

# **Young Researcher Report - Open Assembly Panel: Can we Imagine a World Without Ice? Economic, Social and Political Consequences.**

## **Presentations by NRF Young Researchers.**

Rapporteur: Yongjia Song, University of Wisconsin-Madison, USA / China

Young Researchers: Mark Vardy, Adam Freeburg and Jennifer Laliberte.

Mr. Mark Vardy gave the questions of “what are the implications of the inclusion of sea ice as territory in Inuit Nunangat for how sovereignty is understood and practiced? Assuming territory includes sea ice, what then are the implications of sea ice reduction?” The issue is that territory, as a self-evident distinction from the ocean, is as essential to modern conceptions of sovereignty as sea ice is to the Inuit way of life. Sovereignty is not absolute or unchanging; we need to open up concepts of sovereignty to democratic debate and discussion. This could be all the more important given possibility for sudden changes.

Dr. Adam Freeburg gave us a long-term perspective of sea ice variability and culture change in northwest Alaska. Paleo-proxies of tree rings, pollen, beach ridges and archaeological fauna are researched for sea ice variability. He also uses fauna as paleo-ice proxy, such as ringed seal and bearded seal, for ice variability and human scale and dimension. His research is useful for lessons of adaptation and resiliency – challenges and possibilities.

Dr. Jen Laliberte stated the history of Yukon indigenous society, their development as well as challenges due to sea ice reduction. Yukon society is faced with both challenges and opportunities. Yukon indigenous identity in imagination and reality provide us with the image of a society living within the Arctic circle.