

LACE – Labour Mobility & Community Participation in the Extractive Industries – Yukon, Canada

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mobileminingLACE

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Mobility and Mining

Increasing mining and exploration activities in the Yukon Territory since mid of 2000s show that the demand for a mobile workforce is increasing. However, this boom turned 2015 into a bust, but nevertheless people commute for jobs elsewhere. This research project aims to understand the variety of coping strategies, positive and negative effects brought about by mobile and multi-local life-style due to fly-in/fly-out (FIFO) which involves also living in camps. Field sites are Mayo and Whitehorse with experience in mining and FIFO operations to the mines nearby. A comparative aspect of the two communities should highlight local coping strategies as well as different approaches by the variety of companies involved as employers.



Subsistence and Cultural Changes

The project centers around indigenous/local communities and their involvement in extractive industries in Canada's North. Livelihood is based in parts on wage labor, subsistence activities and social welfare. Part of the research aim is to understand how mineral resources, their extraction, associated working conditions of mobility and subsistence activities relate. It will look into what role 'subsistence' plays in the negotiation of the current development paradigm for northern regions: 'employment in the extractive industries plus entrepreneurship' as well as it looks into 'sustainability'. Therefore, the project is also interested in cultural changes in the context of the region's mining activities and contemporary cultural revitalization processes.



Mobility Companion Guide

One key-product is a so called Mobility Companion Guide (MCG), a low threshold hand-book for the workforce, community-workers, administration, industry and other stakeholders. It's aim is to convey understanding of mobility and its cumulative impacts as well as to learn how best practice can be achieved. The MCG is a means of communication not only of research results, but of practical challenges to be observed as well as of best practices and benefits from indigenous engagement and knowledge. This guide should not only be useful for the communities involved but reach out to other communities involved in mining around the world.

Community Cooperation

An important aspect of the research and achieved through a community researcher and participating youth (Mobile Youth Multi-Media Project) as well as three stages of workshops for the reflection of the research agenda, ongoing outcomes and final results. Workshops will be done with different focus groups as well in the form of larger town hall meetings.

Research Methods

This research is based on ethnographic methodology: 1, narrative interviews with community members; 2, expert interviews with stakeholders from community organization, industry, administrative bodies, chambers, labour unions etc.; 3, long-term participant observation in communities as well as of communication processes between stakeholders and the community; 4, assessment of mobility patterns and modes of transport to and from site as well as to local centers such as Whitehorse; 5, collaboration with a local community liaison in collecting the data, analysis and publication.



Communities

The population of **Mayo** is around 400 and is the home of the Nacho Nyak Dun First Nation. The region experienced population fluctuations when the local mines closed and re-opened in the 1980's. Since 2015, no mining activities are on the way due to low mineral prices. Mayor companies around Mayo have put their project on mid-term hold.

Whitehorse is the capital of the Yukon Territory with 27,889 inhabitants. It is the largest city in Northern Canada. As the administrative center as well as transport hub for labour force to the mining sites in the region, it is attractive for incomers.



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