

## Module 5: Indigenous Policy in the Circumpolar North

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### Overview

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This module explores basic Indigenous policy in the circumpolar world and expands on concepts introduced in CS 100, in particular northern governance, economic development and Indigenous rights. This module discusses policies concerning Indigenous peoples including political autonomy, cultural and language rights, economic rights, and how these have influenced domestic policies and forms of Indigenous self-rule throughout the circumpolar North. The module concludes with a comparative study of Indigenous policies relating to land claims.

### Learning Objectives

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Upon completion of this module you should be able to:

1. Explain the main types of policies concerning Indigenous peoples.
2. Explain developing lines of domestic policies for Indigenous peoples.
3. Explain different forms of Indigenous self-rule in the circumpolar North.
4. Compare and contrast similarities and differences in Indigenous policies in the circumpolar North.

### Required Readings (including web sites)

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### Key Terms and Concepts

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- Arctic Human Development Report
- Cultural and Language Rights
- Devolution
- Economic Rights
- Political Autonomy
- Intersection of Policy Sectors
- Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) / Traditional Knowledge (TK)
- Self-Determination, Self-Governance, Self-Rule

## Learning Material

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### Introduction

The circumpolar world is vast and home to a variety of Indigenous peoples with distinct cultures, histories and relationships with governments under which they live (Koivurova, 2008). Historically, policymakers located in the south who regarded Indigenous peoples as peripheries formed most policies affecting Indigenous peoples in the circumpolar region (Young, 2000; Brody, 1975; Watkins, 1977). In the late 1970s, Thomas Berger (1977) and others examined how policies developed for Indigenous peoples had been traditionally viewed through a lens that saw dichotomy between those from the South seeking access to the North's resources and those residing in the North.

The **Arctic Human Development Report** (2004) demonstrates numerous visions that have “framed Northern issues and shaped the interests of individuals and stakeholder groups during the course of modern history.” Three main interrelated types of policies concerning Indigenous peoples can consistently be found throughout the circumpolar region.

### 5.1 Types of Policies Concerning Indigenous Peoples

#### 5.1.1 Political Autonomy

A major type of policy concerning Indigenous peoples in the circumpolar North is commonly associated with **political autonomy**. Specifically, the principles of **self-determination**, **self-governance** and **devolution** are important aspects of Indigenous policies. Such achievements are significant because they allow Indigenous peoples to directly control community well-being and, as philosopher William Kymlicka (1995) suggested, “History has shown that the most effective way to protect Indigenous communities from this external power [political and economic] is to establish reserves where the land is held in common and/or in trust, and cannot be alienated without the consent of the community as a whole.”

#### 5.1.2 Cultural and Language Rights

Another major form of policy in the circumpolar region relates to **cultural and language rights**. According to Kate Darling, the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (1976) and the *International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights* (1976) “established the foundations that support our current understanding of an Indigenous person's right to speak their mother tongue as an inseparable aspect of culture and as a necessary element of substantive equality” (Darling, 2009). The *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (2007) states the right of Indigenous peoples to speak their own language and the ability to preserve and participate in his or her own traditions and culture are necessary for the long term success and viability of a people. Development of Indigenous language and culture policies is critical to the survival of Aboriginal peoples in the circumpolar North.

#### 5.1.3 Economic Rights

The third significant policy type involves **economic rights** and is often closely linked to political

#### Learning Activity 1

Think of something within your region that would fall within each policy category.  
Discuss how they may be interrelated.

autonomy as it covers Indigenous policies relating to land use (and land rights) and access to resources. The development of policy surrounding Indigenous economic rights is often complex and involves **informal, formal and transformative** economies existing at times in isolation of each other but increasingly in tandem.

## 5.2 Developing Lines of Domestic Policies for Indigenous Peoples

Many countries in the circumpolar North have begun to consult Indigenous peoples on a wide range of topics that directly impact their society's well being. Consultation does not always mean incorporation of Indigenous peoples' concerns because in many countries legislation does not require it. For centuries northern Ontario has been the provider of much of the province's natural resources. While many unexploited resources are on lands held by Indigenous peoples through treaties or claimed as traditional homelands, exploitation of these resources continues without consultation (Beaulieu, 2013).

Indigenous peoples in Alaska, Canada, **Fennoscandia** and Russia have sought rights to protect their languages and cultures through the creation of institutional mechanisms. Key to this is Indigenous peoples' connection to traditional lands in which their cultures are rooted. Prior to the Second World War, states in the circumpolar North pursued assimilationist policies. States educated children in residential schools in the language of the dominant society and away from their parents. States also banned cultural practices such as potlatches and shamanism.

Since the 1950s, governments in the circumpolar North increasingly allowed and encouraged Indigenous cultures and languages to co-exist with the language and cultural practices of dominant societies. Governments have also supported, financially and institutionally, Indigenous language and culture education and Indigenous institutions such as Aboriginal cultural organizations and media.

In Canada, the *Indian Act of 1876* set in motion a number of policies aimed at assimilating Aboriginal cultures. The Act was amended over years in response to conditions and changes in government intentions. Federal residential schools were established and religious residential schools were supported with federal funds to educate Indigenous people and assist with assimilation and socialization into the dominant society. Indigenous practices such as potlatches and the right of Indigenous people to organize politically were outlawed in 1927.

In Norway, similar policies were enacted. In 1850, the government introduced the *Finnfondent*, a policy of promoting the Norwegian language in Sami areas. The *State Land Act of 1902* restricted private ownership of lands to those who could speak, read and write Norwegian. Both chipped away at the self-determination of the Sami in Norway. In Russia, after centuries of being pawns in tsarist expansionist plans, the Soviet state collectivized reindeer herds and organized Indigenous communities into state and collective farms. As in the case of Fennoscandia and Canada, Indigenous children in Soviet Russia were often placed in residential schools away from

### Learning Activity 2

Read the Government of Canada's Fact Sheet on the Nisga'a Treaty.

<http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ai/mr/is/nit-eng.asp>

Summarize how the Nisga'a's Government has begun to implement its policies.

their parents.

### 5.3 Methodological Changes: TEK

An important development occurring throughout the circumpolar region is a methodological one. The recognition and use of **Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK)** or **Traditional Knowledge (TK)** has resulted in significant policy developments that are more consultative and balanced.

TEK describes knowledge Indigenous peoples possess about nature and their culture (EIP, 1996; Legat 1991). However, it is not a static knowledge as critics often dismiss it to be. Burgess (1999) stated, TEK is “systems of experiential knowledge gained by continual observation and transmitted among members of a community. It is set in a framework that encompasses both ecology and the interactions of humans and their environment on physical and spiritual planes.” Similarly, Koïchiro Matsuura, Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, explained in 2008:

As factors of social integration, languages effectively play a strategic role in the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger; as supports for literacy, learning and life skills, they are essential to achieving universal primary education; the combat against HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases must be waged in the languages of the populations concerned if they are to be reached; and the safeguarding of local and Indigenous knowledge and know-how with a view to ensuring environmental sustainability is intrinsically linked to local and Indigenous languages (United Nations, 2008).

Often transmitted through oral tradition (and recently written communication) TEK is increasingly considered an equally valid form of information as science by policy makers. In Canada, the **Nisga’a Final Agreement Act** is an example of how adoption of TK can inform and assist in the development of successful policy. The Nisga’a Treaty was the culmination of over 20 years of work by the Nisga’a people for recognition of self-governing and land rights by the Canadian federal government. The Supreme Court’s decision to accept oral history, a form of TK, as evidence led to an agreement in 2000 after 22 years of negotiation (Molloy and Ward, 2000).

Buoyed by the Nisga’a ruling, Indigenous peoples in the northern portion of the Province of Ontario incorporated TK along with culture and values into land claim disputes, co-management initiatives and advisory boards. It has become a dominant issue with provincial and federal government resource extraction policies. Mining and forestry industries, developers, communities and other groups have begun to work together to incorporate TK in preliminary screenings, environmental assessments and environmental impact reviews, and community impact studies. While some policies have become legislation, such as the 2009 Mining Act, consultation with Indigenous peoples is often required although they do not have a veto.

### 5.4 Intersection of Policy Sectors

Increasingly, domestic policies have been informed or framed by growing transnational dialogue between Indigenous peoples in the circumpolar world. One of the earliest transnational level

venues for this intersection of policy sectors is **The Inuit Circumpolar Conference** (formed in 1977 and recognized by the United Nations in 1983). It represents over 150,000 Indigenous peoples of **Inuit** and **Yupik** heritage located in Canada, Greenland, the United States and Russia (Osherenko and Young, 1989).

The six principal goals of the Inuit Circumpolar Conference echo the three main types of Indigenous policies already discussed. The Inuit assume they are not restricted by the confines of the **nation state**. Focused on unity among all Inuit in the circumpolar world, the Inuit Circumpolar Conference seeks to, among other things, have a “full and active participation in the political, economic and social development in our homelands” (ICC website). The promotion of Inuit rights and interests is viewed as one and the same as developing and preserving culture and society for present and future generations.

Similarly, the **Aleut International Association (AIA)** is a formal organization of Aleut peoples created in 1998 to “protect the natural resources and environment of the region surrounding Aleut homelands, which is threatened by the impact of the Russian economy, pollution, climate change and commercial fishing fleets of several nations” (Arctic Council website, Aleut International Association). AIA is composed of Indigenous peoples living on both sides of the Bering Strait. AIA has been particularly active in the advocacy of policies within Alaska and Russia that preserve Indigenous cultures and languages, in addition to local, regional and international environments facing pressures placed on them by resource exploitation.



ARCTIC COUNCIL

Two forums established in the 1990s have provided

Indigenous peoples access to national and international policy makers. Although the Arctic Council, formed as the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (AEPS) in 1991, was established to deal with environmental protection, it has allowed representation by Indigenous peoples from across the circumpolar region to participate as Permanent Participants. The Northern Forum, also established in 1991, was established to “improve the quality of life of northern peoples ... [by supporting] sustainable development and the implementation of co-operative socio-economic initiatives among Northern regions” (The Northern Forum, 2003).

### 5.5 Rovaniemi Code of Conduct

One such policy development was The Northern Forum’s **Rovaniemi Code of Conduct** finalized during the Arctic Opportunities Conference in Rovaniemi, Finland in 1994. The Rovaniemi Code is a guideline for resource development and

#### ROVANIEMI CODE ARTICLE 6: THE RIGHTS OF NORTHERN PEOPLES

- A. Respect for the cultural and traditional values and ways of life of local populations, their basic means of subsistence and rights as recognized by national, regional and international norms and rules;
- B. Respect for the rights of the populations concerned to participate fully in the economic benefits, including training and educational programs and employment;
- C. Consultation, participation and consideration of local populations, including Indigenous peoples, in resource development decisions; utilization of local Indigenous knowledge is seen as a valuable contribution to the decision-making process;
- D. Strict adherence to international human rights instruments that outlaw discrimination of all kinds;
- E. In determining development strategies, respect will be given to the importance of the culture and values of Indigenous peoples for their traditional relationship to resource use of land and water.

business operations in the North. The Code built on the AEPS Rovaniemi Declaration to achieve substantial progress toward sustainable development and “comprehensive monitoring, assessment and safeguarding of Arctic nature and Arctic peoples” (Northern Forum, 1994).

A declaration of the “Rights of Northern Peoples” was included in the Code, which stated, “ultimately, resource development and business activities should improve the living conditions of the inhabitants of the region, including Indigenous peoples” (Northern Forum, 1994). The Rovaniemi Code reveals human rights, such as the language and cultural rights of Indigenous peoples, are increasingly recognized while questions of land rights remain the subject of debate in many Arctic countries.

The Arctic Council remains important because Indigenous peoples are defined as permanent participants and must be fully consulted before decision-making occurs. However, the Arctic Council and Northern Forum are limited in terms of decision-making authority. For example, the Rovaniemi Code of conduct encourages domestic and international businesses to endorse and integrate its guidelines into development and business practices.

Beginning in the late 1990s, a series of Arctic Council studies were released that incorporated many ideals of the Rovaniemi Code. Each study explored aspects of the circumpolar world and was intended to inform government policy development. While studies that focused on issues such as pollution (AMAP, 1997; 2002), flora and fauna (CAFF, 2001), reindeer hunting (Jernsletten and Klovov, 2002; Ulvevadet and Klovov, 2004) and climate (ACIA, 2005), of particular importance are *The Survey of Living Conditions in the Arctic Project (SLiCA)* and *Arctic Human Development Report (AHDR)*. Both substantially increased knowledge of issues facing circumpolar Indigenous peoples.

The AHDR was intended to identify problems and highlight success stories that could be “studied and possibly adapted by policy makers and people throughout the region” (AHDR, 1). The concluding chapter “draws attention” to policy-relevant findings but does not “advocate adoption of specific policies” (ADHR, 22). While it may be too soon to make conclusions, it has informed research produced by policy makers. An example is the recent *Arctic Social Indicators Report* (2009) that followed up on the AHDR’s recommendation to develop social indicators that provide data for policy development and analysis.

## 5.6 Different Forms of Indigenous Self-Rule in the Circumpolar North

Most Indigenous peoples across the circumpolar world share the fundamental goal of achieving some form of **self-rule**. The 2004 *Arctic Human Development Report* states:

### Learning Activity 3

Choose a similar theme from the Arctic Human Development Report and the Arctic Social Indicators Report and compare and contrast similarities and differences between the two reports.

“The contemporary formal policies and ideal with regard to increased Indigenous influence seems to be widely shared in Arctic states, even if political and administrative solutions vary from state

to state. One answer that is closely linked to the growth of regional autonomy is the establishment of public governments.”

Since the mid-twentieth century, global events have empowered Indigenous peoples through new structures of governance and devolution of legislative power. The 1960s and 1970s, in particular, witnessed renewed calls by Indigenous peoples for a greater voice in policy decisions affecting their homelands and societies. For example, the Canadian federal government’s policy of relocating communities in the 1950s and 1960s led to a reaction by many Inuit (Dahl et al., 1990).

Political awareness and activism heightened as governments increasingly began to take notice of northern regions due to the discovery of oil, gas and minerals. Indigenous peoples’ concerns about environmental damage, loss of traditional ways and further marginalization led to demands for greater autonomy and self-rule. This manifested itself in Greenland with calls for independence from Denmark and Alaska experienced demands for land rights in the 1970s.

### 5.7 Greenland Home Rule

Since 1380, Greenland Inuit have been under Danish rule and until 1953 Greenland was a colony of Denmark. Denmark granted self-government to Greenland in 1979. Indigenous peoples were given the ability to make education, health care, social welfare and economic development decisions. The Greenland Home Rule Act represents a pioneering effort to accommodate Indigenous peoples’ aspirations for self-determination.

Since 1979, Greenland has operated under the Home Rule Act, which grants its 55,000 residents some autonomy from Copenhagen over its internal affairs. However, Inuit residents are not granted greater or lesser political rights than non-Inuit residents. Home Rule is a form of public self-government, not Aboriginal self-government. Fiscal transfers from Copenhagen to the Greenlandic government are not transferred on ethnic lines. Inuit residents make up eighty percent of the population and are in no danger of being out voted by non-Native residents. Following the achievement of Home Rule, Greenland’s capital was the site of the creation of the Inuit Circumpolar Conference in 1980.



**Figure 1: Katuaq Cultural Centre in Nuuk**  
[www.greenland.com/content/english/tourist/towns\\_regions/west\\_greenland/nuuk](http://www.greenland.com/content/english/tourist/towns_regions/west_greenland/nuuk)

### 5.8 Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act

In 1867, Aboriginal Alaskans were the majority when the United States purchased Alaska from Russia. Today, Aboriginal Alaskans represent 15 percent of the population. Throughout Alaska’s history, increasing numbers of newcomers mirrored increasing demand for land and resources traditionally used by Aboriginal Alaskans. Oil reserves were of particular importance. Due to the importance of oil to the American economy the United States government insisted Aboriginal claims be settled before further development occurred in Alaska. Negotiations resulted in the

1971 **Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA)**, one of the most important pieces of Aboriginal rights legislation.

The ANCSA attempted to redefine relations between Aboriginal peoples and the state and provide greater self-determination for Aboriginal Alaskans. Although many observers and Aboriginal organizations pointed out serious shortcomings of the ANCSA, it was remarkable for its time. The ANCSA created twelve regional for-profit corporations with surface and subsurface mineral rights to 180,000 km<sup>2</sup> of state land. In each region, village corporations were created and held surface rights to local lands. A thirteenth corporation was created for beneficiaries who did not live in Alaska.

Native Alaskans also received nearly one billion dollars in exchange for lands and rights ceded. Native Alaskans acquired greater self-determination through their regional and village corporations; however, Native Alaskans did not acquire political self-government rights in the same way as other Aboriginal peoples in North America. Further, Native Alaskans do not have the same degree of protection of subsistence rights on non-corporation lands as do their counterparts in other areas of North America.

## 5.9 The Creation of Canada's Nunavut

Four years later in Canada, the James Bay Cree and the *1975 Northern Quebec Agreement* (extended to include the Naskapi of northeastern Quebec in 1978) represented the second major North American agreement in the modern era. The James Bay Agreement was in response to natural resource development, in this case a massive hydroelectric power development.

The agreement provided three categories of land: the first gave Cree peoples surface ownership of 5,543 km<sup>2</sup> with a veto over the Province of Quebec's use of subsurface rights; the second provided exclusive subsistence rights over 62,160 km<sup>2</sup> of land; and the final and largest gave special consideration for traditional land use by Cree peoples. The agreement provided municipal-style, local self-government to eight Cree communities and regional government through the Cree Regional Authority.

The 1993 **Umbrella Final Agreement** for fourteen First Nations in the Yukon Territory and corresponding self-government agreements for four of the fourteen First Nations represented a stronger agreement in terms of self-determination over lands and government. The agreement provides 8,000 First Nations people in the Yukon land rights to 41,439 km<sup>2</sup> of territory, including surface and sub-surface rights to Category A lands and surface rights to Category B lands. Yukon First Nations have co-management rights on key resource and development boards. The Yukon self-government provisions are also stronger than the James Bay Agreement.

A final model of self-rule is the recent *Nisga'a Final Agreement*. The Agreement's land claim settlement is less remarkable than the provisions for self-government. Although the Nisga'a government is comparable to a municipal government in a number of ways, it is much more than that. In this respect, the Nisga'a model of self-government differs from the James Bay Agreement and the Yukon First Nations model.



The Nisga'a government is constitutionally protected therefore neither the provincial nor federal government can unilaterally dissolve the Nisga'a government. The Nisga'a government is paramount in some areas of jurisdiction, which means Nisga'a law can prevail over federal or provincial law on matters such as Nisga'a citizenship, language and culture. Since the Nisga'a government is paramount and has constitutional protection, the Nisga'a government becomes a third order of government in Canada after provincial and federal levels.

These agreements, combined with increased levels of political power, have been used to increase protection of lands and achieve social and economic gains throughout Canada. In Canada, Nunavut is a good example of the devolution process. The Territory of Nunavut was established April 1, 1999, in Canada's eastern Arctic. Nunavut's government model is similar to Greenland with a few important exceptions.

In part based on the utilization of TEK, the Nunavut agreement provides Inuit with ownership and subsurface rights to 36,000 km<sup>2</sup> of land. Unlike Greenland, the Canadian federal government controls Nunavut's policies with respect to international issues. For example, Greenland's decision to remove itself from international treaties signed by Denmark before Home Rule, as was the case in its withdrawal from the European Union, is not an option open to Canadian Indigenous peoples.

### 5.10 The Sami Parliament

A contrasting example to Greenland and Nunavut is the history and role of the **Sami Parliament of Fennoscandia**, which has advisory powers to the national governments in Sweden, Finland, Norway and Russia. Seventy thousand Indigenous Sami have little legislative protection and have become a minority within their traditional lands. In a 1981 decision by the Swedish Supreme Court movement toward any form of self-rule has been forestalled by the denial of property rights. The Finnish Sami Act obliges the national government to negotiate with the Sami Parliament but involves little more than consultation.

### 5.11 The “Small-Numbered Peoples” and RAIPON

The Russian situation is slightly different. Indigenous peoples of the Russian north known as the “Small-Numbered Peoples of the North” are the most recent Aboriginal peoples in the circumpolar world to embark on the path to self-determination. Collectively they consist of over forty peoples, but constitute a fraction of one percent of the population of the Russian Federation. Indigenous peoples occupy a place on the national policy agenda greater than their numbers would otherwise dictate because their traditional territories are rich in natural resources and Indigenous policy issues are important among northern countries.

This situation is the result of two factors. After the political and economic changes in the former Soviet Union, federal and regional governments in Russia adopted legislation recognizing the rights of Indigenous peoples and granting increased measures of self-determination. Article 69



of the Constitution of the Russian Federation explicitly recognizes the rights of Indigenous peoples in accordance with international norms, but it does not define them.

The second factor was the formation of the **Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North (RAIPON)** in 1990. Originally consisting of twenty-six Soviet Indigenous peoples who came together to form an association to press for autonomy, environmental protection, rehabilitation and self-government, it now represents over forty-one different Indigenous peoples. Its goal remains to guarantee the right of protection of native homelands and traditional ways of life and the right to self-governance according to national and international legal standards (RAIPON website).

Figure: Ssami Reindeer herders. Arktinen Keskus website. [www.arcticcentre.org/?Deptid=24486](http://www.arcticcentre.org/?Deptid=24486)

Since RAIPON's establishment it has influenced the drafting and implementation of policies particularly those related to land rights and self-government. RAIPON has been a member of the Arctic Council since 2001. However, Aboriginal peoples' land rights and self-governance authorities are generally weak because of weak Russian laws.

### 5.12 Similarities and Difference in Indigenous Policies in the Circumpolar World

Indigenous policies relating to language, culture and land claims in the circumpolar North allow for some level of comparative analysis. Despite the intersection of these policy sectors in pan-Indigenous organizations such as the Arctic Council and the Inuit Circumpolar Conference, history has demonstrated different outcomes on similar issues has tended to be the norm, e.g. the legal right to ownership of traditional lands in British Columbia and the Taxed Mountains of Sweden.

#### Learning Activity 4:

List three common traits and differences between Indigenous peoples in your country and another country? Which stand out as being most significant?

#### A Comparison of Nunavut and Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA)

	Nunavut	ANCSA
Land compensation	18%	11%

Sub-surface rights to lands claimed	1.80%	11%
Surface priority rights to lands given up	82%	0%
Benefit agreements	+	-
Royalty of extraction of non-renewable resources on non-owned lands	+	-
Political accord	+	-
All Indigenous have equal rights	+	-
Shares and benefits can be transferred to non-Indigenous	-	-
Lands can be sold	-	+

Source: Arctic Human Development Report, 2014

The British Columbia provincial government's policy until the late 1980s was to deny Aboriginal peoples the legal right to own traditional lands. After a series of court cases culminating in the 1997 Delgamuukw decision of the Supreme Court of Canada, it was established in law that the land rights of the Wet'suwet'en and Gitksan people's of northern British Columbia had not been extinguished when the province joined Canada and survive to this day.

However, the Supreme Court ruled these rights were not absolute. Whereas governments have a duty to consult First Nations before any resource development can occur on traditional lands, government can override Aboriginal opposition to the expropriation of traditional lands under certain circumstances. Regardless, the recognition of Aboriginal land title was an important victory for Aboriginal peoples in Canada.

In contrast is the Taxed Mountains case of the Sami of Sweden. There are neither reserves in Fennoscandia nor Aboriginal land claims in the same sense as in North America. Sami living near the Norwegian border in northern Sweden attempted to establish ownership rights based on the fact that for centuries they paid taxes to the Swedish state similarly to conventional landowners. In 1981, the Supreme Court ruled the Sami did not have ownership rights to traditional lands in question, but established the Sami possessed the "firm right of use" to Crown lands.

Recognition of Aboriginal rights was a victory and setback for Sami in Sweden. The recognition as legal land use rights (usufructuary rights) of an Indigenous cultural and political community strengthened the claim of Sami people for greater self-determination. However, Courts placed clear limits on the extent of those rights by denying Aboriginal land ownership rights (proprietary rights).

In Russia land claims evolved differently over the past 100 years. In the 2004 Arctic Human Development Report, Indigenous peoples who wish to pursue "traditional" activities such as hunting and reindeer herding can petition for land allocation. These lands then, theoretically, become inalienable and closed to industrial development unless the holders of this tenure agree to such development (Fondahl and Poelzner, 2003). As a result, hundreds of Aboriginal groups called Obshchiny were established. However, the collapse of state subsidies following the end of the Soviet Union, continued economic issues and external competing industrial interests led to

the disappearance of many of these peoples and the inability of others to attain lands (Ziker, 2003).

## Conclusion

Indigenous policies in the circumpolar North have historically been developed and implemented by non-Indigenous populations living in southern regions of circumpolar countries. Contact over hundreds of years in Fennoscandia and North America resulted in the nineteenth century implementation of assimilation policies where states did not view Indigenous peoples as distinct political communities.

Changes brought on by global warming have had tremendous impacts on traditional ways of life. Loss of habitat has affected the number of seals, whales, fish and polar bears. As sea ice has thinned, hunting has become more dangerous (Ford et al., 2006; ACIA, 2005; AHDR, 2004). These threats to traditional ways of life have profoundly influenced regional cultures, economies, social structures and community well being. Each area as a result has become the focus of new policies throughout the circumpolar region as many peoples' ways of life are endangered. New Indigenous policies in the circumpolar North are needed to tackle these and other issues.

## Discussion Questions

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1. What are the main types of Indigenous policies in the circumpolar North? How do they interrelate?
2. What is the Rovaniemi Code? What are its implications to Indigenous policy?
3. What new rights did the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act give Aboriginal Alaskans?
4. Briefly describe the James Bay, Nisga'a and Yukon First Nations Agreements. Compare and contrast each agreement in terms of self-rule. Explain how each agreement advanced rights granted by the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act.
5. What are the key differences between the models of self-rule of the Inuit (Nunavut and Greenland) and the Sami (Sweden, Norway and Finland)?
6. Why are land and self-government rights among Russia's northern small-numbered peoples weak?

## Study Questions

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1. Explain the types of policies concerning Indigenous peoples.
2. Outline different forms of self-rule in the circumpolar North.
3. Discuss similarities and differences in Indigenous policies.

4. How has the Arctic Council influenced policy development concerning Indigenous peoples?
5. Outline types of domestic policies for Indigenous peoples.

## Glossary of Terms

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**Devolution:** The transfer of power in a unitary system of government to a regional or local administration (i.e., Denmark or Norway).

**Fennoscandia:** Geographic and geological term used to describe the Scandinavian Peninsula, the Kola Peninsula, Karelia and Finland.

**Home Rule:** An advanced state of devolution in which a colony has autonomous law-making powers (with specific reference to Greenland and the Faroe Islands). In the United States, home rule means the ability of a municipal corporation to develop and implement its own charter.

**Informal Economy:** A system of trade or economic exchange used outside state controlled or money based transactions.

**Rights:** Entitlements that others have an obligation to respect and which permit a person or a people to do something or refrain from doing something.

**Self-Determination:** In its most absolute sense self-determination is the freedom of a people to decide their own allegiance or form their own government. With regard to Aboriginal rights, in most cases, it means a degree of self-government coupled with other rights.

**Self-Government:** The ability of a people to make decisions about their own affairs without interference or direction from external forces. Sometimes used synonymously with political capability.

**Umbrella Final Agreement:** Reached in 1988 and finalized in 1990, it is the overall umbrella agreement of the Yukon Land Claims package.

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