

# **Square Hour: Voices of Young Researchers**



# Conceptual, Structural and Operational Problems of Northern Territories

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A study of the modern Arctic Region puts before researchers a number of conceptual, structural and operational problems concerning international co-operation in the North. The experience of recent years has shown an occurrence of new premises and concepts which require deep study. The co-operation of Arctic areas as a region, both at the level of the national states and at the level of local authorities – the region global and the region local – is situated within the limits of globalisation, interdependence, and local problems, all of which demand more precise definition in their explanations. These terms, as well as all humanitarian terms, have approximate definitions; nevertheless, the consequences following from them are frequently at variance with the interests of different social groups, and, consequently, are by one denied, and by others welcomed.

In the structural and operational plan, extensive discussion inside Russia about the northern areas shows two distinct tendencies: a state-centred approach and a transcontinental approach. The first view holds that Arctic areas are not strengthened by co-operation with foreign states, and that it even weakens the situation within our northern areas in many cases. The second approach supports international development of the Arctic Region, and its transformation into a realm of world economic activity.

These two opposing attitudes do not leave much

room for constructive compromise in this situation, a solution which most regions of the Russian Federation basically support. The supporters of the state-centred view are concerned about the inadequacy of oceanographic, sociological, and economic research in the North and the transfer of research initiative to foreign partners. In this connection they, as the experts, have presented a bill to the State Duma of the Russian Federation „About State Regulation of Activity of the Foreigners in the Russian North.“ It is also believed that the study and exploitation of the North can be coordinated within a single structure whose status could be secured by appropriate legislation regulating federal property within the region.

The supporters of the transcontinental approach to the Arctic Region assume the equal participation of all the Arctic countries, in protecting and exploiting social, political, economic and ecological interests. It is this view which conforms with the international dialogue and the general climate of opinion. So, for example, in the opinion of Governor Yamalo of the Nenetskiy okrug the aim should be “the development of a policy of openness, and encouragement of the international and interregional contacts in all spheres of human activity.” The international dialogue depends in many respects on the relations of the sovereign national states of the Arctic Region, their interests and opinions, which cannot be neglected in the analysis of the co-operation of non-govern-

mental international organisations with local authorities, civil, and public organisations. Basically, they are influenced by the progressive globalisation of the Arctic Region, which is, in turn, connected to a changed notion of protection and enforcement with regard to problems of environmental protection, natural resources, and overall management of the Arctic Region.

Operational problems include the relations between governments, between governments and international organisations, and between international organisations. There are a lot of interesting situations. Concerning institutional structure, the question is put in Russia whether the Arctic Region needs a supra-national structure. What purpose would it serve? Would this structure generate new funding possibilities? What would guarantee its status?

It would seem timely to create public informational organisations in each Arctic country, having access to governmental tribunes and the capability of presenting a common program of requirements and ideas. As non-governmental structures are less controllable by the state and are not always in accord with governments, they could represent an alternative, parallel perspective.

Russian science, which has recently been opened up to Western scientific influence in all its variety, is undergoing fundamental changes. The opportunity to study reality with all of its contradictions conduces to the formation of a theory, based on the experience of Western experts and modern processes, but reflecting also the principles of a domestic science, using relevant local materials to draw constructive conclusions for the purposes of practical application. The input from Western science presents a real opportunity to compare the Russian reality with the possibilities for the coexistence of capitalism and socialism envisioned by Russian science. We must form a just understanding of the place and the role of Russian science in the formation of global policy, especially that which concerns the Arctic Region.

In the development of the Russian North, especially of the former Northern Economic Region, St. Petersburg has great, if not decisive importance, with its unique scientific, economic, cultural and geopolitical potential. It was not by coincidence that St. Petersburg was selected as the centre of the Representative of the President of Russia in the Northwest Permanent Federal District during the reform of the state authority. This has strengthened the geopolitical and state influence of St. Petersburg on all the northern territories of Russia. In 1998, the president of Yakutia, M. Nikolaev, noted that St. Petersburg can give new, even more powerful, momentum to the development of all the Russian North. The partial reorganisation of the city's institutions of higher education in order to prepare experts in different branches of study pertaining to northern regions demonstrates the importance of St. Petersburg for the North of Russia. St. Petersburg, while remaining a centre of research and co-operation within the Northern Territories, now becomes the centre of study of the North in an international global context. Co-operation within the Arctic region has become a major object of attention both by the St. Petersburg administration and within scientific circles, as is apparent from the number of initiatives and scientific conferences that have been realized during the past few years.

Finally, I would like to mention the aspiration the young researchers studying the socio-political aspects of different regions of the North have to become an organised, creative group for analyzing and disseminating information about the on-going changes in the Northern Territories: we hope to be able to direct research activity concerning the socio-political problems of development of the Northern Territories. That knowledge, accessible by means of modern technologies from foreign establishments within the Arctic Region, is changing the mentality of young researchers and inducing them to join more actively in the uneasy, but noble, process of rescuing the fragile, clean, and free environment of the Arctic Region.

# The Role of the Northern Climate ExChange in Addressing Climate Change Issues in Canada's North: A Model for Regional Action on a Global Issue?

Aynslie Ogden

International concern has been growing during the last few decades that increasing concentrations of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere will change our climate in ways that may be detrimental to our environmental, social and economic systems. Abundant data demonstrate that global climate has warmed during the past 150 years. Temperature increase has not been constant, but has consisted of warming and cooling cycles at intervals of several decades. The long-term trend is one of net global warming with the ten warmest years since 1880 all having occurred in the 1980s or 1990s. Corresponding with this warming, alpine glaciers have been retreating, permafrost has thawed, sea levels have risen, and climatic zones have been shifting. These observations have led the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change to conclude, „the balance of evidence suggests that there is a discernable human influence on global climate.“ The third assessment, expected to be released in early 2001, has revised this statement to characterize human influence on global climate as „significant“.

A changing climate will affect many components of the northern environment. In fact, northern regions are predicted to receive the earliest and most extreme impacts resulting from a changing climate. Scenarios of climate change, based on experimental results of General Circulation Models of the atmosphere for a doubling of atmospheric carbon dioxide, suggest that

northern regions could warm up by 5°C by the middle of the 21st century. These changes could affect northern economies, wildlife, traditional cultures and recreational activities. Stakeholders will need to respond to the effects of climate change on water and land resources. These responses will be influenced by the political, lifestyle and economic choices made by government officials, community residents and industry leaders in response to new global realities. *Perhaps no other issue in the North cuts across jurisdictional, political and environmental boundaries with consequences of the magnitude posed by climate change.* This issue is surely to become one of the greatest social, economic and environmental challenges faced by the circumpolar North which may well require unprecedented levels of international cooperation to successfully address these challenges.

In response to these challenges, a multi-stakeholder, inter-jurisdictional centre, the Northern Climate ExChange (NCE), was established in northern Canada in February 2000. The experience of the Mackenzie Basin Impact Study (MBIS) suggests that an integrated assessment requires a partnership of stakeholders and scientists, in which visions are shared and respected, and information is freely exchanged.

## Northern Climate ExChange

The Northern Climate ExChange, established in February 2000, is a Yukon-based centre to co-ordinate and facilitate climate change research and education in the circumpolar North. Goals of the centre include:

- Facilitating a clearer understanding of the impacts of climate change on the northern economy, environment and social fabric.
- Increasing science and research capacity among northerners and improving the links between scientific and traditional northern ecological knowledge.
- Promoting local economic opportunities in the development of resource efficient technologies and practices that can contribute to mitigating climate change impacts.
- Fostering circumpolar partnerships and strengthening Canada's role as a scientific and political force in the circumpolar North.
- Contributing to regional and national northern policy decisions and development of policy tools.
- Increasing general awareness of the issue of climate change, its impacts on the North, and the global benefits of northern-based research.
- Establishing a series of coordination points in the North to anchor climate change research activities.
- Providing public education and outreach programs on climate change issues in the north.
- The NCE should be a catalyst for climate change knowledge and awareness and be a central source of information with respect to climate change initiatives.
- The NCE should allow for various tiers of access (levels of detail and manners of presentation) when providing information.
- The NCE should bring together experts and decision-makers to develop strategies for reducing our vulnerability to climate change impacts and decreasing greenhouse gas emissions.
- The NCE should track industries, sectors and ecosystems that are being affected by current climatic variations and promote dialogue with resource managers and stakeholder groups to identify and encourage the development of adaptation strategies for addressing emerging issues.
- The NCE should thoroughly investigate the nature of information required for addressing climate change impacts and adaptation issues across the north.
- The NCE should liaise with existing partnership processes and stakeholder groups to foster partnerships and put climate change into existing consultation processes in an efficient manner, and play a facilitative role in generating consensus in the community on difficult adaptation questions.
- The NCE needs to develop a model for how to finance the centre in the future, as continuity of the Northern Climate ExChange is expected and assumed. Given the long-term nature of the issues surrounding climate change impacts, it is very important to ensure there are long term commitments, goals and vision.

## Taking Action on Climate Change in Yukon, Canada

This past summer, the Northern Climate ExChange undertook a community consultation program. The purpose of this program was threefold: to involve First Nations, communities, industry, scientists, educators and government in the development of a vision to deal with climate change in the Yukon; to document local observations and concerns on climate change; and to define the role of the NCE in facilitating and co-ordinating responses to climate change. The following recommendations were received:

Along with recommendations for the Northern Climate ExChange, specific recommendations for governments, communities, industry, and researchers were received. Firstly, governments should consider climate change in management agreements for natural resources and environmental impact assessments for development projects, and should encourage and support community-based monitoring and archiving programs. Communities should also participate in monitoring programs and begin discussing strategies for adapting local infrastructure to a change in climate. Private sector industries such as

forestry, transportation, mining, construction and oil and gas should include climate change considerations in research, planning and design of projects such as pipelines, dams and tailing ponds. And finally, researchers should consider developing a centralized archive of data relating to climate change and consider community needs in the design of research programs.

### **NCE - A Model for Regional Action on a Global Issue?**

Although climate change is a global issue, it has important regional dimensions. The creation of the Northern Climate ExChange provides a new opportunity for Northerners to learn more about climate change, and to contribute their own knowledge, so that a regional response to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and minimize our vulnerability to climate change impacts, can be developed. We believe it is important to develop a community-based vision for climate change action in northern Canada for the following reasons:

- Community participation in research and decision making is essential to long term resource, environmental and cultural sustainability in the North.
- An integrated, community-based, northern approach to addressing the challenges posed by

climate change will make best use of limited resources and will be better received by national and international audiences.

- Regional efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions may not be sufficient to reduce the potential impacts of climate change in the North.
- It is in the best interest of northerners to be well-prepared for addressing the possible impacts of climate change and reducing the vulnerability of our environmental, economic and social systems to those impacts.
- It will aid in setting milestones for action and monitoring progress.

The NCE will strive to be relevant at local, national and international levels. Ongoing work at the NCE will also be both flexible and adaptive in order to incorporate all elements of climate change, and the evolving needs of northern communities, industries and governments. Through ongoing consultation, the NCE will focus on the relevance of climate change to the North, and based on that consultation, derive 'useful' approaches to address those needs in the future.

Only time will tell if the NCE experiment will be a model for other regions in the North (national and international) for moving uncertain science forward into consensus action.

## Asymmetry Of and In Dimensionalism

Oleg Reut

The point of departure in the Northern Dimension (ND) was the economic inter-dependence between the European Union (EU), Russia and the Baltic states. The ND appeared, no doubt, to be a point of departure in out-lining political space at the edges of the EU. It aimed at installing a far less confrontational frame for the policies pursued by the relevant actors (Joenniemi and Sergounin, 2000); and it was oriented to support co-operation carried out within the (sub-) regional engines: the Council of the Baltic Sea States, the Barents Euro-Arctic Council and the Arctic Council.

Pragmatically speaking, the focus was particularly on the environment, infrastructure, natural resources, (one-way) direct investment, and Kaliningrad. The policy was implemented with existing resources and within existing structures: there were no new EU programmes, budgetary tools or instruments to be created for carrying out the new initiative.

Was this a political pre-condition for the recession of the initiative that today has become an integral part of EU external and cross-border policies? Indeed, this issue -do we go from regional structures to what I call (Reut, 2000), dimensionalism in the North? - is not merely the basic question of this article but the question that confronts territorial organisation in the North. The short answer to this is that it is up to us.

We are, literally, the principal architects of our own future.

In this brief article, I am, first of all, going to discuss the changing roles of sub-regional, regional, and inter-regional structures in to-day's North, where this stable and relatively predictable order is being challenged by processes of:

- globalisation, or inter-regional integration
- glocalisation, or fragmentation in international systems and
- de-territorialisation, as part of the modern institutionalisation of physical boundaries.

Then I will try to defend a number of relatively new terms and definitions describing the dimensional organisation of the North. Finally, I will use the changing meanings of the relations between the Republic of Karelia (in the Russian Federation) and Finland (as a full EU member) on the one hand, and relations between the federal power and marginal territories like Karelia, on the other hand, as an example to illustrate these theoretical ideas.

The Republic of Karelia, the Leningrad oblast and the Murmansk oblast are the only members of the Russian Federation having a border with the EU. Can we view the external affairs of Karelia as reflecting double asymmetry: On the one hand, *vis-à-vis* the Finnish provinces, within the framework of the EU's

ND, when we explain paradigms of European integration? On the other hand, *vis-à-vis* the federal core, Moscow, and/or the regional, and now federal, centre of the Russian North-West, the city of St.Petersburg, when we determine the dichotomous character of perception of intentional marginality and centrality?

## Dimensionalisation and Dimensionalism

Present-day students of political geography looking at countries in terms of how they must organise their politics and their economic systems argue that a striking feature of the contemporary, dynamic North is the parallel movement towards sub-regional decentralisation on the one hand, and towards international integration on the other. However, in addition to both globalisation and glocalisation (fragmentation, or sub-regionalisation), dimensionalisation appears to have increased in reach.

The point of departure in the EU's ND was the economic inter-dependence between the EU, the Baltic states and the Russian Federation (with its 89 members, spreading from the Baltic Sea, across ten time zones, to Siberia's Pacific coast). The objective was to supplement two already existing policies: the Southern Dimension, that is concerning the Mediterranean macro-region, and the Western Dimension, or Trans-Atlantic policy.

The emerging new pragmatic European economics, characterised by increased openness and glob/calisation, has diminished, but not eliminated the impact of economic hurdles; the geo-political borders still remain, sometimes impeding the regionalisation of decision-making. This globally networked economy has also meant a diminished role for central governments in achieving regionally sustainable economic growth. Thus devolution of powers has meant that local governments are increasingly forced to accept more responsibility for the economic development of their own jurisdictions.

Realised successfully, ND would benefit geo-eco-

nomically the states in the region, mainly due to the fact that its policy was implemented within existing structures. At the same time, societies will face the challenge of adapting to an increasingly dimensional economy, which appears to be bringing not only greater inequality - primarily, in the categories of cross-border infrastructure and oil and gas transit - between nation-states, but also accentuating the gap between rich and poor within states.

In addition to the asymmetrical nature of dimensionalism, new patterns of regional foreign activity are, predictably, increasing the current differences in many states. Under these conditions, maintaining sufficiently inclusive understandings of dimensionalism's disarray, both economic and geo-political, is a daunting challenge.

The Baltic states and Russia launched their internal transformation processes during a turbulent phase in the evolution of world economics and politics. While changing their own systems, they also need to adjust to the rapid transformation of the inter-regional environment. The concurrence of these two transformations may result in a slow-down of change, but it may also provide opportunities for acceleration.

In a Europe of regions, sub-regionalisation created new boundaries and challenged the relations between existing political-military and social-economic spaces. This gives rise to the drawing of new lines between physical entities, emphasising the vector organisation of economics, or dimensionalism.

But in what way have events of the distant past been incorporated into new narratives? What is regional or dimensional integration now? Would it be possible to implement its general approaches and schemes to the Northern, Southern and Western Dimensions? To the EU? To the Northern corner of the European economic space? To the state-centred system of Euro-regions? To the federal state? To today's Russia of economic regions? Under what circumstances does regional integration occur? And how do the differences between „regions as social-economic practice“ and „regions in discourses“ emerge, exist and fade away?

What makes a region a region? What makes a border an asymmetry axis? Do asymmetries gravitate towards each other? What for? When and how?

Another question integration theorists are trying to answer concerns sub-regions, regions and dimensions in a world of re-territorialisation and globalisation - are they convergent processes or alternative systems? Indeed, the answer is more complex than it seems.

### Asymmetry in Dimensionalism

Dimensionalism seems to be a very broad concept. As I just indicated and, as can be seen in current day Europe, regionalism has created new boundaries and challenged the relations between existing political-military and social-economic spaces.

In contrast, dimensionalism appears to have increased its sphere, shifting the „practical“ emphasis from both fragmentation and globalisation to the drawing of new lines between physical entities, organised mainly on the basis of the vector organisation of economics (in particular, oil and gas infrastructure), on the one hand, and making a „theoretical“ confirmation of the changing meaning of ethno-national identities, security-oriented territorialisation and the institutionalisation of borders in modern geo-political systems, on the other.

Naturally, evolution of economic activity (together with the meaningful consequences of its integration into international structures) and internal affairs cannot be directly compared to each other, as they are of different hierarchic nature. But even in these circumstances it is possible to identify and evaluate certain mutual features and trends, particularly, their influence over the inequalities to be found in sub-regional development, or asymmetries.

### Asymmetries Gravitate Towards Each Other

Today, in the eastern and western parts of the region,

different understandings of inter-dependence and development are demonstrated. A perfect example of the „first“ type of asymmetry of dimensionalism is the so-called Euro-region Karelia project. In terms of economic realities, Euro-region Karelia provides new ways of organising more-and-more predictable - at the sub-regional horizontal level - cross-border collaboration based on the successful implementation of the EU's programmes, TACIS-CBC and Interreg III/II, and of attracting Euro-money from Brussels's „long corridors“.

On the Finnish side, the provinces of Northern Karelia, Kainuu and Northern Ostrobothnia have a keen interest in using a number of financial instruments connected with setting up the joint fund for the TACIS-CBC and Interreg-Karelia programmes. The fund is supposed to be administrated by a joint Karelian-Finnish management committee, which will be authorised to decide upon the projects to be financed on the basis of the Euro-region Karelia Development Programme.

From the theoretical point of view, this type of asymmetry in the administrative division of the border areas, and in the decision-making powers of the different political-administrative levels on both sides of the border, is a major obstacle to a more instrumental direct co-operation. Unemployment, on both sides of the border, is primarily a consequence of the long-term transformation process, but it is also a consequence of the marginalisation of the border sub-regions during the post-war period.

Cross-border co-operation is currently looked upon as an efficient means for correcting dimensional disadvantages, creating an attractive environment for new foreign direct investment, thus improving economic conditions and reducing emigration. After an initial period of regular contacts across the border between various economic and social institutions and enterprises, sub-regional governments on both sides of the border began to systematise and institutionalise their mutual co-operation.

In other words, the existent boundaries seem to make the sub-regions peripheral, marginal and asym-

metrical. However, the asymmetries gravitate towards each other: despite the obvious and often dazzling differences between two halves on an asymmetry axis, it should nevertheless be stressed that there are lots of similarities between them as well. At the same time, many West European arrangements, developed within the framework of pan-European integration, have proved non-transferable, particularly in view of Russia's non-membership in the EU.

### **Asymmetries Can Lead to Convergent Federalism**

At the moment, in the Russian Federation there are a total of eight inter-regional economic associations (IREAs) - the Arctic Agreement, the Siberian Accords (or Agreement), the Shernozem Association, the Greater Volga, the Ural Regions, the Far East, the North Caucasus, and the North-West - which have tried to realise on a practical basis the ideas of federally controlled (or just federally assisted) centrifugal development via allotment of their own tax-bases.

In September 1998, Mr. Y. Primakov, former Prime Minister of the Russian Federation, repeated and stressed his earlier statement that, from the point of view of the current tension in centre-periphery relations and the development of the vertical hierarchy of power, 89 constitutional factions in the federation are too many and the time has come to re-think the role of the inter-regional economic associations.

The next logical step towards re-centralisation was made in May 2000, when President V. Putin signed a decree creating seven federal districts, or new geopolitical super-regions, which happen to coincide closely with antecedent military districts created in the nineteenth century under Tsar Alexander II, and with contemporary IREAs (minus the Arctic Agreement).

Realistically speaking, the new three-stage and, to some extent, trihedral construction, central power-federal district-regional authority, has been created to strengthen the Presidential Administration's control over the peripheries: Mr. Putin has made clear his

determination to limit the powers of the independent-minded governors and to build a strong central state.

Mr. Putin feels that the greatest threat Russia faces is disintegration. Like Bismarck, he is ready to use force to keep the country together. To this end, all regional forces are subordinate to the presidential envoys - the administration of the former KGB, the interior ministry, internal armed forces groups, and border groups. Even defence ministry generals are somewhat confused because it is not known to what extent military district commanders will be subordinate to presidential envoys. Meanwhile, it is also clear that Mr. Putin's vision of Russian economic federalism relies mainly on the „power vertical“ with the iron rule of the so-called governor-generals, who have unlimited powers and report directly to Moscow - which will - most likely, be based on the horizontal foundation of IREAs.

In practice, the preconditions for the creation of seven new quasi-states, as well as for the establishment and development of convergent federalism, were reached because the federal representatives are tasked with taking direct control of all central agencies, such as security and taxation, and ensuring that the Kremlin's directives are strictly carried out.

Undoubtedly, in the light of these challenges, Karelia's relationship with the federal power will always be emotionally charged, infusing political thought from the inside with a false dilemma: either be a part of the huge Euro-Asian civilisation, or be in „confrontation“ with Moscow. Psychologically - in the transition from yesterday to a very different and not clearly imaginable tomorrow - this „complex“ will crop up again and again.

The historic non-acceptance of Karelia by the Nordic countries has created in the republic a relatively strong feeling of marginality: even if Karelian politicians and political observers might consider themselves European, not Eurasian, it does not mean that the whole of Northern Europe agrees on that point.

## By Way of Conclusion

Consequently, the process of transforming the Karelian double asymmetry from a barrier to a vital link between the parties involved is not an easy one. Would it be reasonable to focus future efforts upon the sub-regional level? In the face of global economic homogenisation, is not the issue of divergence or convergence the main question that confronts the „new“ dimensional organisation of the North? Many practical - by their very nature - problems which I have touched on here have to be solved before marked progress can be achieved.

For the first asymmetry, the only solution is to improve „traditional“ dimensional factors in the border sub-regions and to strengthen them through coordinated policies on both sides of the border. For this reason, it is particularly important that the border should be made more permeable.

For the second asymmetry, the solution depends on systematically correcting the dimensional aspects of the „new“ asymmetrical relationship between the central authorities, in both Moscow and St. Petersburg, and the peripheries, and to moderate them through equitable policies aimed at making Russian economic federalism less convergent and more transparent.

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# The European Union's Northern Dimension and the Sami People

Tanja Tirronen

The European north is too often described as a cold or forbidding place with poor living conditions and a fragile environment, where the people, especially indigenous peoples, have been assimilated by other cultures. The north has, however, undergone some extraordinary changes in recent years and I'm convinced that the European north is a psychologically warm and spectacularly beautiful place, with different cultures and traditional livelihoods which remain vibrant even as they undergo rapid changes.

In the fall of 1997, Finland launched a policy initiative entitled the EU's Northern Dimension. It proposes collaboration between northern Europe and Northwest Russia in transportation, energy and the environment under the umbrella of sustainable development. Since the accession of Finland and Sweden in 1995, the European Union extends from the Mediterranean to just a few kilometres from the Barents Sea. With these memberships, the European Union does, geographically, have its Northern Dimension and it has become more interested in northern policy and the European North. It has also been recognised that there are important indigenous minorities in the region, which have a very significant role in the further formation and development of the Northern Dimension.

In Europe, the Sami are an indigenous people, like the Inuits in Greenland. The Sami people live in

Sweden, Norway, Finland and on the Kola peninsula in Russia. The Sami people were divided between these four countries when the national states gained power in the north; the ancestors of the Sami people, however, had settled there before any other people. Today the Sami people are an ethnic minority in these four countries, with a culture and language of their own. They don't have their own state but they look upon the region where they live as their own and call it Sàpmi. The Sami community contains over 75,000 people, and they have their own history, language, culture, source of livelihood, way of life and identity. The Sami culture is based on their own territory and on the sustainable use of nature to fulfil the basic needs of the people.

Vast increases in the amount of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases being emitted into the atmosphere from human sources are affecting the atmospheric processes that determine the world's climate, giving rise to the prospect of climate change that could drastically reduce the habitability of the planet. Because the northern environment is exceedingly vulnerable, arctic co-operation has focused particularly on the environmental problems of this area. For the people in the north, the need for co-operation is very real, because in the north you experience also the waste which has its origins completely elsewhere. For this reason, we can talk about ecological interdependence which increases because of the common

environmental problems. Environmental problems cross state borders, and the problems affect different human groups in discrepant ways. This means that different people have varying possibilities for influencing matters.

When you look at the rights of the indigenous peoples, you have to also take account of the principle of state sovereignty. Although the historical facts show that the so-called stateland belongs to the Sami, the handling of that issue has been very problematic. State sovereignty guarantees the states right and duty to protect and use its natural resources, but at the same time this legally indistinct situation destroys the material basis of the Sami culture. Sovereignty as a concept, and as a definite factor in relationships between states, has to meet challenges in environmental issues which seriously question its meaning these days. I have been examining the relationship between state sovereignty and self-determination especially in regard to how possible conflicts about land use, ownership and protection might be solved.

The historic claim of the Sami to the lands that they have traditionally used and occupied is emerging as a significant public issue in Finland, Sweden and Norway. The main problem has been the divergent views about the ownership of the lands and waters which are now administrated by the state. This disagreement has prevented Finland from ratifying the International Convention of the International Labour Organization (N:o 169) concerning the world's indigenous and tribal peoples.

The growing awareness of their position and the threats to their future have made the indigenous peoples to try new political ways for influencing issues that are important to their well-being. A serious attempt to try to solve these different problems requires that the indigenous perspective must be given equal status in all efforts to deal with the conflicts. This is the same in the context of the Northern Dimension, because the Sami people have an important role in this new policy of the European Union. As is stated in the sustainable development program of the Sami adopted by the Sami Parliament in March 1998, the Sami need to work towards a sustainable Sami society, and to that end create possibilities for influencing decision making concerning the Sami's own area, livelihoods and culture.

These goals can only be reached by means of legislation, administrative efforts and financial support. The Sami should be allowed full participation in National administrative and regulatory systems in accordance with the Finnish Constitution. As long as the material basis of the Sami culture has not been upheld and protected, the Sami do not have the social means to carry out sustainable development.

I believe that indigenous peoples across the Arctic have much to give to the Northern Dimension and they should be recognised as significant and important actors in the region. We should respect the values and philosophies of the indigenous peoples and special attention should be given to their special, harmonious relationship with nature and their use of natural resources when developing the Northern Dimension in the future.