

Effects of Global Ecological Change on Arctic Council Permanent Participants

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AUTHORS

Erica Dingman, Linda Jabs, Dayanita Ramesh, Niko Niemisalo
and Dorothea Wehrmann

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I. Introduction - Dorothea Wehrmann

Northern communities are highly vulnerable to Global Ecological Change (GEC): The Arctic is known as the region experiencing climate change twice as fast as other world regions. Arctic communities need to adapt to environmental changes caused by sea ice melt, natural changes such as variations in population and migration of wildlife, and contaminants in traditional foods. The new accessibility of Arctic regions has also opened up new economic opportunities (mining, oil and gas exploration, tourism and shipping), which pose additional environmental risks.

In the Arctic Council, an intergovernmental forum formed by the Arctic-rim states in 1996 to improve cooperation with regard to climate protection and security and to enhance the relation between Arctic-states and the indigenous peoples living in the Arctic, six indigenous peoples organizations have status of Permanent Participants: The *Aleut International Association* (AIA), the *Arctic Athabaskan Council* (AAC), the *Gwich'in Council International* (GCI), the *Inuit Circumpolar Council* (ICC), the *Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North* (RAIPON) and the *Saami Council* (SC). Although they do not have voting (but consultation) rights, they represent 500,000 indigenous peoples living in the Arctic regions of Russia, Norway, Finland, Sweden, Denmark (Greenland), Canada, Iceland and the U.S at Arctic Council meetings and are recognized as full participants in all Arctic Council working groups. Although the ability of each community to cope and to adapt to GEC differs depending on the regional location and community setting, all of them need to respond in particular to the changes caused by humans in the Arctic. Through the indigenous peoples organizations they address the Arctic Council member-states to consider their positions. The following papers provide an overview on their positions on tourism, resource extraction and shipping in the Arctic region as can be found in the policy- and strategy papers of the six Permanent Participants to the Arctic Council.

II. Arctic Athabaskan Council (AAC) - Dayanita Ramesh

The Arctic Athabaskan Council (AAC) is an organization that represents American and Canadian Athabaskan member First Nation governments. The AAC's membership spans across Alaska, Yukon and the Northwest Territories. About 76 communities and roughly 45,000 people live in an area that includes three of the largest river systems in North America, tundra and boreal forests, mountains and non-polar ice fields. Many Athabaskans continue to practice the same traditions and eat the same diet as their ancestors who were semi-nomadic hunters. The AAC is a Permanent Participant in the Arctic Council and emphasizes biodiversity conservation, climate change and helps ensure the implementation of the global Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs).¹ The main goal of the AAC is to “foster a greater understanding of the shared heritage of Athabaskan peoples of Arctic North America.”² And according to the Treaty of the AAC, Athabaskan peoples are “aware of their respective and mutual interests and responsibilities in preserving and protecting the northern environmental ecosystem.”³

While Athabaskan peoples have a shared heritage, their views and perspectives are hardly monolithic or homogenous. That said climate change is a major concern for all Athabaskans who urge for climate adaptation practices and policies. In Alaska, Athabaskan peoples are organized under federal and State statutes, and many other state-legislated and traditional political entities. Energy is central to the economy of the state of Alaska and while Athabaskans are aware of the abundance of natural resources that surround them, their goal is to ensure that natural resources are developed sustainably and responsibly.⁴ In Canada, Athabaskan peoples have organized under federal legislation into political bodies, such as bands, self-governing First Nations and regional umbrella organizations.

In regards to shipping, tourism and oil and gas exploitation, the AAC urges for sustainable and responsible development in addition to greater empowerment and awareness raising of

¹ Nordic Council of Ministers “Europe and the Arctic: A View from the AAC,” <https://www.norden.org/no/nordisk-ministerraad/samarbeidsministrene-mr-sam/arktis/common-concern-for-the-arctic/den-europeiske-union-og-arktis/europe-and-the-arctic-a-view-from-the-arctic-athabaskan-council-aac-pdf>

² Arctic Athabaskan Council, “About Us,” <http://www.arcticathabaskancouncil.com/aac/?q=about>

³ Arctic Athabaskan Council, “Treaty of the AAC,” www.arcticathabaskancouncil.com/aac/?q=node/3

⁴ USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, “Success Stories Council of Athabaskan Tribal Governments,” http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/national/newsroom/features/?cid=nrcs143_023491

indigenous peoples to participate in decision-making processes. As a majority of Athabaskans are relatively young, the consequences of decisions being made will be felt by the younger generations who will inherit the region. The AAC seeks to influence international decision-making and protect the rights and interests of Athabaskan peoples in the US and Canada.⁵

III. Aleut International Association (AIA) - Dorothea Wehrmann

The Aleut peoples have lived on the Aleutian Islands of Alaska in the United States and in the Russian Kamchatka Krai for millennia. In both countries the health, economic well-being, and ways of life of the Aleut has been connected to the rich resources of the Bering Sea, on which their present maritime sociocultural identity is based.⁶ It is their main objective therefore to protect the Bering Sea marine habitat.⁷

The Aleut community benefits from the resources of the region but also faces environmental problems caused by transboundary contaminants transport, climate change and commercial fisheries in the Bering Sea.⁸ The Aleut peoples address these challenges through their active collaboration with national governments, international decision-makers at the Arctic Council, to which the Aleut International Association was admitted as a Permanent Participant in 1998, the *Economic and Social Council of the United Nations*, to which AIA was granted Special Consultative Status in 2004, as well as through their engagement at the *United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change* (UNFCCC) and the *Global Environment Facility* (GEF).⁹

The Aleutian/Pribilof Islands Association, U.S., and the Association of the Indigenous Peoples of the North of the Aleut District of the Kamchatka Region of the Russian Federation (AIPNADKR) share the following positions on tourism, shipping and resource extraction in the Arctic region:

⁵ Arctic Athabaskan Council, Spring 2008 Newsletter,

http://www.arcticathabaskancouncil.com/aac/files/newsletters/AAC_Summer_2008.pdf (accessed 8.6.14)

⁶ Arctic Council (2011): Aleut International Association. <http://www.arctic-council.org/index.php/en/about-us/permanent-participants/aleut-international-association-aia>

⁶ And cf. Reedy-Maschner, K.L., 2010. Aleut Identities: Tradition and Modernity in an Indigenous Fishery. McGill-Queen's Press - MQUP. P. 11.

⁷ Gamble, Jim (2013): Aleut International Association. Presentation at the Alaska Arctic Policy Commission August 28-29, 2013.

⁸ Aleut International Association: *About Us*. [WWW Document] <http://www.aleut-international.org/Page1.html> (accessed 8.6.14).

⁹ Arctic Council (2011): *Aleut International Association*. [WWW Document] <http://www.arctic-council.org/index.php/en/about-us/permanent-participants/aleut-international-association-aia> (accessed 8.6.14).

In the Bering Sea, it is estimated that U.S. commercial fisheries are worth close to \$1 billion per year, and make up more than half of all annual domestic fish landings; in Russia, the fishery is worth about \$600 million a year, and makes up about a third of the country's fish harvest.¹⁰ In addition to the cultural relationship of the Aleut peoples with the marine ecosystems, fishing in the Bering Sea is thus a very important economic driver for the Aleut and particularly for the socioeconomic development of coastal villages along the Bering Sea. In order to conserve the Bering Sea fish the Aleut developed individual fishing quotas (IFQ) that have been hailed as the most sustainable fisheries management plans worldwide.¹¹ The Aleut promote the implementation of the IFQ throughout the Arctic Region in order to protect Arctic fish. As climate change heavily impacts the living structure of this marine resource, the Aleut also believe that the limitation of fishing supports Arctic fish in their adaptation to climate change impacts.¹²

Oil and gas leasing in the North Aleutian Basin within the 1998 Lease Sale 92 area (now called Lease Sale 214) is supported by the Aleut East Borough if residents of the Aleutians East Borough benefit from employment and business opportunities, and as long as exploration and development is conducted in an environmentally safe manner. Estimates predict that the basin contain 8.6 trillion cubic feet of gas and 750 million barrels of oil or condensate - resources that may be worth \$37 billion over the next 30 years.¹³

With regard to tourism, the Aleut advocate Arctic tourism as long as tourism activities are carried out sustainably and do not endanger the Arctic environment. The Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association is working to develop eco-tourism, which can serve as an example throughout the Arctic region.¹⁴

The Aleut generally support tourism, shipping and resource development in the Arctic region, however, maximum protection and priority must always be given to the fishery resources.¹⁵

¹⁰ Aleut International Association (2007): *Indigenous Peoples Lead an International Polar Year Project to Monitor Changes in the Economically and Culturally Important Bering Sea*. [WWW Document] <http://www.aleut-international.org/files/Download/BSSN%20grant%20press%20release%2007%2005%2007-cdt.pdf> (accessed 8.6.14).

¹¹ And cf. Reedy-Maschner (2010): 124.

¹² Aleut International Association (2007).

¹³ Steering Committee: *North Aleutian Basin Energy-Fisheries Workshop*. [WWW Document], n.d. URL <https://seagrant.uaf.edu/research/projects/energy-fisheries/docs/energy-fisheries-workshop.pdf> (accessed 8.6.14).

¹⁴ Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association (2014): *St. Paul. Economy*. [WWW Document] <http://www.apiai.org/tribes/st-paul/> (accessed 8.6.14).

¹⁵ Aleutians East Borough: *Resolution 09 - 26. A Resolution of the Aleutians East Borough (AEB) Regarding the 2010-2015 Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) Oil and Gas Leasing Program*. [WWW Document] <http://www.aleutianseast.org/vertical/sites/%7BEEDABE05-9D39-4ED4-98D4-908383A7714A%7D/uploads/%7BD95F13C0-493A-40BE-B9FA-B6C1180FF3B3%7D.PDF> (accessed 8.6.14).

IV. Gwich'in Council International (GCI) - Dorothea Wehrmann

As the “people of the land” the Gwich'in peoples have been living in northeast Alaska and in the northern Yukon and Northwest Territories in Canada for more than 20,000 years.¹⁶ Their life and culture are based on the Porcupine Caribou herd¹⁷ which is the main source of food, tools, and clothing for the Gwich'in. It is their main priority to protect the Caribou herd, as they depend on them and “anything that endangers the herd also endangers the existence of the Gwich'in”.¹⁸ In the past and in the future, hunting, fishing and trapping have remained and will remain important both culturally and economically for their people.¹⁹ The Gwich'in are the northernmost indigenous people and have lived in the region since before the U.S. and Canada existed. In their opinion, therefore, their voice should be taken into consideration in policy-formulation and decision-making processes that concern the North-American Arctic region.²⁰ At national governments as well as at the Arctic Council, in which the Gwich'in Council International (GCI) has been a Permanent Participant since 1999.²¹ The Gwich'in People of every community from Arctic Village, Venetie, Fort Yukon, Beaver, Chalkyitsik, Birch Creek, Stevens Village, Circle, and Eagle Village in Alaska; from Old Crow, Fort McPherson, Tsiigehtchic, Aklavik, and Inuvik in Canada share the following positions on tourism, shipping and resource extraction in the Arctic region:

Although communities have regular air service, only a few can be reached by road, such as Fort McPherson and Tsiigehtchic. In accordance with the *Gwich'in Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement* from 1992, they generally endorse further development of the port and road infrastructure as long as particularly the latter do not impact migration patterns of the

¹⁶ Arctic Circle: *The Gwich'in of Alaska and Canada*. [WWW Document]. URL <http://arcticcircle.uconn.edu/ANWR/anwrgwichin.html> (accessed 8.5.14).

¹⁷ “Porcupine Caribou Herd” means those migratory barren ground caribou found north of 64 degrees, 30' north latitude and north of the Yukon River which usually share common and traditional calving and post-calving aggregation grounds between the Canning River in the State of Alaska and the Babbage River in Yukon Territory and which historically migrate within the State of Alaska, Yukon Territory, and the Northwest Territories.”

¹⁷Cf. Arctic Circle (1987): *Agreement Between the Government of Canada and the Government of The United States of America on the Conservation of the Porcupine Caribou Herd*. [WWW Document]. URL

¹⁷<http://arcticcircle.uconn.edu/ANWR/anwrint-agreement.html> (accessed 8.5.14).

¹⁸ For thousands of years, the Gwich'in People of northeast Alaska and northwest Canada have relied on caribou for food, clothing, shelter, tools and life itself, and today the Porcupine (River) Caribou Herd remains essential to meet the nutritional, cultural and spiritual needs of our People.

¹⁸Cf. Gwich'in (2012): *Gwich'in Niintsyaa 2012. Resolution to Protect the Birthplace and Nursery Grounds of*

¹⁸*the Porcupine Caribou Herd*. [WWW Document]. URL <http://ourarcticrefuge.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/GG-Resol.-2012-1.pdf> (accessed 8.5.14).

¹⁹ Gwich'in Social and Cultural Institute (2003): *The Gwich'in*. [WWW Document]. URL <http://www.gwichin.ca/TheGwichin/Gwichin.html> (accessed 8.5.14).

²⁰ Gwich'in Steering Committee (2014): *About the Gwich'in*. [WWW Document]. URL <http://ourarcticrefuge.org/about-the-gwichin/> (accessed 8.5.14).

²¹ Gwich'in Council International (2010): *Gwich'in Council International*. [WWW Document]. URL <http://www.gwichin.org/> (accessed 8.5.14).

Porcupine Caribou herd and are planned and implemented in the territory²² under Gwich'in supervision after approval of the Gwich'in Tribal Council.

They oppose any form of oil and gas development in the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, the area in which the Gwich'in culture is known as the "Sacred Place Where Life Begins." The Gwich'in Steering Committee, which was formed in 1988 in response to proposals to drill for oil in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge has met ever since, at intervals of every two years, to discuss possible resource development in this area. In the formal *Resolution to Protect the Birthplace and Nursery Grounds of the Porcupine Caribou Herd* from 2012 they declared officially that the Gwich'in peoples perceive any resource development in caribou calving grounds as "a threat to the very heart of our people."²³ As decided in their Annual General Assembly 2013, the Gwich'in also refuse to accept the amended Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act as introduced by the Government of Canada, which would decrease their influence in decisions on land and water management in that area.²⁴

Tourism contributes to the economy of Gwich'in tribes. Particularly the Tsiigehtchic and Aklavik community and the Teetl'it Zheh Gwich'in have benefited from tourism activities in the past.²⁵ As stated in the *Memorandum of Understanding for Contracting Within the Gwich'in Settlement Area* from 2012, the Gwich'in support an increase of tourism activities in the Arctic as long as this happens in a sustainable manner and as long as Gwich'in tribes and the Gwich'in business community is involved.

Following the *Agreement Between the Government of Canada and the Government of The United States of America on the Conservation of the Porcupine Caribou Herd* from 1987,²⁶ the Gwich'in hold on to their will to cooperate with domestic authorities as long as all further planning of activities that concern tourism, shipping and resource extraction in the North-American Arctic region are presented and discussed at the International Porcupine Caribou Board, in which representatives of Gwich'in tribes are active participants.

²² According to the Agreement, this landmass encounters over 22,000 square kilometers of land in the Northwest Territories and over 1,500 square kilometers of land in the Yukon.

²² Cf. The Canadian Encyclopedia (2013): *Gwich'in*. [WWW Document]. URL <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/gwichin/> (accessed 8.5.14).

²³ Gwich'in Steering Committee (2014)

²⁴ Gwich'in Tribal Council (2013)

²⁵ Gwich'in Council International (2009): *The Gwich'in*. [WWW Document]. URL <http://www.gwichin.org/gwichin.html> (accessed 8.5.14).

²⁶ Arctic Circle (1987)

V. Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC) - Linda Jabs

Established in 1977, the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC)²⁷ is an international non-government organization that is one of six Permanent Participants of the Arctic Council. The ICC represents approximately 150,000 Inuit living in settlements and homelands in Alaska, Canada, Greenland and Chukotka (Russia) that are jointly referred to as the *Inuit Nunaat*.²⁸ Through the ICC, the Inuit have come together to speak with one voice on common issues and to actively assert their rights as policy-makers and decision-makers affecting the *Inuit Nunaat*,²⁹ particularly those decisions regarding resource development.³⁰ The Charter and By-laws of the ICC set out the composition of the ICC, which consists of a general assembly that is to meet at least once every 4 years and an Executive Council that ensures the operation of the ICC between meetings of the General Assembly.³¹

For millennia the Inuit have endured in *Inuit Nunaat* and have adapted to changes and challenges in order to ensure the health and well-being of their communities. The movement of the sea and sea ice are integral components of that adaptation, therefore any action or intervention that affects the sea and the land must protect the environment and wildlife so that they can continue to endure for millennia to come.³² The Inuit do not make distinctions between the land and the sea and their definition is “Land is anywhere our feet, dog teams, or snowmobiles can take us.”³³

The pace of change in *Inuit Nunaat* is coming at a rapid rate and is being driven primarily by changes in the Arctic environment. While there are acknowledged opportunities for economic growth in shipping, resource extraction and tourism in the Arctic and for the Inuit, there are also consequences for the environment and the Inuit way of life.³⁴ For the Inuit, it is imperative that a balance be struck between both renewable and non-renewable resources and

²⁷ Arctic Council (2011): Inuit Circumpolar Council. <http://www.arctic-council.org/index.php/en/about-us/permanent-participants/inuit-circumpolar-council>

²⁸ Arctic Social Indicators Inuit Nunaat – The Inuit World: <http://www.svs.is/ASI%20II/ASI%20-%20Chp%206%20-%20no%20graphics.pdf>

²⁹ Inuit Circumpolar Council: A Circumpolar Inuit Declaration on Sovereignty in the Arctic:

<http://www.inuitcircumpolar.com/uploads/3/0/5/4/30542564/declaration12x18vicechairsigned.pdf>

³⁰ Inuit Circumpolar Council Annual Report 2012-13, p. 2 <http://www.inuitcircumpolar.com/uploads/3/0/5/4/30542564/2012-2013-full-eng-annual-report.pdf>

³¹ Inuit Circumpolar Council Charter and By-laws: <http://www.inuitcircumpolar.com/charter--bylaws.html>

³² Inuit Circumpolar Council (2008): *The Sea Ice is our Highway An Inuit Perspective on Transportation in the Arctic* p.ii: http://www.inuitcircumpolar.com/uploads/3/0/5/4/30542564/20080423_iccamsa_finalpdfprint.pdf

³³ Inuit Circumpolar Council (2008): p. 2

³⁴ Inuit Circumpolar Council 12th General Assembly July 21-24, 2014: Program Notes p. 12

the economic, social and cultural benefits that can be derived from both categories of resources while at the same time forestalling environmental degradation.³⁵

There are two defining ICC Declarations that each set out the principles under which the ICC will operate and conduct business with the Arctic States and international parties. The first is the “Circumpolar Inuit Declaration on Sovereignty In The Arctic”³⁶ ratified in April 2009, which sets out the foundations for action by the Inuit and the Arctic States to chart the future of the Arctic. The second is the “Circumpolar Inuit Declaration on Resource Development Principles in Inuit Nunaat,”³⁷ passed in May 2011, which sets out the principles under which the governance, management, development or use of resources will occur in the Arctic. Both Declarations use strong and prescriptive language as to the approach and expectations of the Inuit with respect to engagement on issues.

The ICC Declaration on Resource Development Principles is the definitive document outlining resource development in *Inuit Nunaat* regardless of whether or not the resource development involves renewable resources, which are the historical basis for the Inuit culture and future generations, or non-renewable resources which are seen as a means to enhance the living and social conditions of the Inuit.³⁸ There currently does not seem to be any distinction made between resource development, tourism or shipping by the ICC.

Any and all interactions must be conducted with openness and transparency and respect the rights of the Inuit as grounded in the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. Resource development must also be grounded in the *Circumpolar Inuit Declaration on Sovereignty in the Arctic* and include the Inuit as active and equal partners in developing policies and decision-making that affect *Inuit Nunaat*. An integral component of this partnership must be the active inclusion and engagement of the local communities that will be impacted by the resource development.

Any resource development must contribute to rather than detract from any regional, national or international initiatives to curb greenhouse emissions and must not exacerbate any climate

³⁵ Inuit Circumpolar Council: A Circumpolar Inuit Declaration on Resource Development Principles in Inuit Nunaat: http://www.inuitcircumpolar.com/uploads/3/0/5/4/30542564/declaration_on_resource_development_a3_final.pdf

³⁶ Inuit Circumpolar Council: A Circumpolar Inuit Declaration On Sovereignty In The Arctic: <http://www.inuitcircumpolar.com/sovereignty-in-the-arctic.html>

³⁷ Inuit Circumpolar Council: A Circumpolar Inuit Declaration on Resource Development Principles in Inuit Nunaat: <http://www.inuitcircumpolar.com/resource-development-principles-in-inuit-nunaat.html>

³⁸ Inuit Circumpolar Council: A Circumpolar Inuit Declaration on Resource Development Principles in Inuit Nunaat

change-related stresses on the survival of Arctic wildlife. Human needs must be at the centre of any resource development and must promote the physical and mental health of Inuit communities and individuals as well as Inuit food security. Resource development must sustainably service the needs of the Inuit today and demonstrate support for affected communities without compromising the ability of the Inuit to meet the needs of tomorrow. Land use planning, management and impact assessments must consider the cumulative impacts of current and proposed future projects and where prudent, limit the number and scope of projects.

Active monitoring of vessel traffic and specific plans regarding any oil spill cleanup and containment must be based on the highest technological standards and practices currently available. Minimum standards will respect the Arctic Council's "*Arctic Offshore Oil and Gas Guidelines*."

Inuit also expect that any resource development will result in an improvement in their material well-being and be well-rooted in any international indigenous and human rights laws. Any projects must be planned and implemented in such a way that they support and enhance rather than overwhelm Inuit culture. The Inuit will also be given opportunity to learn and develop the technological skills and training and business management that are needed by the Inuit.

Going forward, some of the critical factors under consideration by the ICC are contained in the Kitigaaryit Declaration,³⁹ which was ratified at the General Assembly held in Inuvik July 21-24, 2014, continue to be resource development, the ongoing priority of Inuit health and well-being, and on-going efforts to include Inuit in all bilateral and multilateral meetings of importance to the Inuit.

³⁹ Inuit Circumpolar Council: Kitigaaryit Declaration. <http://www.inuitcircumpolar.com/declaration---2014.html>

VI. Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North (RAIPON) - Dayanita Ramesh

The Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North is an umbrella organization which represents 35 regional and ethnic organizations. RAIPON represents 41 groups of indigenous peoples of roughly 270,000 people who live in the North, Siberia and Far East. RAIPON seeks to protect the human rights of indigenous peoples, defend their legal interests, assist in environmental, social, economic, cultural and educational issues and works with the State Duma and Government of Russia in regards to self-governance issues. RAIPON is a Permanent Participant in the Arctic Council and also participates in the UN Economic and Social Council and Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum of the UN Environment Program.⁴⁰

RAIPON has had great difficulty operating in Russia; the government is wary of the organization's international engagement (like in the Arctic Council). In 2012, RAIPON received a warning from the Russian Ministry of Justice about "irregularities in its organizational status" and possibility of being shut down. In 2013, after difficult legal battles with the Russian government, RAIPON was allowed to continue its activities. Russia has seen an "extensive hike in the level of industrialization in the north," and RAIPON wishes to represent indigenous peoples in these economic and natural resource activities.⁴¹ It has been roughly eight months since RAIPON's reinstatement, but it is difficult to say whether or not the organization has returned to its level of activity. As for their views on shipping, tourism and oil and gas, RAIPON also seeks greater influence on decision-making at the international level. Unlike the AAC however, RAIPON faces serious domestic barriers and great difficulty in conducting its work.

VII. Saami Council (SC) - Niko Niemisalo

The Saami Council is a Sami non-governmental organization that has member organizations in Finland, Russia, Norway and Sweden. It was founded in 1956.⁴² Another important formal

⁴⁰ Arctic Council, "RAIPON," <http://www.arctic-council.org/index.php/en/about-us/permanent-participants/russian-association-of-indigenous-peoples-of-the-north-raipon>

⁴¹ Barents Observer, "Hard-fought new life for RAIPON," 2013 <http://barentsobserver.com/en/society/2013/03/hard-fought-new-life-raipon-15-03>

⁴² Saami Council, "First page," <http://www.saamicouncil.net/?deptid=1116>

Sami organization is the Saami Parliament.⁴³ To understand the stances and activities of the Sami people it is important to familiarize oneself with their history and current activities where the footnotes of this text give further understanding. According to United Nations Regional Information Centre (UNRIC),⁴⁴

The Sami are the indigenous people living in the very north of Europe, in Sápmi, which stretches across the northern parts of Norway, Sweden, Finland and the Kola Peninsula. They are a minority in today's Finland, Russia, Sweden and Norway, but a majority in the innermost parts of Finnmark county in Norway and in the municipality of Utsjoki in Finland. However, although regarded as one people, there are several kinds of Sami based on their patterns of settlement and how they sustain themselves. Furthermore, their rights and general situation differ considerably depending on the nation state within which they live.⁴⁵

About 9,000 people identify as Sami in Finland, about 2,000 in Russia, 15,000-20,000 in Sweden, and about 60,000 in Norway.⁴⁶ In general, it can be said that tourism provides a significant livelihood for Sami people. It is extremely challenging and controversial to condense the stances held by the Sami population towards development, since tourism is seen as source of living on the one hand, but on the other as a phenomena that makes traditional ways of life in to a commercial product. In general, it can be said that the Sami population is very concerned about how existing and planned Arctic resource extraction as well as shipping affects the northern environment that is their historical home area.⁴⁷

VIII. Discussion - Erica Dingman

When reflecting on the various official documents provided by the Arctic Council Permanent Participants it is important to take note that although there are similarities amongst policy positions and at times official statements, all groups do not necessarily hold identical views. Moreover, within each group of peoples official policy positions do not necessarily reflect the view of an individual. Quite to the contrary. To put this in context, it is highly unlikely that all citizens agree with official policy positions taken by a government in a given nation-state. Respectively, Arctic Indigenous Peoples must be understood in the same vein.

⁴³ Sámi Parliament, "First page," <http://www.samediggi.fi/index.php?lang=english>

⁴⁴ United Nations Regional Information Centre

⁴⁵ United Nations Regional Information Centre for Western Europe, "The Sami of Northern Europe – one peoples four countries," <http://www.unric.org/en/indigenous-people/27307-the-sami-of-northern-europe--one-people-four-countries>

⁴⁶ Ihmisoikeudet.net, "Saamelaiset," <http://www.ihmisoikeudet.net/index.php?page=saamelaiset>

⁴⁷ See also Rovaniemi declaration, that recognizes the rights of indigenous people and aims to develop cooperation to tackle with environmental challenges <http://arcticcircle.uconn.edu/NatResources/Policy/rovaniemi.html>

In general terms, all Arctic Council Permanent Participants agree with the institutionalization and implementation of international instruments including the International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention No. 169⁴⁸ and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).⁴⁹ Both of these international instruments call on states to respect the basic rights of indigenous peoples worldwide. They are both a means of providing a basis for restitution to those who have been marginalized on the very lands of their ancestry.

It could be said that for Arctic Indigenous Peoples one of the most critical aspects of development decision-making is the right to “free, prior and informed consent” by their respective states. This principle is most clearly stated in UNDRIP where the phrase appears numerous times throughout the Declaration. Article 32.2 affirms:

States shall consult and cooperate in good faith with the indigenous peoples concerned through their own representative institutions in order to obtain their free and informed consent prior to the approval of any project affecting their lands or territories and other resources, particularly in connection with the development, utilization or exploitation of mineral, water or other resources.

The complexities of increasing global entanglements are vast. However, as the new accessibility of the Arctic region pose enormous challenges to the people living there, it is important that political decision-makers consider the ramifications of tourism, shipping and natural resource extraction alongside the implications of global economic trends.

In closing, it is essential to think beyond the limitations and constrictions of a given policy position to view the dynamics of Arctic indigenous peoples as living aspirations that are complex and fluid adjusting to conditions of the moment. Arctic indigenous cultures and traditions are rich with nuance.

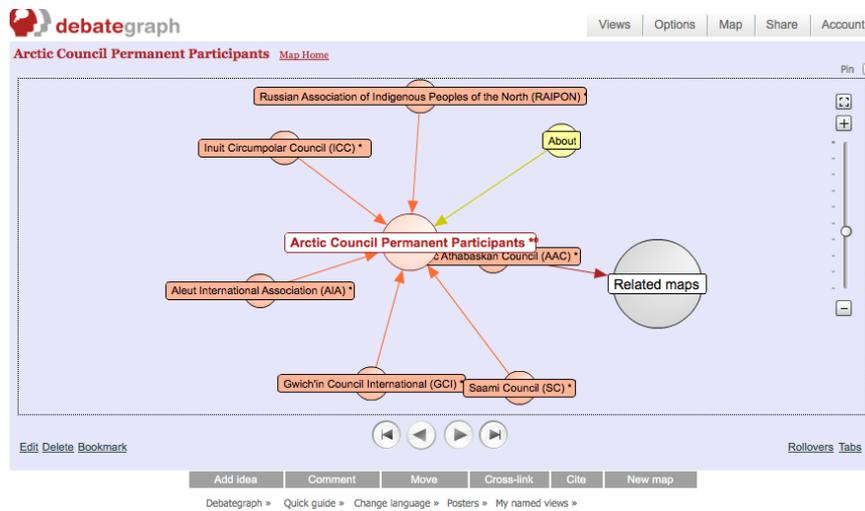
IX. Arctic Council Permanent Participants’ DebateGraph – Erica Dingman

To enhance a broader understanding of Arctic complexity as seen through the lens of Arctic indigenous peoples, we have chosen to include a cloud-based platform called DebateGraph. This platform is a powerful means of explaining complexity, encouraging others to question and deliberate the topic at hand, in this case perspectives held by the six Permanent

⁴⁸ International Labour Organization (1989). *C-169 – Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (C-169)*. Available at: http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C169

⁴⁹ United Nations (2008). *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. Available at: http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf

Participants at the Arctic Council. Beyond engaging those who are deeply involved Arctic issues, this DebateGraph is meant to inspire a broader public to think about the people of the Far North as active participants in changing Arctic conditions.



This inactive screen shot visualizes the first ‘page’ of our DebateGraph. The viewer can click through the bubbles drilling further into the subject matter. Please join the community by visiting our *Arctic Council Permanent Participants’* DebateGraph at: <http://debategraph.org/Stream.aspx?nID=349846&vt=bubble&dc=focus>