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Preface

This book is an outcome of a longer period of research, which has focused on the restructuring of Russian spatial-economic change. The history dates back to Joensuu-based projects which were focused on the research of spatial restructuring of communities, from villages to industrial towns, in remote settings¹. The Russian development came to a picture when the Soviet economy collapsed and serious economic and social problems emerged. The milestones of research were doctoral theses produced in the projects and books published².

The growth period after the 1998 crises challenged researchers to carry out project on growth and restructuring of industries in the Russian North. How does the economic landscape change? Which communities grow and which will collapse, and how people are adapting to these changes? Do people move? What are the impacts of foreign capital and technology? Does the energy boom bring positive impacts and how they diffuse in society? These have been central issues in the project.

The *Russia in Flux* –programme financed by the Academy of Finland provided a new setting for continuing research under the project “Does the Russian Northern Peripheries Really Change?” for the period of 2004-2007. This book is an outcome of the project. The contributions to this volume are partly built on research conducted by individual authors for the doctoral dissertation, partly on individual research papers from outside and papers derived from conducting seminars of the project as well as final reporting.

The project was provided a platform for researchers to conduct their research. The bonds and bridges of the project have been joint research courses, meetings, conference attendances and field trips. Informal exchange of ideas face-to-face and via the internet and telecommunication has been equally important. We have shared very much the methodological setting by adopting new approaches from economic geography focusing on process-based research and the developments of rural research combining various geographical scales and methods.

This book would not have been possible without the full commitment of all involved researchers and contributors and the financial support of the Academy of Finland. The focused effort and enthusiasm of all participants ensured the successful editing and publishing of this volume.

Markku Tykkyläinen
Person-in-charge of the project

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Senior researcher in the project

¹ E.g. Neil, Cecily and Markku Tykkyläinen (eds.) (1998). *Local Economic Development. A Geographical Comparison of Rural Community Restructuring*. Tokyo, UNU Press; Neil, Cecily, Markku Tykkyläinen and John Bradbury (1992) (eds.), *Coping with Closure: an international comparison of mine town experiences*, Routledge, London & New York.

² Rautio, Vesa (2003). *The Potential for Community Restructuring – Mining Towns in Pechenga*. Saarijärvi, Kikumora Publications A9; Varis, Eira (ed.) (2000). *Transitional Survival Strategies of Peripheral Resource Communities in Hungary and North-Western Russia*, *Studies on the Northern Dimension* 5; Varis, Eira (1998). *Syrjäkyläen murros Venäjän Karjalassa ja Unkarissa*. Joensuun yliopiston yhteiskuntatieteellisiä julkaisuja 33.

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Markku Tykkyläinen is Professor at the University of Joensuu. His main research interest is in economic, social and rural geography, local economic development issues, resource communities, impacts of modern technology, and socio-economic restructuring and modernization. He is the author of more than 200 books, articles and research papers. His books have been published by Ashgate, Avebury, Brill, Routledge and UNUPress. Professor Tykkyläinen is a distinguished supervisor and examiner in doctoral training in geography. Currently, he is President of the Geographical Society of Finland.

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Kari Vuorinen as a Former Finnish Vice-Consul to Murmansk and Finnish Embassy staff member in Moscow in the 1990s has gained much of his expertise in Russian migration policies and socio-economic development while living and working in Russia over the years. In addition, Vuorinen worked with Russian educational institutions and firms in cross-border co-operation projects, and has spent time advising in a joint Finnish-Russian project on prison reform. Since 2006, Vuorinen has been working on his PhD dissertation in the Department of Geography at the University of Joensuu within the project Does the Geography of Russian Northern Peripheries Really Change?

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