Organizers

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Description

This PhD seminar is the result of a collaboration between two research networks, MinErAL, a Canadian funded Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) research network on Mining Encounters and Indigenous Sustainable Livelihood, and REXSAC, a fennoscandinavian Nordic Centre of Excellence funded by NordForsk that focuses on Resource Extraction and Sustainable Arctic Communities.

The rationale for this summer school is the boom and bust character of extractive industries, in particular mining and fossil fuel extraction. For example, from the mid-2000s the Arctic was part of a global mining expansion, triggered by high metal prices on the world market as a consequence of a high demand for mineral commodities in East Asia and elsewhere. In 2013 the boom turned into bust, with high-profile Arctic mining projects in Canada, Sweden, Norway and Greenland being discontinued. In 2017 the price fall slowed down and once more investors are now investing money into geological prospecting and mining projects in the north. Although the time horizon of this latest boom-bust was particularly short, this is not the first time in history that the Arctic has experienced such expansion and contraction cycles in resource industries, and it will not be the last. Mineral-rich areas in the isolated Arctic are prone to these dynamics and therefore bear their material and immaterial legacies.

Whether ores naturally run out or prices run low, all mines eventually come to an end, leaving environmental as well as social and cultural footprints behind. These legacies can take the material or immaterial form of memories, identities, nostalgia and loss – economic as well as emotional – or else be a point of departure for creating new opportunities and future visions. They often also take the form of acid mine drainage from waste rock piles and tailings ponds, mining-related production facilities, infrastructures, abandoned or degraded settlements and disrupted services. Considerable discussion has ensued on what to do with such legacies of extraction, spanning from environmental remediation, repurposing for new economic activities, tourism development or projects to preserve mining remains as cultural heritage, and especially how to make these post-mining enterprises financially viable.

During the summer school, researchers and PhD students in the REXSAC and MinErAL networks will explore how communities that are heavily dependent on extractive industries in the Arctic can deal with rapid change and legacies of resource extraction, and under what circumstances it is possible for these communities to build new futures based on the redevelopment of former extraction sites and beyond extraction.
The lectures, literature review, site visits, interactions with local actors and research workshops will relate to different ways of dealing with change in mining settlements of Quebec and Labrador. They will address topics such as Indigenous rights, the design of built environments in mining settlements, the evolution of labour arrangements from company towns to modern fly-in fly-out camps, mining governance, environmental assessments, as well as impact and benefit agreements. They will also deal with closure, environmental remediation andrewilding – the practice of restoring landscapes altered by extraction through a variety of practices, nowadays required in the mining legislation of many countries. We will discuss environmental remediation as not only a matter of applied ecology or engineering, but also as a political, social, and cultural process that involves different actors valuing different things and making choices. A related topic is how remediation can be reconsidered in order to better serve communities and take into consideration their perspectives and aspirations. Another central concern is heritagization processes and repurposing projects in Arctic mining towns. We ask questions like: How have communities in the Arctic dealt with the material legacies of mining, in attempts to diversify their economies and/or in processes of transition to post-industrial futures? What lessons can be drawn from attempts to define and use abandoned mining landscapes as heritage? Whose narratives and understandings about the past come to dominate in heritage and remediation processes, and why? How can multiple and often contradicting experiences of mining be dealt with in resource communities undergoing transitions?

Other related lessons to be drawn from economic diversification and transitions to post-extraction economies in the Arctic are attempts to turn former extraction settlements and sites into tourist attractions – historical mining sites but also ongoing mining operations. What are the best practices and processes? One of the goals is to open new avenues for considering mining as a process of change that can be owned and indeed used to generate legacies that contribute to the sustainability of communities and the respect of their rights.

Objectives

This summer school aims to provide keys to understand the social, economic and political issues related to mining in northern Canada, particularly in the case of towns born with mining. The objective of this project is to organize a PhD seminar and research workshop focusing on extraction-based communities in the north that are undergoing change, in particular through the processes of industrialization and deindustrialization. The project will focus on communities in Quebec and Labrador that have been subject to mining operations in the past and are currently the site of active (re)developments: Schefferville, Fermont, Labrador City and Wabush. The course and research workshop will explore how stakeholders and rights holders in these regions have dealt with industrialization and deindustrialization and what lessons can be learned from such processes for other mining communities in the Arctic and beyond. As such, this summer school offers the opportunity to explore historical and memory issues related to past mining operations, current issues having to do with the weakening or resumption of mining activity, as well as the way in which the future of these cities is approached and imagined.
Learning goals and pedagogy

The objective of the course is for PhD students from Canada and Fennoscandinavia to gain a thorough understanding of the dynamics of boom and bust in northern mining towns – why they take place, what their social, cultural and environmental consequences are and how stakeholders in the north have dealt with them. The course will explore this topic from a multidisciplinary perspective. When having completed this course, the students should have a firm knowledge about:

- characteristics of industrialization and deindustrialization processes in northern mining settlements, in the past and present;
- different explanations of why boom and bust occurs;
- the social, economic, cultural and environmental consequences of boom and busts; and
- how local residents and different stakeholders have dealt with change, and why.

The learning activities consists of lectures, fieldwork exercises, seminar discussions and reading of course literature, as well as a written assignment. Learning objectives aim at:

1) training students in social science fieldwork research by helping them to better understand and relate the points of view and interests of different actors, through a variety of conceptual tools;

2) laying the foundation for scientific collaboration in the development of a special issue of comparative review on mining cities in transition in the Canadian and Swedish contexts. Researchers from REXSAC and MinErAL and students will write co-authored articles for a special issue of *The Extractive Industries and Society*, comparing mining settlements in the Canadian and Fennoscandinavian norths.

The summer school is structured around different working sessions spread over several days, punctuated by conferences offered by researchers, field visits, discussions and roundtables aimed at understanding the viewpoints of local actors on the different transitions that their municipality and communities have undergone with regard to mining activity, past, present and future. They will address at least three questions: How to understand transition regarding boom and busts of mining activities in northern Canada? What are the municipalities’ and Indigenous communities’ experiences of mining cycles? What are the levers that towns and Indigenous groups use today to negotiate their relationships with mining companies?

Assessment

The evaluation of this course is based on:
- Attendance at the course and the writing of a fieldwork diary that should be based on notes from the conferences, meetings and any other contents that the student considers interesting to attach (photo, press clippings, drawings, etc.). Daily notes of 500 words per day will represent 30% of the final score.
- A final analytical report on a specific topic explored in the summer school. The text should be between 8 000 and 10 000 words that summarize the lessons learned from the conferences and meetings that will have taken place during the summer school and connect it with the pertinent readings. This will represent 70% of the final score and should be delivered by 21st June 2019.
For undergraduate students, the evaluation will also be based on daily fieldwork notes (500 words) and a synthesis of the specific texts mentioned below (4 000-5 000 words).

Schedule

Day 1 - Sunday May 26
*Arrival in Sept-îles*
17.00 Gathering *Chez Edgar, 490 avenue Arnaud, Sept-îles, Québec*

Day 2 - Monday May 27
*Train travel from Sept-îles to Schefferville (departure 7.00 am)*
**Presentations on the train:**
- Mining and indigenous communities (Thierry Rodon)
- Mining laws and indigenous rights in Canada (Sophie Thériault)
- Mining legacies in Canada and Northern Europe (Arn Keeling)
- Mining town in transitions (Albina Pashkevich, Dag Avango, Lill Rastad Björst)

Day 3 - Tuesday May 28
*Schefferville*
Presentation of the regional context – Jean-Sébastien Boutet
Visit of the Matimekosh Band Council
Meeting with Schefferville administrator and entrepreneurs

Day 4 - Wednesday May 29
*Schefferville*
Visit of the Tata Steel mine
Visit of the Kawawachikamach Band Council

Day 5 - Thursday May 30
*Schefferville*
Meeting with Innu and guardians of sacred sites
McGill Subarctic Research Station
Summary of the Schefferville meetings and activities – Élise Lepy

Day 6 - Friday May 31
*Train travel from Schefferville to Fermont (departure 8.00 am)*
Presentation of the regional context – Thierry Rodon
Visit and history of Fermont

Day 7 - Saturday June 1
*Fermont*
Roundtable with citizens on the boom and Fermont future
Visit of the Arcelor Mittal mine
Day 8 - Sunday June 2
Fermont / Labrador West
Meeting with Minerai de Fer Quebec
Roundtable with the USW representatives and workers
Visit of Labrador City

Day 9 - Monday June 3
Fermont / Labrador West
Roundtable with municipality council and Arcelor Mittal
Travel from Wabush to Quebec City in the evening (departure 20.30)

Day 10 - Tuesday June 4
Quebec City – Monastère des Augustines
A look back at the discussions and learning experience
Beginning of writing work for a special issue in a scientific journal

Reading list

1. **Extractive industries in northern Canada and the Arctic: law, policy, governance, Indigenous rights.**

These readings provide an overview of historical, social, economic and legal issues related to mining activities in northern Canada and the Arctic. They focus especially on the politics of mining in Indigenous territories, covering Indigenous relations with the mining industry (including negotiated agreements), Indigenous rights, and mining law, policy and governance with regards to Indigenous peoples.

**Mandatory readings:**


Optional readings:


2. Mining towns: social and economic impacts.

These readings focus on the socioeconomic impacts of mining activities and the challenges of single industry towns, including economic diversification and historical and modern labour arrangements such as company towns and fly-in, fly out.

Mandatory readings:


Optional readings:


3. Mining towns: the regional context(s).

These texts examine in more details the regional context for the mining industry in Québec-Labrador, exploring the long-term relationships between communities and the industry, the impact of mining cycles, and the links between local and global economic drivers in Schefferville, Fermont and Labrador City.

Mandatory readings:


Optional readings:


4. Territory, environmental legacy, closure and remediation.

These readings examine the environmental legacy of mining activities, especially with regards to Indigenous relationships to the territory, and the challenges of closure and remediation.

**Mandatory readings:**


**Optional reading:**


These texts are dedicated to opening up theoretical perspectives in the extractive industry literature in Canada, especially regarding the colonial legacy of mining activities, the prospects for consent and Indigenous sovereignty, and reflexivity regarding the role of social science for and beyond extractive industries.

Mandatory readings:


Optional readings:


6. Histories of northern science.

Optional readings: