



## UNIVERSITY OF THE ARCTIC

### Module 13

## Concluding Observations: What About the Fisheries?

---

Developed by Chris Southcott, Lakehead University

### Key Terms and Concepts

- sustainable development
- globalization
- population change
- resource-dependent communities
- Indigenous communities
- fishing communities
- fish stock decline
- inland hunting-fishing
- maritime hunting

---

### Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this module students will:

1. Understand how to start basic research into a circumpolar issue
2. Recognize the essential nature of the fishing industry in the Circumpolar World
3. Understand the implications of globalization for Circumpolar fisheries
4. Recognize the essential similarities and differences of the issues discussed in the course
5. Understand the nature of the obstacles and opportunities presented by attempts to develop sustainable industries in the Circumpolar World



## UNIVERSITY OF THE ARCTIC

---

### Overview

The objective of this module is to use what you have learned so far in the course to find out for yourself about the importance of the fisheries for certain communities and understand the challenges currently facing the use of this resource for the development of sustainable communities in the North. We start out with a review of some of the essential concepts and themes that you may need to understand for a proper analysis of the fisheries in the Circumpolar World. We then review material on the Northern fisheries dealt with in earlier modules. We conclude with a brief discussion of possible places to look for information on circumpolar fisheries.

---

### Lecture

You are now almost finished this course. So far the course has tried to inform you about the basic problems facing the development of healthy, sustainable communities in the North. For most of the modules, challenges currently facing the development of such communities are linked to the processes of globalization and its impact on population trends and the major types of communities in the circumpolar region.

In order to develop sustainable communities in the circumpolar region, you will have to understand the importance, and impact, of natural resource use for these communities and ownership of these resources. So far we have looked at tourism, reindeer herding and traditional resource use, oil and gas, forestry, and mining.

Still, there is one natural resource that is important for Northern communities that we have not as yet dealt with—fishing. The objective of this module is to use what you have learned so far in the course to find out for yourself about the importance of the fisheries for certain communities and understand the challenges currently facing the use of this resource for the development of sustainable communities in the North.

#### **What have we learned so far that may be helpful in understanding the fisheries?**

Let us review some of the essential concepts and themes that you may need to understand for a proper analysis of the fisheries in the Circumpolar World.

**Sustainable development:** To understand the challenges currently facing the use of fisheries for the development of sustainable communities in the North we have to have a good understanding of sustainable development. To quote once again from the Brundtland report, sustainable development should



## UNIVERSITY OF THE ARCTIC

“...meet[s] the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (Brundtland, et al 1987, p. 8). We should strive to ensure that the basic needs of everyone on the planet are met in the present, but that in doing so we must also ensure that the same opportunities to meet basic needs are available in the future.

**Globalization:** Of the issues affecting the sustainable development of our communities, most are related to what is happening in the world economy. For a long time now, the vast majority of our communities have been under the influence of economic forces that are outside our regions. We have not had local control of our economies for a long time. Many people argue that this lack of local control has intensified lately under the influence of a new economic system called globalization.

Globalization is not an easy concept to define. It means many different things to many people. In a very general sense, it means that national economic boundaries are being erased as international trade becomes more and more important. It also means that the demands of local communities with particular needs, such as those in the circumpolar regions, have increasingly become secondary to the demands of international trade forces.

Globalization is more than the influence of international capital. While the Circumpolar World was considered by each colonizing nation as a storehouse of the potential wealth of that nation, it is important to understand that, from the beginning of the twentieth century, the Circumpolar World was linked to the demands of global capital. In the early twentieth century, Canadian capitalists were building mines in what was then Northern Finland. From the turn of the century, the pulp and paper industry in the sub-Arctic regions of Canada was built by American capital.

Yet, globalization is the most recent economic system to impose itself on the Circumpolar World. This globalization contains some of the earlier aspects of natural resource development in the North but presents them in a new national and international environment. This new environment includes the decreasing importance of the national state and transfer systems. It is also linked to the challenges of an increasingly post-industrial society. Any analysis of the fisheries in the Circumpolar World has to take into account the impact of globalization and whether this impact has been good or bad for Northern communities. To understand this impact one has to trace a history of the relationship between these communities and the fisheries. You then need to see what had happened to this relationship in the last 30 years. Have there been changes? What are the sources of these changes? Are these changes good or bad?

**Population change:** In order to evaluate the changes on these communities one must take into account the population changes that are taking place within



## UNIVERSITY OF THE ARCTIC

the context of the general population changes of the North. In general, in the last 30 years the circumpolar region has seen a slowing of population growth and the start of population decline. For some regions, such as in the Russian North following the collapse of the Soviet Union, this decline is rapid. In other regions there is not so much a decline as a stagnation of the population. Northern communities are increasingly becoming dominated by the very young or the elderly. Within this context, how are the populations changing in fishing dependent communities. Can these changes be seen as something negative or something positive?

**The two main types of circumpolar communities:** A proper understanding of the population changes in fishing dependent communities will probably depend on an understanding of the two main types of communities in the circumpolar region: resource-dependent, industrial communities and Indigenous communities.

In the industrialized, resource-dependent communities populated mainly by non-Indigenous people, the forces of globalization and post-industrialism have brought about a lot of changes. While they have improved life in some instances, they have also had negative effects. The increasing need for economic “rationalization” in order for resource companies to remain competitive has often meant a decline in the number of jobs. With few new jobs for younger employees, these communities are often faced with the problems of youth out-migration, an aging population, and a general decline in population. Is this happening in the industrial resource-dependent communities that are dependent upon the fisheries? Are the forces of economic rationalization having an impact on the fishing industry in the same way they are having an impact on the forestry and mining communities?

The other main type of community in the circumpolar region are Indigenous communities. Many of these communities also depend in large part on the fisheries, although in a different manner than the industrialized, resource-dependent communities. For some of these communities, fishing has been part of their traditional economy for centuries. Most of the time however, fishing is not used to produce a commodity to be sold on the international market. Fishing is instead used for the subsistence of these communities.

In light of this difference, has globalization had any impact on fishing in Indigenous communities? Module 6 outlines several conflicts facing these communities that may also be having an effect on the fisheries. The domination of the circumpolar fisheries by global industrial interests has often meant the depletion of the resource. This depletion has meant the inability of Indigenous communities to continue traditional fishing activities. As well, new environmental values that have developed in southern urban centres have had an effect on the ability of Indigenous communities to carry out such traditional activities such as whaling and sealing. Finally, the creation of a



## UNIVERSITY OF THE ARCTIC

certain dependence in these communities on “the transfer economy,” and the subsequent decline of these transfers, can also be seen, at least indirectly, in the use of the fisheries by these communities. Several other possible impacts are dealt with in Module 6. What are they?

Module 7 deals with northern tourism. This industry is not what we would normally call a resource industry but is there anything that we can learn from what is currently occurring in the tourism industry that will help us understand some of the issues confronting the fishing industry in the North?

One of the issues raised in this module is the issue of local control of the tourism industry. Communities are trying to develop tourism in a way that they can control the industry. In doing so they hope to minimize some of the negative aspects of tourism, such as environmental problems, and maximize the benefits. Is local control an issue in the circumpolar fishing industry? The regulation of the circumpolar tourism industry is also seen to be a concern. Is it a concern for the circumpolar fishing industry?

Module 8 discusses traditional resource use in the circumpolar regions through the example of reindeer husbandry. In the module, Golovnev notes several important changes that have taken place in reindeer husbandry over the past century that have transformed the activity from a more “traditional activity” to a more industrial one. He also points out the problems encountered in husbandry that may mean the forced return of the activity to a traditional activity, at least in post-Soviet Russia. Are there similarities between what is happening in reindeer husbandry and what is happening in the circumpolar fisheries?

Another important point raised in Module 8 that may be important for a proper understanding of the circumpolar fisheries is the importance of the activity for the cultural identity of the communities. Golovnev refers to reindeer husbandry as a “stronghold of traditions” (Golovnev, p. 139). He states,

By any measure of ethnic values, reindeer herding ranks as one of the highest achievements and basic cultural distinctions of many northern communities. This is something that no one, including ambitious newcomers, can do better than genuine northerners. It is the core of the economic system, of the social network, of ethnic religion and ideology, and of inherited science. (Golovnev, p. 139)

Are the cultural aspects of the fishing important for some circumpolar communities in the same manner that reindeer husbandry are. Do we need to look at fishing as something more than an economic activity in order to understand its importance for some Northern peoples?

Module 9 introduces students to the oil and gas industry in the circumpolar region. It is primarily descriptive in nature, informing students about the



## UNIVERSITY OF THE ARCTIC

historical, economic, and business aspects of oil and gas developments in the region. It briefly discusses the social, political, and environmental impacts but leaves most of these questions to be answered by the students themselves. Still, it points out that there are different “models” of the utilization of the resource in different parts of the Circumpolar World. It notes the existence of an American and European model of oil and natural gas development and questions whether we are also seeing the development of a “Northern model” of development. Can we see different development models existing in the circumpolar fisheries? Is “American” circumpolar fishing fundamentally different from “European” circumpolar fishing? Is there a fishing industry model that can be properly called a “Northern” model?

Forestry is an activity that can be seen to have many similarities with fishing in that it deals with a resource that, in theory, is renewable. Module 10 highlights the problems associated with harvesting the forest in a manner that is, in fact, renewable. The issue of sustainability is at the centre of most recent discussions of circumpolar forestry. Duinker points to the recent importance placed on the development of criteria and indicators of sustainable forestry management and the increasing importance of public participation. Are these important issues as well for the circumpolar fisheries? He also points to issues such as climate change, the involvement of Aboriginal peoples in decision-making, and ownership questions as being important ones for the sustainable development of circumpolar forests. Are these issues that are also important for the circumpolar fisheries?

Module 11 deals with a resource exploitation activity that is, in theory, non-renewable—mining. At first glance one may think that there is that an analysis of circumpolar fisheries can gain from an understanding of the circumpolar mining industry. Still, the module by Lyck notes the particularities of business structure and ownership in the mining industry and the impact this could have on the development of sustainable communities. What are the patterns of business structure and ownership in the circumpolar fisheries? What impact could this type of structure have on the goals of sustainable communities?

Finally, Module 12 deals with one of the fundamental questions underlying all resource use in the circumpolar region—the questions of the use and ownership of land and resources and the place of Indigenous peoples in this ownership structure. As part of traditional resource use by Aboriginal communities, the fisheries are often central to demands by Indigenous peoples to have greater recognition of their traditional rights and to have a greater say in the use of natural resources. Module 12 helps us to understand how these issues may affect the fisheries by introducing us to the different types of land tenure rights and the different systems of land tenure involved. It also introduces us to the evolution of the treaty rights that form the basis of greater Aboriginal involvement in resource development. What impact have these treaties had on the circumpolar fisheries? What future impact could they have?



## UNIVERSITY OF THE ARCTIC

### What do we know so far about the Northern fisheries?

To be truthful, we already have been exposed to some information about the Northern fisheries. In Module 5, we briefly discussed changes occurring in fisheries-based resource dependent communities. Let us review what we know already.

We pointed out that fishing communities are the main type of resource-dependent community in Greenland, Iceland, the Faeroe Islands and Norway. These types of communities are also important in Newfoundland and Labrador, in Alaska, and in parts of Northern Russia. We noted that these communities are sometimes excluded from discussions of resource-dependent communities because they are not as “industrial” as forestry and mining communities. It is sometimes believed that these communities are made up of “small capitalists [and] entrepreneurs” as opposed to industrial wage earners (Lucas 1971, 14). This may have been the case many years ago but industrialism, globalization, and post-industrialism means that fishing communities in the North are increasingly similar to forestry and mining communities in terms of economic structure. A study directed by Patricia Marchak in the 1980s on the economic conditions of fishing communities in British Columbia stressed the similarity between the fishing industry and its communities and the other resource-dependent communities of British Columbia (Marchak et al. 1987).

Our earlier discussion also notes that the decline of fish stocks in the North Atlantic over the past thirty years has meant the intensification of the restructuring based on global market relations. A recent study on coping strategies of fishing communities in Iceland, Northwestern Russia, and the Faeroe Islands point to changes in these communities caused by external forces (Skaptadottir, Morkore, and Riabova 2000).

Complying with market forces has been the over all trend in an increasingly globalized fishing industry. Concentration and centralization has been intensifying with the fishing industry and the state’s engagement in the well being of the peripheral communities is clearly being reduced. The expansive force of globalization has hitherto been industrial production with a role in history to concentrate wealth and population in central areas while marginalizing peripheral life and production. (1)

The study points to crisis in these communities brought about in large part by increasing exposure to the global economy and the new market relations that this exposure brings.

We discussed earlier that in Iceland, Gisli Palsson has researched the evolution of these new market relations in that country’s fishing communities (Palsson 1993). This research looks at new production arrangement introduced



## UNIVERSITY OF THE ARCTIC

into Iceland's fishing industry in the 1980s. These new arrangements were deemed necessary in order to deal with the decline of North Atlantic fish stocks. According to Palsson, the introduction of a quota system has transformed the fishery into a more capitalist enterprise. Common ownership of fish stocks has been eliminated; "... quota owners have gained de facto ownership of fish stocks"(17).

Peter Sinclair has noted the shifts in class relations occurring in Canada's North Atlantic fishing communities. He saw the steady decline of traditional

"domestic commodity producers ... a form of production in which household members who own the means of production supply the labour to produce fish for sale ... Goods are sold in order to acquire means of subsistence ... Accumulation of capital ... is not the driving force of this economic activity." (Sinclair 1992, 87)

Domestic commodity producers have been replaced by the more capitalistic classes of "petty capitalists" and "wage workers." Sinclair points out that competitive forces led to the increasing use of new technology in fishing and this led to higher levels of productivity. These higher levels of productivity, combined by inadequate government management policies, led to the present collapse of the groundfish fishery in Newfoundland and the Northern Cod Moratorium imposed in 1992. The industrialization of fishing from the 1940s to the 1980s did provide some benefits to these communities in the form of higher incomes and new jobs in fish-processing factories. As is now seen however, these benefits were short-lived.

Our earlier discussion pointed out that research on trends in these types of communities indicate that the population is on the decline, a decline caused in large part by the decline of fish stocks (Kennedy 1997). What is interesting about these communities is that despite the devastating effects of the depletion of the fish, life satisfaction in at least some of these communities remains high. In research conducted in fishing communities in Newfoundland and Labrador, Felt and Sinclair found no difference between life in these poverty ridden, high unemployment communities and in Canada as a whole (1991). The reason for this, they argue, is the realization that, although things are bad in their community, things would probably be worse for them in a large urban centre. Felt and Sinclair point out that the members of these communities recognize that there are advantages to living there—"[they can] own their own residence without mortgage claims, avail themselves of a significant informal labour exchange among friends and kin, be close to family and friends as well as have access to a wide range of outdoor recreational pursuits" (18). Without this recognition of life satisfaction, related to the historical development of these communities, the decline of these communities would be even greater than that which is now occurring.



## UNIVERSITY OF THE ARCTIC

Finally, our earlier discussion of fishing-dependent resource communities noted that changing gender relations has been the subject of considerable research in these communities. In the 1980s a debate developed between Donna Davis, whose research indicated that gender differentiation in these communities was changing, and Marilyn Porter, whose research indicated that it had not changed substantively (Sinclair and Felt 1992). Research published in 1992 by Sinclair and Felt supported Porter's findings. There were persistent sexual divisions of labour in the communities studied by them. These sexual divisions maintained themselves despite the increasing importance of women's wage labour in fish-processing plants. According to Sinclair and Felt the main reasons for the persistence this phenomena was the traditional "fishing culture" in these communities. Research by Barbara Neis tempers these analyses somewhat in that there has been a shift in gender relations in these communities. She sees aspects of "familial patriarchy" as on the decline and being altered by the "social patriarchy" found in social welfare institutions (1993).

In addition to this discussion, Golovnev discusses the importance of fishing as part of traditional systems of "Arctic adaptation." He divides traditional fishing activities into two main types: the inland hunting-fishing type and the maritime hunting type.

Discussing the first type, Golovnev writes that fishing was an important part of a general pattern of subsistence that was shared by many different Indigenous peoples.

The inland hunting-fishing type used various methods of foraging (hunting, trapping, fishing, gathering). Ethnographically, they are represented in Siberia by the Yukagir, Nganasan, Ket, Selkup, Mansi, Khanty, Evenk, Even, Itelmen, Nivkh, Nanaitz, Negidaltz, Ulchi, Udege, and Orochi; in Northern America by inland Eskimo, Algonquian and Athabaskian groups. Their semi-nomadic life style demanded light, transportable lodges for housing, such as conical tents, including *chum* (West and Central Siberia), *urasi* (Yukagir), and *tepee* (American Indian), which consisted of poles bound together at the upper end, and covered with skin (mostly reindeer) in winter and bark (mostly birch) in summer. Dugouts were in often used for winter housing. Means for transportation included skis, snowshoes, sleds, and boats. Clothing was made of fur and animal skin, birds' feathers, and fish skin. In local variants this type was supplemented with features of other systems, like reindeer breeding for transportation of Evenk, Even, Khanty, Mansi, Ket, and Nganasan. (Golovnev, p. 143)

On the other hand, maritime hunting was based on different patterns of subsistence. To quote Golovnev:

Maritime hunting, typical for coastal cultures, emerged in the areas favourable for hunting big sea mammals like walrus, whale, and seal, though this subsistence



## UNIVERSITY OF THE ARCTIC

pattern was also based on exploiting a wide range of animals, “from whales to shellfish and caribou to lemmings” (Taylor 1966, 118–19). Peoples of the Siberian north-east and the American north-west represented this economic type: Chukchi, Koryak, Aleut, Inuit, Yupik, Itelmen. The main features of their cultures were living in stationary, year-round settlements in dugouts or semi-underground houses (Yupik and Aleut) and seasonal dwellings like the Chukchi *yaranga* or the Eskimo *igloo*. Some groups used dog sleds, boats of different types (*kayak*, *baydara*, twin boat) for transportation. Historically, mediaeval Scandinavians, Saami, and Nenets shared traits of this type. (Golovnev, p. 143)

### **How do we find out information about the Northern fisheries?**

If this is what we know now about the circumpolar fisheries, how do we find out more. We have introduced you to important concepts that may be crucial for a proper understanding of the fisheries and we have given you a bit of basic information about the fisheries themselves.

Now we are asking you to use what you have learned so far to 1) find out more information about circumpolar fisheries 2) relate what is happening in the circumpolar fisheries to changes occurring both globally and in the different sectors of the circumpolar economy.

Hints to where to look for more information:

1. The Internet – You have already learned from the earlier modules that there are often sites on the internet that are devoted to the topic you are interested in. Use the search engines to find out if this is the case with the Northern fisheries. If there are no sites specific to a particular issue, look for the sites of associations that may be concerned with the issue. Look for sites of government departments who are responsible for the regulation of the Northern fisheries. Look for the web sites of fisher associations in the Northern countries. Look for sites of Indigenous associations and environmental organizations that may be concerned with the fisheries. You may also look for more academic sources by using library search engines or search engines for scientific research publications. Finally, for basic information about the most recent events occurring in the Northern fisheries you could try searching the public information site of the mass media such as newspapers and television stations.
2. The Library – Depending on where you live, you may have access to a library which contains information on Northern fisheries.
3. Community resources – If you live in a community where fishing is important you can talk to local people involved in the fisheries to find out what is occurring. They may be able to direct you to other sources of information.



## UNIVERSITY OF THE ARCTIC

### Study Questions

1. Find a community close to you where fishing is an important activity. Write a short history of these activities. What changes have taken place in this activity in the last 30 years? How do these changes relate to changes discussed in the rest of the modules for this course?
2. Take one of the questions about the circumpolar fisheries posed in the lecture part of this module. Try to answer it.
3. How important are the Northern fisheries for the sustainability of circumpolar communities? What can you use to measure the relative importance of fisheries when compared to other economic activities?
4. What are the most important challenges currently facing northern fisheries? How do these challenges relate to challenges faced by other economic activities in the Circumpolar World?

### References

- Brundtland, Gro Harlem, and the World Commission on Environment and Development. 1987. From one Earth to one World: An overview by the World Commission on Environment and Development. In *Our Common Future*. New York: Oxford University Press. Palsson 1993)
- Felt, L., and P. Sinclair. 1991. Home Sweet Home: Dimensions and Determinants of Life Satisfaction in an Underdeveloped Region. *Canadian Journal of Sociology* 16(1): 1–21.
- Kennedy, John C. 1997. At the Crossroads: Newfoundland and Labrador Communities in a Changing International Context. *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology* 34(3): 297–317.
- Lucas, R. 1971 *Minetown, Milltown, Railtown: Life in Canada's Communities of Single Industry*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Marchak, Patricia, Neil Guppy, and John McMullan, eds. 1987. *Uncommon Property: The Fishing and Fish-Processing Industry in British Columbia*, Toronto: Methuen.



## UNIVERSITY OF THE ARCTIC

- Neis, B. 1993. From 'Shipped Girls' to 'Brides of the State': The Transition from Familial to Social Patriarchy in the Newfoundland Fishing Industry. *Canadian Journal of Regional Science* 26(2): 185–211.
- Palsson, G. 1993. From Commons to Quotas: The Formation of Icelandic Fisheries Policy. In *Fishing Communities, Aarhus*, edited by E. Vestergaard. *North Atlantic Studies* 3(2).
- Sinclair, P. 1992. Atlantic Canada's Fishing Communities: The Impact of Change. In *Rural Sociology in Canada*, edited by David Hay and Gurcharn Basran. Toronto: Oxford University Press.
- Skaptadottir, U. D., J. Morkore, and L. Riabova. 2000. *Overcoming Crisis: Coping Strategies in Fisheries Based in Localities in Iceland, Northwestern Russia, and Faeroe Islands*. Joensuu, Finland: Paper for the UNESCO MOST CCPP Workshop.
- Taylor, William E., Jr. 1966. An Archaeological Perspective on Eskimo Economy. *Antiquity* 40(158): 114–120.