

doi: 10.18720/SPBPU/2/id19-121

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POSSIBLE MODELS OF COLLABORATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE ARCTIC

Abstract. *The article analyzes the perspectives of sustainable development in the Arctic through the cooperation between governments, researchers and local Indigenous minorities. Mainly focusing on social aspects of sustainable development and the importance of Indigenous participation, the author attempts to define the characteristics of possible models of collaboration that would satisfy all parties and would contribute to the well-being of the Arctic. Therefore, the already observed results of the involvement of Indigenous peoples of the Arctic region and other social policies have been revised. The article bases on information provided by the Nordic Council of Ministers, WWF and the International Polar Year. Sustainable development in the Arctic is connected to the definition of sustainable development introduced by the United Nations. Environmental issues have to be resolved by the government in cooperation with researchers as Indigenous peoples are mainly victims of environmental changes initiated by resource extraction and climate change. The social sphere, however, requires deep connections to the Indigenous population of the North as the Sustainable Development Goals consider the well-being of all people. A balance between the interests of both parties has to be maintained and this is only possible through serious scientific research. It is also important to secure the right of Indigenous peoples to preserve their way of life.*

Keywords: *Arctic, Indigenous peoples, sustainable development.*

Originally concerning mainly problems of climate change and resources, the research about the Arctic has finally taken notice of social aspects of this region after the International Polar Year 2007-2008 [3]. One of the main goals, alongside with the investigation of ice, land, oceans, space, and the atmosphere, was the engagement of northern people, the protection of their traditional knowledge, the inclusion of Indigenous peoples in the work of IPY, the focus on the northern human health and on their social system [IPY - People]. Since then, the amount of questions connected to the problems of integration, protection, and representation has grown progressively. But it is important to understand how this research can contribute to the well-being of northern people and a more efficient policy.

The Arctic being exposed to the effects of global warming, the growth of interest for issues of human rights and cultural preservation, and the participation of countries that are highly implicated in international cooperation and have the resources and will to develop the Arctic region

results in a wide range of research on these topics. As the Arctic Social Indicators and Arctic Human Development Report state, significant progress has been reached in the use of Indigenous knowledge, local participation, control and ownership, governance arrangements and Northern Identity. For example, the post-secondary education attainment is increasing in many Arctic regions and new technologies allow distance education, which is important in northern conditions. The increased local control and ownership of northern resources due to recent institutional changes, the appearance of new forms of governance that include indigenous peoples, and the emergence of Arctic identities can also be named as examples of successful Arctic policies. Moreover, the Arctic itself has become more “marketable”, thus getting more attention of the media, policy-makers and the world population in general [2]. Significant changes were introduced to the legal framework (such as the Agreement on Cooperation on Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue in the Arctic, the Agreement on Cooperation on Marine Oil Pollution Preparedness and Response in the Arctic, and the Agreement on Enhancing International Arctic Scientific Cooperation) that do not focus on Indigenous peoples in particular, but create a basis for future cooperation (the SAR Agreement is considered to be the first bounding agreement of the Arctic Council [3]).

However, there still exist gaps in policy and in knowledge that need to be filled. For example, it is still relatively hard to study the specifics of the Indigenous peoples of the Arctic due to the differences in classification existing between the members of the Arctic Council. Some members only consider the birthplace (as it is done in Greenland), while others classify its citizens more specifically (Russia) [2]. Furthermore, it is complicated to implement a unique policy for all the Arctic regions because of the diversity of the political systems and the economies of the northern countries. As already mentioned, the traditions and level of development of the peoples inhabiting the North differ strongly. The characteristics of the non-Indigenous population also vary due to the specifics of local economic orientation. For example, a resource-based economy would require skilled workers from other regions what would result in a higher percentage of temporary male population. Another example would be military bases – an aspect that has strongly affected the North during the Cold War. Information about the migration background of the Arctic regions can also be analyzed as a source of new and unique economic perspectives.

Another issue that has to be taken into consideration is the difference between the views of life of Indigenous peoples and other inhabitants of northern countries. For example, introducing these peoples to local institutions and trying to help via including them into the common economic practices, the governments sometimes act against the interests of these minorities that refuse to give up their traditions despite changes in

their areas [9]. Therefore, we first have to identify what definition of ‘sustainable development’ would be suitable for both the indigenous peoples and the governments of the Arctic countries. According to the definition of the United Nations, sustainable development is “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” [8]. The goals defined therefore are: no poverty, zero hunger, good health and well-being, quality education, gender equality, clean water and sanitation, affordable and clean energy, decent work and economic growth, industry, innovation and infrastructure, reduced inequalities, sustainable cities and communities, responsible consumption and production, climate action, life below water, life on land, peace, justice and strong institutions, partnerships for the goals [8].

In respect of those goals that concern mostly environmental problems, the involvement of Indigenous peoples would not lead to significant changes as these inhabitants of the Arctic are victims of ecological changes and most of the initiatives are introduced either by researchers or by the government. However, Indigenous peoples could be a source of information about endangered species or climate change. Nevertheless, the Sustainable Development Goals that affect society are directly connected to the well-being of the northern peoples. Therefore, it is important to protect their sources of nutrition, help them preserve the way of life they prefer (without forcing adaptation). However, the opportunities that exist for other groups of population should also be provided for Indigenous peoples.

Both the governments of the Arctic and its Indigenous inhabitants are interested in the conservation of local ecosystems and environmental security. Moreover, cultural preservation and the improvement of living conditions play an important role in the policies of the members of the Arctic Council [1]. Consequently, the cooperation should be organized in accordance to these basic principles. Further changes can be implemented with the agreement of both parties. This means that an ideal model of collaboration should include the representation of Indigenous peoples in governmental and scientific institutions without the forcible introduction of extraneous rules. However, Indigenous peoples should have the choice to enter or not to enter the common economic system. All human rights must be respected.

At the same time, “soft securities” require a more active participation of local governments as they cannot be provided without the use of higher technologies. Governments have to guarantee the protection of the resources Indigenous peoples already possess and offer them, if necessary, equivalents that would help them preserve their way of life. This is especially crucial when it comes to oil production. When economic and social interests collide, there have to be followed certain principles: social

orientation, complexity, systematization, regulation and consensus, and continuous monitoring [5]. In short terms, the benefits of one party should not be reached through the losses of the opposite party. This can be maintained through a developed legal system, the evolution of technology, and deep scientific research.

Another aspect is the growth of efficiency of regional and local governments. Not only international organizations, but also regional and local governments should represent their peoples more effectively, transmitting the need and wills of the inhabitants of their regions [6]. At the same time there should not be too many 'small' representative groups as they appear to be weaker than when they are united [2]. They should also participate more actively in international structures, such as the Arctic Circle, within the appropriate international Indigenous organization.

Only those models of collaboration among researchers and regional and local governments and Indigenous organizations will result in sustainable economic development that consider the interests of all parties, which can only be reached through quality representation, deep scientific research both on international and local levels (international experience can be transmitted from international institutions to local organizations), proper legislation and law enforcement. In order to higher the efficiency of possible policies the study of local cultures, migration flows and already existing problems (including environmental problems) is required. International cooperation can enhance the quality of this research but should not lead to a unification of rules in the whole Arctic region.

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