

## **IASC WG HUMAN & SOCIAL SCIENCE**

WORK-SHOP

13 DECEMBER 2012, 09.00-17.00

LOCATION: UMEÅ UNIVERSITY, SWEDEN

### **BETWEEN DISCOURSES AND MODERNITIES: HISTORIES AND METHODOLOGIES OF ARCTIC SOCIAL SCIENCES, HUMANITIES, AND ARTS**

The International Polar Year (IPY) had an ambition to accomplish an integration of the human dimension into the research program. A specific research theme was added with the ambition to investigate the cultural, historical, and social processes that shape the sustainability of circumpolar human societies, and to identify their unique contributions to global cultural diversity and citizenship. Kupnik et al. (2005) expressed that: "Our main challenge today is to articulate to a broader science audience that we regard ourselves as vigorous and active players in the polar science community, with the human and social conditions in the Polar Regions as our prime study object. We believe that as partners we are well qualified to address the issues of participation, involvement and representation, human rights, social and economic development, education and public outreach".

There are different opinions whether the IPY was successful for humanities and social sciences, and if we have addressed the human dimension in an appropriate way. Irrespectively of stand point in this matter, we state that research efforts that focus on peoples in the Arctic are valuable and have a great potential to develop and find new pathways to collaboration.

The aim of the workshop was to highlight one of the prioritized research items of the IASC Human and Social Science WG, and to identify the challenges and problems of the research field outside natural sciences and technology. With a self-reflexive approach the workshop addressed questions that are needed for an improved understanding of the position and direction of this research. Furthermore, informal discussions built a firmer foundation for future interdisciplinarity, community-based collaboration, and international research collaborations.

Relevant themes comprised scientific representations of the Arctic, the history of environmental monitoring, governance, natural resource exploitation and geo-politics in the Arctic, international law, the use of historical documents, traditional knowledge and scientific practice, indigenous self-representation, the relevance and influence of research, driving-forces, and the construction of knowledge and expertise.

The workshop gathered a limited number of invited researchers from the social sciences and humanities deliberating on topics with a significant value for the understanding and development of Arctic research, especially within humanities, arts and social sciences. Additionally, the event included discussions on the possibilities of common research planning, funding and action. The objective was to strengthen human Arctic sciences, to investigate the methodologies, and to problematize the relation between evolving modernity and conceptions and experiences of the North.

Initiated by Robert Corell the workshop discussed important initiatives for Arctic research, to be presented at the 2013 NCSE Annual Conference. The ideas that were put forward included organizing a meeting of the Arctic funding agencies and ways of providing new mechanisms for the participation of indigenous peoples. Moreover, the funding of an indigenous research school with a number of PhD students from the Arctic countries, including a mobility program was discussed. Additional items were a revision of the working group structure of the Arctic Council where it was argued that a break-up should be challenging, and that the current design is contra-productive; the promotion and improved financing structures for UArctic, including their mobility program North2North; the de-licensing of the representation of indigenous peoples in Russia, and the need for packages of funding that are neutral and not nation bound; the importance of collaboration with and development of media work (journalist courses, new research and co-operative projects were suggested); efforts to promote children and youth in the Arctic are often mentioned and acknowledge, but the results of these aims are rather poor, a Childrens AHDR was suggested as one solution; improved distribution of knowledge about the Arctic outside the Arctic; the importance of addressing other issues than global warming to the Arctic citizens; and, the need for multi-disciplinarity

The workshop took place during a dynamic week at Umeå University. The participants were offered an overall program that consisted of:

11-12 December – International workshop: Elderly and Arctic Change (42 participants)

12 December - Workshop with Arctic research in Sweden and the inauguration of the Swedish Humanities and Social Science Polar Committee (37 participants)

12 December – The Opening of Arcum – Arctic Research Centre at Umeå University with a Scientific Symposium and a Gala Dinner (142 participants)

13 December - IASC WG Human & Social Sciences Workshop Between Discourses And Modernities: Histories And Methodologies Of Arctic Social Sciences, Humanities, And Arts

13 December – Arctic Human Development Report II Town Hall Meeting

The IASC workshop gathered 10 presenters and a total of 39 participants. The workshop design presented three themes: Interdisciplinarity, Circumpolarity and Objects/material culture/print culture/land.

## PROGRAM

- 09.00-10.30** *Session I: Interdisciplinarity*  
Peter Schweitzer (Vienna)  
Otto Habeck (Halle)  
Andrey Soloviev (Murmansk)
- 10.30-11.00** Coffee
- 11.00-12.30** *Session II: Circumpolarity*  
Carina Keskitalo (Umeå)  
Niklas Labba (Tromsø)  
Annika E. Nilsson (Stockholm)  
David G. Anderson (Aberdeen)
- 12.30-14.00** Lunch
- 14.00-15.30** *Session III: Objects/material culture/print culture/land*  
Gail Fondahl (UNBC)  
Amber Lincoln (Fairbanks)  
Heidi Hansson (Umeå)
- 15.30-16.00** Coffee
- 16.00-17.00** Concluding discussion
- 17.15-18.45** Dinner at Restaurant T.C. Umeå Folkets hus

## PARTICIPANTS – IASC WORKSHOP (39)

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