has become a popular lens for investigating and communicating about the suite of socio-economic and environmental changes underway across the circumpolar north. An analysis of how resource development alters the course, outcomes of human security at this global scale would help contextualize (give broader meaning to) the large body of community and regional studies which have been carried out in many northern regions.