

**EUROCORES Program BOREAS: Histories from  
the North - environments, movements, narratives**

**BOREAS Workshop "Heading North, Heading South:  
Arctic social-sciences research in a global dialogue"**

Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, Halle  
6-9 March 2008

## **WORKSHOP OUTLINE**

BOREAS ([www.esf.org/boreas/](http://www.esf.org/boreas/)) has a commitment to placing Arctic social-sciences research into a global context. By inviting colleagues working in other regions, we seek to disseminate lessons from "the North" to the wider academic community, while simultaneously incorporating "Southern" prospects and experiences into our own work. Seven panel sessions will be organised around the themes: frontiers and borders; indigeneity and indigenism; conversion and community cohesion; migration; relocation; development and conservation; environmental change.

### **GOAL OF THE WORKSHOP**

A major commitment of BOREAS is to "place the circumpolar North into wider contexts". From the very inception of the BOREAS Programme, members of the Scientific Committee and Project Leaders have stressed the need for "deprovincialising" Arctic/ Northern social-sciences research. BOREAS has the unique potential to demonstrate how social-sciences and environmental research activities in the Arctic can provide new insights for, and be linked up with, research in other parts of the world. The Workshop proposed here offers a major opportunity to do so. By inviting colleagues who work in other parts of the world, we seek to disseminate lessons from "the North" to the wider academic community, while simultaneously incorporating "Southern" prospects and experiences into our own work.

In addition, we propose to invite specialists from within the “South” as well as Arctic specialists from Russian institutions. We believe this is extremely important so that (a) the “South” will not be spoken for solely by scholars based in Europe and North America, and (b) BOREAS will remain in a close working relationship with specialists in Russian institutions despite the fact that Russia has been unable to participate formally in BOREAS. There will be three BOREAS Russian Academy fellowships to be awarded to participants selected by representatives of the Siberian Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences. ESF funds will also cover the attendance of 10 junior researchers from other countries. A call for applications will be circulated widely (notably also outside the circumpolar research community), to generate interest among non-Arctic specialists.

The meeting is expected to result in a substantial, high quality publication; the BOREAS programme has set aside funds to support the publication; an international, high quality publishing house will be contacted by the local organisers.

#### **PROGRAMME OUTLINE**

Sessions will be arranged around the seven themes outlined below. Sessions will be organised as round-table discussions among all participants of the workshop. In order to lay the groundwork for discussion, in each session two or three BOREAS researchers plus one external participant with experience in the “South” will present short statements (10-15 minutes each). Accordingly, each panel comprises 30-40 minutes presentation time; the remaining 50-60 minutes are left for discussion.

The programme will be rounded off by an opening session with keynote speech and a two hours’ final session. Additional time will be reserved for inter-CRP meetings before and after the workshop. The three BOREAS Russian Academy fellows and the 10 junior researchers who join the workshop on the basis of a travel grant are expected to present their current research activities in a poster session.

March 6: inter-CRP meetings before the start of the workshop

March 7: opening session, keynote speech, sessions 1-3, poster session

March 8: sessions 4-7, workshop dinner

March 9: final session, inter-CRP meetings after the end of the workshop

## **DESCRIPTIONS OF SESSIONS 1 TO 7**

### *1 Frontiers and borders*

The Amazon and the Arctic, the deserts of Africa and Siberia all carry the notion of frontier. Previously perceived by colonial powers as peripheral regions that need yet to be conquered, civilized and exploited, these regions and their inhabitants were subjected to scientific inquiry in a specific way. Nation-state borders cut across the Arctic, fragmenting indigenous peoples' spaces politically and economically. Perceptions the North have somewhat changed over the last years, but the geopolitical role of the Arctic as a mineral resource base still prevails. What does the legacy of colonial research have to offer to the descendants of those who were then "under study"? How do incomers and long-time settlers negotiate "belonging" to the community and how do they deal with shifting notions of "home" and "frontier"?

### *2 Indigeneity and indigenism*

In both the North and the South, indigenous movements have strongly grown in importance over the last 10 to 20 years. They have established trans-national and international networks. New forms of identity representation and political leverage have resulted in a much higher degree of complexity of legal and political negotiations. How do indigenous movements, organizations and spokespeople connect with and represent themselves towards official institutions on the one hand, and how with local communities on the other?

### *3 Conversion and community cohesion*

Along with the growing importance of spirituality and the “return” to religion that can be observed in many regions of the world, there is increased interest in the activities of various religious denominations worldwide (for example, Pentecostalism). For the individual who has converted, religion provides a new sense of belonging and participation in a truly global network; however, missionary activities may have a negative impact on the social “fabric” of the local community. What do we know about the speed and intensity of conversion processes in different regions of the North/South? To what extent can we speak of religious identifications as either collaterals or alternatives to ethnic/indigenous ones? Why does religious conversion help create a particular local identity in some cases, whereas in other cases it has a disruptive effect on community cohesion?

### *4 Migration*

Of all migratory processes affecting Northern and Southern countries likewise, rural out-migration is the most decisive one. More and more, sparsely populated areas lose permanent residents, as employment is more and more concentrated in urban areas. On the other hand, there is a trend to temporal forms of residency and land use (e.g. tourism, mineral resource extraction). How much do we know about the reasons for these migrations, and what are the likely consequences for both rural and urban areas? How do changing patterns of land use influence people’s perceptions of “home” and their degree of mobility?

### *5 Relocation*

Patterns of displacement and relocation in the North seem to be caused by very different processes than in the South. While refugees appear to be a “Southern” problem, resettlement over large distances, organized by state authorities “from above”, is a phenomenon known from many parts of the North. These processes seem to lead in opposite directions: some people are pushed to the periphery whereas others are moved to the centre against their will. To what extent can such divergent cases be discussed and integrated within a common theoretical framework, such as colonialism?

What do we know about local responses and coping strategies, physically and psychologically?

### *6 Development and conversation*

The political discourse on development is commonly associated with “third-world” countries in the South. Development policies in the North have received much less attention, although nation-wide modernization projects (e.g. during Soviet times) have led to large-scale social and economic change, and frequently also to environmental change. The discourse on nature conservancy runs counter to the one on development and modernization. Who takes part in the formulation of such principles as “rational land use”, “sustainable development”, protection of “cultural heritage”? How are they implemented in practice, appropriated and/or subverted by various actors? How, and how much, are social scientists themselves involved in local empowerment or paternalism?

### *7 Environmental change*

Public awareness of global climate change has led to increasing attention of the Polar Regions. Research on the likely impact of global climate change on land use and human living conditions is now being conducted in many parts of the Arctic. Climate change in the Arctic is likely to improve access to mineral resources and spur new conflicts concerning the control over resources. Why is there, in comparison, such a small number of studies that address the impact of global environmental change on economies and populations in Africa or other “Southern” regions? How do farmers, hunters and pastoralists deal with climatic risk factors in semi-arid regions as compared to the tundra and tree-line regions? How can research on prehistoric environmental conditions and human adaptations help us to understand the consequences of climate change from a long-term perspective?

With the aim to assess these questions, the BOREAS Scientific Committee will bring together scholars who are known for their competence and international scientific impact.

## **SPECIFICATIONS CONCERNING TRAVEL AND ACCOMMODATION**

All seven CRPs of the BOREAS Programme will be represented in the workshop by two or three participants whose expenses will be covered by the ESF. CRP Project Leaders have the right to modify the list of participants (in consultation with the organisers). Moreover, each CRP may bring in additional people at their own cost.

On the basis of the financial support provided by the ESF, the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology will arrange accommodation for you during the conference, including the night before and the night after the workshop (i.e., from the evening of March 5th to the morning of March 10th). Meals will also be arranged for by the organisers.

This event, as part of the European Science Foundation EUROCORES Programme BOREAS, is supported by funds from the EC Sixth Framework Programme under Contract no. ERAS-CT-2003-980409. Travel costs will be covered in accordance with the ESF financial rules for the reimbursement of expenses. Participants in EUROCORES Programme networking activities should arrive and depart as close as possible to the beginning and end of the event. In cases where participants have been on non-ESF business either before or after the meeting, the organiser should only cover expenses incurred by attendance of the ESF meeting, unless extension of stay is justified by a significant reduction in overall cost (resulting e.g. from reduced air fares).

Air tickets should be tourist class (or at a lower rate if cheaper tickets, e.g. PEX/APEX, are available). To benefit from the most economical fare, early booking is essential. Where no price is indicated on the ticket, the invoice should also be provided to the organiser.

Taxi costs will be reimbursed under exceptional circumstances only (e.g., absence of public transport). Costs of health, life and luggage insurance are not reimbursed by the ESF. Cancellation insurance will only be reimbursed for PEX/APEX tickets. Use of private car (including road tolls and fuel) can be reimbursed up to 120 Euro maximum (for further details please contact Joachim Otto Habeck, [habeck@eth.mpg.de](mailto:habeck@eth.mpg.de)).