

International workshop

Global Change in the Arctic and Co-production of Knowledge An assessment of recent developments

27 to 29 September 2012, Paris, France

Co-organized by
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Background

Arctic land and seascapes, and the indigenous peoples who depend upon their resources, are subject to growing stress from global climate change. Furthermore, expanding industrial development and large-scale shipping are generating new risks. In the face of these accelerating physical, biological and social transformations, there is a need to monitor change, assess impacts and mobilize responses so as to adequately inform adaptation policies and practice. At present, however, monitoring mechanisms are of limited scope. Scientific data focus on bio-physical factors and broad spatial scales, but lack the societal components and human dimension that Arctic communities require to guide adaptation. Individuals and communities are already responding to change, but these efforts remain poorly documented and understood.

This international experts workshop will contribute to strengthening the Sustaining Arctic Observing Network (SAON), organized under the auspices of the Arctic Council, by reinforcing community-based and social science components, as a complement to the existing bio-physical monitoring capacities. The aim is to bring together a select group of natural and social scientists, and indigenous peoples, from across the circumpolar region to enhance collaborative indigenous-scientific work on global change impacts, monitoring and adaptation, and thus advance thinking on the emerging paradigm of knowledge co-production. This new paradigm is attracting a great deal of interest in the framework of international debates not only relating to climate change, but also biodiversity conservation and sustainable use (e.g. the recently established Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES); Future Earth; and follow-up to Rio+20).

Objectives

- Explore and define the knowledge co-production paradigm, its potential and its limits, its opportunities and its risks, in the framework of Arctic Observing Systems.
- Propose methodologies and share experiences on community-based observatories and databases
- Develop a publication to share these reflections and trigger further debate, based on well-documented Arctic case studies that have emerged from the International Polar Year (IPY) in the context of accelerating global change, including climate change, with a focus on community-based observing systems.

Some definitions and initial questions for our discussions

As a starting point for our discussions at the meeting itself, we propose definitions of some key terms:

- by interdisciplinarity ... we refer to a process (beyond multi- or pluri-disciplinarity where two or more disciplines work side-by-side without integration) whereby two or more scientific disciplines interact together to find new methods and new answers to shared questions. It often begins with a time-consuming phase that involves the co-construction of a shared research object that comes to be meaningful for both (or more) disciplines.
- by transdisciplinarity ... we refer to a process that extends beyond collaboration amongst scientific disciplines to encompass joint work that connects science with other societal partners. This may include various collaborative arrangements such as 'citizen science' or State-community co-management. These joint efforts may vary considerably in the extent to which they move towards truly equitable partnerships.
- by knowledge co-construction ... for the purposes of our meeting, we refer to the complementary and joint work bringing together indigenous knowledge holders and scientists. It is not simply the coming together of scientific disciplines, i.e. interdisciplinarity, nor a bridging between science and other knowledge systems i.e. transdisciplinarity. It goes a step further.

What do we each understand by the expression "knowledge co-production"? Is it just a new buzzword for old things? Or is it a new and emerging paradigm? If the latter, then how does it change methods, outputs, and power relations in your own research or in cases that you know? What kind of new results have been obtained or may be expected to emerge? What are the limits/dangers you already see emerging?

What are the methodological/epistemological/political etc. milestones that have led to the emergence of 'knowledge co-production' and its contemporary prominence? (historical analysis of essential building blocks or key moments/insights, which will likely be different for each participant or discipline)

Can we develop a typology for 'knowledge co-production' (according to domain or the nature of partnership arrangements?) Or identify different levels or stages of its achievement?

Can we identify the constitutive elements that favor the emergence of what we consider 'true' 'co-production of knowledge'?

Or analyze the different roles that people may play in fostering partnerships that lay the foundation for 'co-production' arrangements?

Draft Agenda

Day 1: Thursday 27 September

14:00 to 17:30

- Introduction and agreement on objectives (including decisions on a joint publication - audience, content, style)
- Exchange of views and experiences on diverse forms of knowledge co-production: approaches, contexts, actors, methods, disciplines, relationships and outcomes

Day 2: Friday 28 September

9:30 to 12:30

Lessons learned from Community-based Observatories

Keynote Address: Betsy Weatherhead, Senior Scientist, U. Colorado at Boulder

- Presentation of select Arctic case studies highlighting knowledge co-production in community-based Arctic Observing systems

13:30 to 17:30

Actors and Life Histories

- Agency and roles of indigenous and non-indigenous actors, who create the conditions for knowledge co-production
- Institutional histories that create supportive contexts and open up opportunities
- Relations of power/politics of recognition/repression

Day 3: Saturday 29 September

9:30 to 12:30

Epistemologies

Keynote Address: Igor Krupnik, Arctic and Northern Curator. Smithsonian Institution

- Does co-production resolve and allow us to move beyond existing paradigms (TEK vs science, participatory approaches ...)
- Does it open new avenues for reflection? Does it lead to practical outcomes? Or political opportunities?
- What are the risks?

13:30 to 17:30

Conclusions and organization of teams to develop chapters of the publication.

Agreement on process and schedule

List of Participants

North America

Mathew Druckenmiller, Boulder, CO, USA
Shari Gearheard, Clyde River, Canada & Boulder, CO, USA
David Hik, SAON and IASC, Ottawa, Canada
Henry Huntington, Alaska, USA
Noor Johnson, ICC, Ottawa, Canada
Igor Krupnik, Smithsonian Institution, USA
Nancy Maynard, NASA, USA (TBC)
David Natcher, U. Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, Canada
Brenda Parlee, U. Alberta, Edmonton, Canada
Peter Pulsifer, ELOKA Project, Ottawa, Canada
Chris Southcott, ResDA Project, Lakehead University, Thunder Bay, Canada
Betsy Weatherhead, Boulder, CO, USA

Scandinavia/Russia

Inger Marie Gaup Eira, EALAT Project, Sami University College, Kautokeino, Norway
Svein Mathiesen, EALAT Project, Tromso University, Norway
Anders Oskal, EALAT Project, International Centre for Reindeer Husbandry, Norway (TBC)
Mikael Pogodaev, World Reindeer Herder's Association, Russia (TBC)
Gunn-Britt Retter, Sami Council, Norway (TBC)
Johan Turi, EALAT Project, International Centre for Reindeer Husbandry, Norway (TBC)

France

Alexandra Lavrillier, University of St Quentin-Les Yvelines, France
Doug Nakashima, UNESCO, Paris
Samuel Roturier, Agroparistech, Paris, France
Marie Roué, CNRS-MNHN, Paris, France