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Module 9

Secondary Societies: Centralization, Collectivization, and Relocation

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Key Terms and Concepts

- settlement patterns
- migration
- nomadism and de-nomadization
- centralization
- collectivization
- relocation
- transition to settled way of life
- cultural and language assimilation
- paternalism
- Welfare State Policy

Learning Objectives/Outcomes

This module examines the ways in which governments and other social agencies reorganized northern peoples for their ideological or organizational convenience.

The module begins by recalling some characteristics of Aboriginal, pre-contact settlement patterns. It describes the first interventions by fur traders, and their motivations, on indigenous settlement patterns and economic activities. It then describes motivations for centralization—by which government agents induced (semi-)nomadic people to settle—and discusses cases of imposed relocations and the different reasons for which indigenous people were moved.

This module presents collectivization in its Soviet Russian context and reviews contemporary developments in northern Canada and in other northern regions. It



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discusses the effects of these changes on indigenous people, their reactions to them, and the legacy of the period.

Upon completion of this module you should be able to

1. describe the ways in which governments and other social agencies reorganized northern peoples for their ideological or organizational convenience.
2. define centralization, collectivization, and relocation, using examples from northern experiences.

Reading Assignments

The course instructor will assign readings from the required textbook by Freeman (2000), *Endangered Peoples of the Arctic*.

Overview

This module introduces a dramatic chapter of the recent history of northern indigenous peoples, when government agencies, motivated by economic reasons or ideology, or both, initiated measures that interfered with the settlement patterns and economic activities of the North. In all parts of the Arctic, and especially during the period 1930–1970, paternalistic governments—whose agents believed that the people affected would not have understood that these measures were for the ultimate good of the people—imposed changes that concentrated populations into settlements. Nomadic people were centralized and relocated; sometimes these relocations were imposed. “Unprofitable” settlements were closed; communities, in which newcomers controlled many of the functions, were built; and the first stages of urbanization were seen. In the former USSR, collectivization forced people into wage employment.

The social and cultural consequences of these interventions were far-reaching. While collectivization is being reversed in Russia and relocations have become less frequent, concentrating Arctic populations remains an ongoing process.



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Lecture

Aboriginal Settlement Patterns in the Arctic

Until comparatively recent times, inhabitants of the Arctic lived in autarky: economic self-sufficiency and independence. “Living off the land” meant that groups of humans had to fend for themselves and to obtain most of what they needed for their subsistence—food in particular—directly from the environment, rather than through exchanges with other people. To this day, even though Arctic communities have long lost their economic isolation and independence, the North is often described as a region where people live in closer association with their natural environment than in many other parts of the world.

As numerous studies have shown, there is a strong correlation between the annual settlement cycles of the different Arctic indigenous peoples and their exploitation of resources. To a very high degree, the location, movements, and distribution of the species people fed upon determined their settlement patterns. In the comparatively poor regions of the central Canadian Arctic, Inuit had to disperse every summer in groups no larger than a nuclear family (i.e., consisting only of parents and their children) to fish and search for caribou. They congregated in ephemeral villages of igloos built on the winter sea ice. The seal hunt, through the ice, required the co-operation of groups of hunters. Farther south, in the Barrens of Canada, Caribou Inuit and Caribou Eater Dene were subdivided into “discrete bands” that corresponded to “discrete herds” of caribou.

Some areas had a richer and more stable supply of resources. At selected spots on the shores and islands near Bering Strait, for instance, more or less permanent villages have existed for more than two thousand years because people could intercept whale migrations and stockpile large quantities of food to see them through the lean season. Some of the largest prehistoric and historic villages of the Arctic are found there: Wales, Alaska, at the western tip of North America, had about 600 inhabitants in the late nineteenth century. Elsewhere, the emergence of intensive reindeer herding, in most places not earlier than the seventeenth century, made access to food more secure, but it implied increased nomadism, as herders had to follow their animals through the migrations of the reindeer.

Migration and nomadism are two necessary adaptations to living off the land in the Arctic. Even on the coasts of the Bering Strait, where resources were abundant, villages were periodically abandoned, and ones that had been abandoned were resettled (Krupnik 1993; Krupnik and Chlenov), in order to let local resources replenish—an equivalent of the agrarian practice of letting a piece of land lie fallow. These movements were decided and



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accomplished by the people involved, without intervention from an outside agency. It is not always possible to neatly distinguish between a migration, which is a permanent move, and nomadism, which involves movements within a given territory according to the seasons of the year and availability of resources.

Economic Motivations to Keep Indigenous People Dispersed

People who went to the Arctic to exploit resources could depend on their home region for supplies. The Hudson's Bay Company (HBC), for example, founded in England in 1670 to buy furs, rapidly established trading posts throughout the Canadian North. Some posts were strategically placed on the seaside and could be supplied by ships coming directly from England every summer. The ships brought a good deal of the food consumed by the permanent employees of the company during the year. The core staff were Europeans, but Aboriginal men and women were hired for diverse, more or less temporary tasks, such as unloading the ships, doing domestic work around the posts, guiding exploratory parties, hunting for fresh meat, making fur clothes, and going on trading parties. Most settlements in the Arctic started in this way.

It was in the interest of the fur traders at the trading posts to have indigenous suppliers and customers who hunted for their own subsistence and trapped for furs. This meant that they had to be kept or sent where fur animals were abundant, and so the fur traders discouraged the suppliers from remaining near the posts, except for those times when the fur traders wanted them near. Such situations existed in most regions of the Arctic, with little variation, because the basic determinants were the same everywhere. Fur traders attempted to attach individual hunters to a certain trading post. The institution of a credit and debt system was efficient in that respect. Where there were no leaders among an indigenous population, the fur traders nominated one in order to have privileged intermediaries in the fur trade. They also succeeded early in causing population migrations to follow the fur-bearing animals. These early interferences with settlement patterns and locations of indigenous peoples culminated in outright relocations over long distances. As early as the eighteenth century, Russian fur traders took Aleut people along with them to hunt furs on mainland Alaska. In Canada, the HBC undertook such relocations, with government approval, in the early twentieth century, and until as late as 1941–42, when some Inuit were moved by the HBC from Nunavik to Southampton Island, across Hudson Bay (Damas 2002, 36). With similar justification—that is, to move people away from a depleted area to new hunting grounds—East Greenlandic Inuit were



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removed from the Ammassalik district in 1925 to settle Scoresbysund, a good thousand kilometres to the north.

The first category of newcomers to the North who encouraged indigenous people to live or gather near them were Christian missionaries. To inculcate notions of Christianity requires close and prolonged contact. Missionaries often settled alongside the trading posts in order to profit from the already established logistics. They encouraged Aboriginal people to visit the mission at least for major holidays, such as Christmas and Easter.

Twentieth-Century Government Interventions in Indigenous Settlement Patterns and Economic Activities

During the period from about 1930 to 1970, government agencies in various countries in the circumpolar North intervened in the settlement patterns, economic activities, and many other aspects of the lives of the indigenous peoples of the North who were placed under their jurisdiction. In particular, as governments concentrated people in certain settlements, their control over indigenous ways of life increased, as did their potential to further transform them. Nomads were induced to settle down, and smaller settlements were condemned and their populations forced to concentrate in a smaller number of larger settlements.

Centralization corresponds to two distinct movements: (1) the **settlement or de-nomadization** of (semi-)nomadic, dispersed populations; and (2) the **concentration** of already settled populations into larger and less numerous centres, involving the closing of smaller, “unprofitable” settlements, and the resettling of the populations into larger centres. Concentration is still going on in the Arctic today.

The overarching motivations for these interventions were similar everywhere. Indigenous ways of life, in particular nomadism, were considered “backward” and incompatible with the ideals of modernity and social “welfare,” as it was then conceived. Policies to change indigenous ways of life were applied in a paternalistic manner. People were considered incapable of understanding and of applying themselves to such transformations. Therefore, the government agents felt justified in imposing changes without consulting those who would be affected. Such procedures have been described as “social engineering” or “planned social change.”

The term **paternalism** applies to the policy of an authority regulating the conduct of those under its control in matters affecting them as individuals as well as in their relations to authority and to each other. Under pretext of



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protection, decisions are taken without consulting those who are affected. For instance, during the formation of the Eskimo Affairs Committee in 1952 in Canada, a senior government official answered the question of absence of Inuit members with these words: “The only reason why Eskimos were not invited to the meeting was . . . that it was felt that few, if any, of them have yet reached the stage where they could take a responsible part in such discussion” (Damas 1993, 20).

Concentrating populations in permanent settlements was seen as the most efficient way to provide people with education, health services, modern housing and institutions, and other benefits of modern civilization. Government services are easier and cheaper to deliver to a small number of larger settlements than to a large number of smaller settlements. The location of larger settlements was determined by the accessibility of large-capacity ships or by the proximity to employment in industry—for example, mining or commercial fishing—but there were many other reasons to move people and to concentrate them.

Relocation is a movement of a group of people that is planned and sometimes enforced by an outside agency. Relocation has been used by outside agencies to bring about centralization and concentration, as in the numerous cases where smaller settlements were closed and their population transferred to larger centres.

A number of relocations were associated, at least partly, with sovereignty claims. The establishment of a village on Wrangel Island in 1924 helped secure Soviet claims to it. The move of Ammassalik Inuit to Scoresbysund in 1925 established Danish sovereignty at the expense of Norwegian claims; likewise, the resettlement of Canadian Inuit to Ellesmere Island in 1953–54 secured Canadian claims.

During the Second World War, Aleuts were moved away from Japanese invaders to mainland Alaska and Russian Skolt Sami were resettled in Finland. Later, during the Cold War, Siberian Yuit were relocated away from sensitive areas close to the US border: Ratmanova (Big Diomedes) Island, and Naukan. In 1953, 116 Inuit from northeast Greenland were evacuated from Thule, where the Americans had built a radar base, and relocated one hundred kilometres north of Thule.

People were moved away from locations that were threatened by coastal erosion (e.g., Old Chaplino on the Russian side of Bering Strait; Point Hope in northwest Alaska), from areas flooded by hydro-power dams (e.g., James Bay in Canada; Alta in Norway), and from areas otherwise affected by industry or resource exploitation. They were relocated in settlements where sea or air access would be more convenient; the water supply sufficient; and where they could be employed, for example, in mining or fishing. Mining towns were condemned when they became unprofitable (e.g., Qullissat on Disko Island in Greenland,



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1924–1972). In Greenland, modernization plans from the 1950s and 1960s foresaw the concentration of populations in a small number of large settlements in the southwestern part of the country, out of which former hunters could be employed in commercial fishing and fish processing. In some cases, the relocations were imposed. In others, services—such as the store, or the school—were discontinued in the condemned settlements while they were improved in towns, thus providing sufficient incentive for people to relocate.

Regional Overviews

Canada and the Soviet Union represent good examples of contrasting government policies of resettlement and concentration. The following sections give overviews of developments in these two countries and discuss the social consequences. Within Russia, we will focus on the Republic of Yakutia (Sakha).

Soviet and Post-Soviet Russia

The most influential factor in the development of Russia during the twentieth century was the dictatorship of the Communist Party. From 1917 to 1991, the party imposed a Soviet regime founded on the ideas of Marx and Lenin.

Collectivization

Owing to the remoteness of northern districts from the perspective of central regions of the USSR, the process of collectivization started and was completed later in the North than in the central and southern regions.

Collectivization in the Soviet Union began shortly after the regime was established. It consisted of abolishing private ownership of means of production and combining labour implements, material, financial means, and working power in communities of different types (*tovarischestvo*, *artel*—associations, companies, etc). In a later stage of the process, all collective labour and property of collective farms came under the control of, and were used for the interests of, the state. Following Marxist-Leninist ideology, collectivization was implemented to get rid of class enemies and build a socialist society without capitalist exploiters.

Created in 1924, the Committee of the North organized the soviets on the basis of patrimonial counsels. During the period 1924–30, the committee held clan counsels and district indigenous councils among Aboriginal peoples of the Russian North. These councils introduced and enforced new policy. They also acted as courts, hearing all cases except capital crimes and crimes involving politics.



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The Soviet power assisted indigenous populations through the patrimonial and indigenous soviets. Northern people were given a privilege: they were released from all common state and local taxes, as well as from labour and military obligations. The liberal rules concerning arms use were legalized; this was considered a great privilege for people who hunted for a living. Administration started keeping a centralized supply of provisions and household and hunting equipment. It was important to note that the state bread storehouses sold food at a privileged price or supplied it on credit. Humanitarian aid was provided for tribes that lived in economically deprived areas and suffered from economic destruction and starvation.

The next stage of the Soviet state activity of collectivization was aimed at creating the united collective farms, *kolkhoz*.

Sovkhoz, kolkhoz, artel, tovarischestvo: These Soviet Russian words designate different forms of collective “farms” and collective work organizations, in order from the most collectivized (*sovkhoz*, or state farm), to the less collectivized.

Reforming the Aboriginal farms and housekeeping into co-operative societies and collective farms made it easier for the state to control, inspect, and confiscate trade products of indigenous peoples for the state’s own benefit. The final results of the work of hunters, reindeer breeders, and fishers was subject to collectivization, as well as the fishing and hunting equipment and all reindeer herds (Khatylaev 2001, 71–77). Illiterate people and those who were not prepared for these changes were afraid that their family and personal things would be also collectivized.

In 1930, the All-Union Central Executive Committee adopted the *Resolution on the Structure of Population Involved in Labour, Trade and Farming in the North of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR)*. The main idea of the resolution was to start from the simplest forms of co-operation—for example, creating production communities, and conducting seasonal fishing activities and the summer pasture of deer.

In addition, an activity to determine the administrative districts in the North was held. The Soviet power determined the borders of national regions and districts and was planning to introduce local self-government in those regions. This was the first stage of the policy of the soviets in the North. The policy also provided the principle of priority of rights of the small-numbered peoples of the North. In particular, the first legal instances were courts of common law (concerning traditional ethnic standards). According to the regulations, at least one of the three judges should be Aboriginal. The Soviet power took into consideration every specific nature of the North—the cultural, historical, and economic peculiarity of northern territories.



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This so-called “romantic” period lasted for some time. By the end of the 1920s, the national policy had changed. Political correctness had changed to distrust of ethnic intelligentsia; the idea of independence and autonomy for people of the North was abandoned. Moreover, according to strict policy, a search for domestic enemies—the “witch hunts”—had begun in the provinces (Khatylaev 2001, 77–82).

The situation became worse: besides the agitation and economic policies, the state used force and confiscated property. For example, in 1930 there was redivision of property in the north part of the republic. Solvent and well-to-do families were declared to be the *kulak* families, and the family members were also considered to be *kulaks*. Their property was subject to confiscation and could be assigned to collective farms. This process was called the “dispossession of the *kulaks*.” Any sign of protest or opposition could be met with arrest and a punishment that ranged from exile to the death penalty.

Kulak is a Soviet ideological term designating a prosperous, well-to-do person. Originally, this term was applied to those who exploited the labour of other people; later, it included all whose property status was above poverty. In the 1930s, campaigns of ***de-kulakization***—the expropriation, marginalization, and sometimes imprisonment and execution of those designated as *kulaks*—took place in the Soviet Union. The **dispossession of the *kulaks*** meant the confiscation of the *kulak*'s property, the deprivation of their civil rights, and imprisonment, usually accompanied by deportation. These actions were extended to all family members and close relatives. Many indigenous reindeer herders were dispossessed and persecuted as *kulaks*.

The collectivization of northern Yakut, which could be called “forced co-operation with confiscation of property,” had also begun. In 1930–31, in the Bulunsky region of Yakutia, 19 small collective farms were created (*artel*). They represented 18 per cent of all farms of the region and 107 member families. Those collective farms were given 13 thousand reindeer out of the 28 thousand confiscated from other rich farms. The rest of the reindeer were distributed to other state organizations. The Bulun uprising of 1930—a violent protest organized by owners of the confiscated property—was quashed and the rebels were cruelly punished. A special detachment sent by the All-Union Central Political Administrative Board checked the nomad camps of the indigenous peoples and arrested many people. In order to save funds, the arrested people were punished in the simplest way: they were beaten by axe and hauled down the ice (Vinokourova, field data, Bulunsky region of the Sakha Republic, that is, Yakutia). Completely innocent people were also executed without any court hearing or inquest.

The process of collectivization was completed by 1940; only some individual peasant holdings remained until the 1950s. In the 1940s, the northern collective



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societies were reorganized into *kolkhoz*, which were typical for the whole USSR; these Soviet collective farms became the forms of labour exploitation of indigenous peoples. Although indigenous people worked hard at reindeer breeding, the standardized taxes had increased, and the price of trade goods was high, while income was low. Having founded the collective farms, the state then intruded in all spheres of life of the northerners, including labour, life, family relations, and leisure.

Later, the collective farms were restructured into state farms (*sovkhos*), which were larger than the *kolkhoz*: this was the state's next campaign. Whole districts and republics transferred the collective societies into the state forms of property. Within several years, almost all *kolkhoz* were consolidated into a smaller number of the larger *sovkhos*.

There were several reasons. The main one was that the newly established mining centres in the North required provisions (mainly food) that could be readily available. The restructuring of the archaic collective farms into state enterprises improved the payment schedule and ensured an eight-hour working day, with holidays and other worker benefits. The state farm was considered an improvement in the lives of northerners.

The property of collective farms was passed on to state farms. Thus, the second stage of the confiscation process had begun. All meetings of members of collective farms were held under ideological control of representatives from the Communist Party of the USSR. Inquiries of members of the collective farms about their personal property that had been passed to a collective farm were stopped. (Vinokourova 1993, 9).

The introduction of new reforms had different consequences in the northern economy. Gradually, the spheres of traditional occupations had diminished. Only large state farms were engaged in reindeer husbandry. Earlier, private traders and many collective farms used to have reindeer as an additional occupation. It was observed that the monopolization of reindeer husbandry did not lead to qualitative and quantitative progress. For instance, in Yakutia in the 1980s, the number of reindeer livestock saw almost no increase. From the 1960s to the 1980s, new occupations—such as breeding fur animals in cages, growing vegetables, breeding dairy cattle, and dairy farming—were introduced in the collective farms of the North. There were even attempts to grow maize. The risks of trying new ventures were high: some activities were tried to the detriment of traditional occupations; moreover, the new ideas did not adapt well in the North, and there were rarely good results from them, or profit.

At the end of the 1980s, the economy of state farms stagnated and collapsed during the period of general crisis.



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Relocation and Centralization

For a long period of time, the policy of resettlement was an important aspect of state policy. Resettlement occurred in three ways: (1) settling people in compact areas where they were to establish the collective farms; (2) creating new settlements for nomadic Aboriginal tribes; and (3) resettling according to administrative and political ideas.

The first process of resettling was in the 1920s and 1930s, when national, indigenous, and administrative units were being founded. For instance, in the 1920s, settlements for Negidal people were created in Khabari. Later, in 1943–47, the Negidal people were resettled by force to villages where the Russians outnumbered them. As a result, in the 1980s, 70 per cent of Negidal'tsy people considered the Russian language to be their first language.

The policy of forced resettlement caused the destruction of the traditional economic structure, way of life, blood relations, and community relations. Assimilation with other nations led to the loss of the mother tongue and traditional cultural values. Moreover, Russian-language propaganda in the education system in the 1970s and 1980s increased the process of assimilation of indigenous peoples.

A campaign of transition to the settled way of life had its maximum scope after 1957. The Central Committee of the Communist Party of the USSR adopted a resolution called *Activities on Further Development of the Economy and Culture of the Peoples of the North*. In addition to assistance and support provided for indigenous peoples, it was necessary to put the traditional nomadic existence to an end.

During a long period, the collective and state farms underwent changes. They became larger, and even grew to include several villages. Then they divided into small farms because of complications in management. The borders of residential districts also underwent changes as well as the management and production plots.

The campaign caused great damage when it declared the settlements as having no social or economic prospects. The economic plots, and areas that had already been worked up, were abandoned, and small national villages were abolished. Moreover, the cultural environment and spiritual relationship with traditional territories, as well as human relations, were broken. Very often, the numbers of technical equipment, people, and domestic animals exceeded the resources of soil and water in the villages. The fragile environment of the North was threatened.

According to state policy, the Aboriginal population was settled outside its traditional territories. As mentioned earlier, Aboriginal villages close to the US–



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USSR border were closed. Another example of this fact was that the indigenous peoples had to leave their traditional territories in Yakutia, Chukotka, and Yamal for the benefit of mining companies. Territories of the Chukchi, Sakha (the self-designation of the Yakut), Evenk, Even, and Yukagir peoples were taken to develop industrial and strategic sites (e.g., railway, electric, and hydro stations; airports).

The borders of national republics were also rehashed for state safety. Some of the former territories of Yakutia became a part of the Magadan and Irkutsk regions; and, in the 1940s and 1950s, the ethnic districts and regions in the Russian Far East vanished.

The indigenous territories continued to be seized. For example, hunting territories of the Yukagir people along the river Shamanikha (a tributary of the Kolyma River) were ceded to mining companies. The borders of the territories of indigenous peoples changed—because of the function of large mining companies, military objects, and frontier territories—or were just expropriated.

Post-Soviet Developments

Conditions in the Russian Arctic changed tremendously after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. Except in a few resource-rich regions, the evolution is characterized by disinvestment from the state, which had previously played a central role; massive out-migration of recent immigrants; severe economic impoverishment; and attendant social and cultural disruptions. The Russian central and regional governments have endeavoured to reduce costs by, for example, cutting subsidies to induce Arctic residents to move back to more southerly regions. This has been an effective measure in Chukotka (Csonka 1998), but without such economic disincentives, people tend to stay. Indigenous people, in turn, are moving from the smaller villages to regional centres, where jobs and food are easier to secure. Many of the smaller settlements have been abandoned for lack of resources for maintenance.

Canada

As the Canadian Arctic is comparatively poor in natural resources, and as its staple terrestrial game—caribou—migrates over vast expanses, Aboriginal people were traditionally nomadic and widely scattered. The wintering locations of European and Euro-American whaling ships had already determined migrations and aggregations of Inuit around them in the last decades of the nineteenth century and until 1915. North of the treeline, trading posts had been established since the beginning of the twentieth century. Until the 1950s, things remained as they were throughout the fur trade. Indigenous people were encouraged to remain dispersed, so they could live off the land by hunting and fishing—and trapping furs. Starvation was not uncommon. In some cases



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starvation was related to the trapping economy, for example, when hunters, in situations of impending scarcity persevered in their search for fur-bearing animals instead of concentrating on subsistence hunting.

But the Canadian government did not respond, tending to agree with the arguments of the fur traders. In sharp contrast to the developments in Soviet Russia, in Canada, “the Policy of Dispersal had as its main ingredients a laissez-faire governmental philosophy, an austere economic stance, and the rationalization of preserving Inuit culture.” (Damas 2002, 107). As late as 1944, there was only one public day school in the central Arctic, in Pangnirtung; otherwise, classes were casually arranged by the missions, when Inuit sojourned near them (Damas 2002, 42). “The most important step made to enhance the welfare of the Inuit before the 1950s was the implementation of the Family Allowances Act of 1944 in the Canadian Arctic” (Damas 2002, 43).

In 1953, some families from Inukjuaq in Nunavik, and from Pond Inlet on Baffin Island, were induced by government agents to let themselves be resettled in the High Arctic, at Craig Harbour (and later at Grise Fiord) and at Resolute—thousands of kilometres to the north. The motives for the relocation and the hardships endured by those who were moved were much debated in the 1990s. It was long suspected that the affirmation of Canadian sovereignty on these large islands of the Arctic Archipelago was one of the prime motives for the move, but this accusation could not be proven on the basis of remaining evidence (Damas 2002; Marcus 1995; Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples 1994; Tester and Kulchisky 1994).

Dene (Chipewyan), while hunting caribou on the Barrens in season, were removed in 1956 and relocated to Churchill; after a few miserable years, they were relocated, again, this time to Duck Lake in northern Manitoba. A group of about 50 Caribou Inuit dwelling inland, far from the west coast of Hudson Bay, were relocated in 1957, after several episodes of starvation, away from the radio station on which they were considered to become too dependent for relief rations. They were left at Henik Lakes, an isolated area where several people starved, before being moved to Eskimo Point (now Arviat), on the west coast of Hudson Bay. The same people were then moved to Rankin Inlet, a few hundred kilometres to the north, so that they could find work in the nickel mine (which had opened in 1953 and was closed nine years later); they resettled in a village constructed in Whale Cove in 1958–59, while a few finally drifted back to Arviat.

In a recent book, David Damas (2002) has attempted to assess the factors involved in the concentration of Inuit of the central Canadian Arctic:

It was clearly the rise of the new Welfare State Policy that had the greatest impact on population concentration during the 1960s. The related loosening of the purse-strings of the government made it possible for humanitarian



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considerations to supercede the austerity that had dominated the Policy of Dispersal. (Damas 2002, 181)

Indeed, concentration of settlement in the Central Arctic was not so much a considered policy (and its inevitability was for a long time only reluctantly recognized) as it was a largely unintended consequence of the new Welfare State Policy. . . . The Welfare State Policy was implemented in programs that promoted better health conditions, education, and comfort for the Inuit of Canada. In particular, poor health was thought to be related to inadequate housing, and the government embarked on a series of housing programs in the centers of settlement. Motives for in-gathering in the early stages of the process were diverse and are not easily isolated. It is likely that, as the process accelerated, the “gradual acquisition of urban preferences by Native people” cited by Vallee et al. entered into the picture. (Damas 2002, 191)

Alaska, Northern Fennoscandia, and Greenland

Processes of centralization and concentration of indigenous populations were also at work in Alaska and intensified during and after the Second World War. Since settled villages existed already before contact, these processes were a matter of degree rather than the kind in Canada.

The Second World War also brought wide-ranging changes to the Sami of Norway, Sweden, Finland, and the Kola Peninsula in Russia. The Finnish Sami were evacuated to more southerly regions of their country at the beginning of the German invasion. Then the retreating Germans burned most of Lapland, and the country was rebuilt according to entirely new, southern-inspired standards. Skolt Sami were resettled from Russia to Finland (Linkola and Linkola 2002). Changing reindeer herding laws, and the closing of borders, deeply affected the settlement patterns of Sami reindeer herders (Lehtola 2002).

Change started accelerating in Greenland during the Second World War, when the island was cut off from Denmark, which had been invaded by the Germans. US military troops built airports and kept troops there. Greenland, from the status of colony, became a province of the Danish kingdom in 1953. Interventionist state policies of the 1950s and 1960s aimed at modernizing the country. Towns on the ice-free coasts of southwest Greenland were earmarked for rapid development. By making conditions less attractive in the smaller hunting settlements, and more attractive in a few centres, people were induced to move to towns in which they were expected to find employment in commercial fishing. It has been chronically difficult for construction to keep up with the housing demands of the growing urban population. Many large apartment buildings were constructed in the 1960s and 1970s. They were the first to be equipped with electricity and running water. However, they proved ill adapted to social conditions in Greenland, and they contributed to the rise of



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social problems associated with urban life. Ever since the introduction of Home Rule in 1979, the issue of the development of towns at the expense of outlying settlements remains a central political issue. Calls to cease investing in—or to close—settlements that survive on public transfers are regularly heard and give rise to protests in the villages and among the more traditionally oriented part of the population.

Summary

For many people, the interventions described in this module meant the rapid social change from a relatively autonomous way of life, based mostly on a traditional socio-economic basis (hunting, herding, fishing), where kinship represented the main and almost sole focus of social organization, to totally new concepts and living habits. In some regions, when people settled into modern communities, wage labour and a cash economy were introduced at the same time as a welfare system. From that time on, kinship ties were no longer the primary focus for economic co-operation. It became possible to make a livelihood from other activities than the heretofore traditional ones.

Unemployment became a feature of life in settled communities. Partly as a consequence of the availability and conformation of new housing, household size and composition tended to shift from the extended to the nuclear family. In Greenland, for example, the average number of persons in a household has decreased from 5.3 in 1955 to 2.6 in 2003. There have been many drastic social and cultural changes in the North since the Second World War—so many that it is not possible to isolate those that are owing solely to centralization, relocation, or collectivization.

Many government interventions, such as those in education, health care, and welfare, had ethical justifications, which in turn justified the forced relocations and the inducements to centralization and concentration. Not all of the changes were for the worse. Nevertheless, the way they were imposed implied a loss of control over local affairs, and over collective as well individual destinies. In small northern settlements, local people could not escape the impression, at times, that they were watching helplessly while things were being done around them and “for” them (e.g., the building of houses, infrastructures, and schools; the administration of justice). The emergence of such feelings of alienation in turn contributed to the rise of social problems, such as suicide, violence, the breaking of laws, and alcohol abuse.

Paternalist policies designed far from Arctic conditions have given way to local autonomies. With a few exceptions, the concentration of nomadic populations was achieved by 1970. In a few cases, relocatees have recently sued their government for the sufferings they have endured (e.g., the “High Arctic relocation” in Canada; and the relocation of Thule Inuit away from an American military base to Qaanaaq). Governments are reluctant to acknowledge that they have made mistakes. Concentration and urbanization remain ongoing issues and processes in the Arctic. As to relocations, it may well be that global warming



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will increase the number of villages threatened by coastal erosion (the coast being left unprotected from waves by sea ice for longer periods each year) and the melting of the permafrost, on which buildings rest.



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Supplementary Readings/Materials

- Inuit history in general: Damas (1996)
- Change among Inuit: 1940–1964: Hughes (1965)
- Canada: Crowe (1974), Damas (1993, 1996, 2002), Honigmann (1975), Jenness (1962–1968), Marcus (1995), Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1994), Tester and Kulchisky (1994)
- Northern Fennoscandia: Lehtola (2002), Linkola and Linkola (2002)
- Greenland: Deth Petersen (1986), Walsøe (2003)
- Russia: Chichlo (1981), Csonka (1998), Forsyth (1992), Krupnik (1993), Slezkine (1994), Vakhtin (1992)

Study Questions

1. What were the contrasting motivations behind policies of dispersal versus policies of concentration of indigenous people?
2. What were the different reasons invoked for relocating people?
3. When there were several simultaneous reasons to relocate people, which ones have been emphasized, and which ones have been played down or hidden by governments. Why?
4. What is the purpose of collectivization? When, where, and in what context did it start?
5. What are the similarities and differences in the ways that Soviet Russia and Canada carried out centralization and relocation policies?
6. In what ways did the policies of collectivization, centralization, and relocations change since the time when they were most actively enforced?

Glossary of Terms

All-Union Central Political Administrative Board	founded in 1923 to replace the Extra-ordinary Committee on struggle against counter-revolution. In 1934, all functions of the All-Union Central Political Administrative Board were transferred to the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs.
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<i>artel</i>	a co-operative association of workers or peasants.
autarky	1 self-sufficiency, esp. as an economic system. 2 a state etc. run according to such a system.
the Barrens	(also barrens, Barren Grounds, Barren Lands) <i>Cdn</i> the treeless, sparsely populated region of northern Canada, lying between Hudson Bay and Great Slave and Great Bear lakes.
Caribou Inuit	an inland Inuit people formerly inhabiting the Barrens and relying almost entirely on caribou for food and clothing.
collectivize	1 organize on the basis of collective ownership. 2 the process of combining labour implements, material, and financial means, as well as the working power of individual peasants who are part of different types of communities (e.g., TOVARISCHESTVO, ARTEL). The final result of collective labour and all property of collective farms were under control of and used for the interests of the State.
Dene	a member of a group of Aboriginal peoples of the Athapaskan linguistic family, living esp. in the Canadian north. [from the Chipewyan <i>dene</i> , meaning person]
<i>kolkhoz</i>	Soviet collective farms.
<i>kulak</i>	Soviet ideological term designating a prosperous, well-to-do person. Originally, this term was related to those who exploited labour of other people; later it was used to signify all people whose property status was higher than poverty.
nomadic way of life	the traditional way of migration within a certain area. Routes and speed of movement depend on current environmental conditions and availability of bio-resources.
solvent	<i>adjective</i> having enough money to meet one's liabilities.
Soviet	<i>noun</i> 1 a citizen of the former Soviet Union. 2 (soviet) an elected local, district, or national council in the former Soviet Union with legislative and executive functions. 3 (soviet) a revolutionary council of workers, peasants, etc. before 1917. <i>adjective</i> of or concerning the former Soviet Union or its people.
<i>sovkhos</i>	Soviet state farms.
<i>tovarischestvo</i>	Soviet production societies.



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transition to settled way of life	refers to the policy of forced transition of nomadic peoples to settled way of life: however, reindeer breeders, hunters, and fishermen could not live in villages and towns and leave their traditional occupations. Therefore, women, children, and older men were the first to settle in the new villages. In this way, the indigenous family and generational ties were lost.
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