

DOUBLE EXPLOITATION, MILITARIZATION OF THE ARCTIC AND ALTERNATIVES -

Options on the socio-ecological development of the Arctic in the era of climate change

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Starting point

“With the melting of the Polar caps due to climate change, large oil resources will potentially be up for grabs soon and important new trade routes are opening up. That is why a fierce competition for influence and an outright militarisation of the Arctic is taking place”.

Draft document of the EL Environment WG for the EL Congress 2016

Arctic has warmed **twice as fast** as the global average;

Some land areas show a 20th-century warming trend in air temperature of 5° C

Some regions in Europe are and will be suffering from rapid climate change more than average: e.g.

✓ the south of Europe,

✓ sea-side cities,

✓ low-lying areas and

✓ mountain regions

✓ - and **the Arctic.**

→ *exchange experiences within these regions*

→ *see common features,*

→ *discussing the causes, general interrelations and feedbacks*

to develop necessary movements

DOUBLE EXPLOITATION & MILITARIZATION

Political economy and political ecology (O'Connor):
relationship between

- ◆ exploitation of man
- ◆ exploitation of nature and
- ◆ Militarisation

generally and especially also for the Arctic

Arctic as a global hot spot

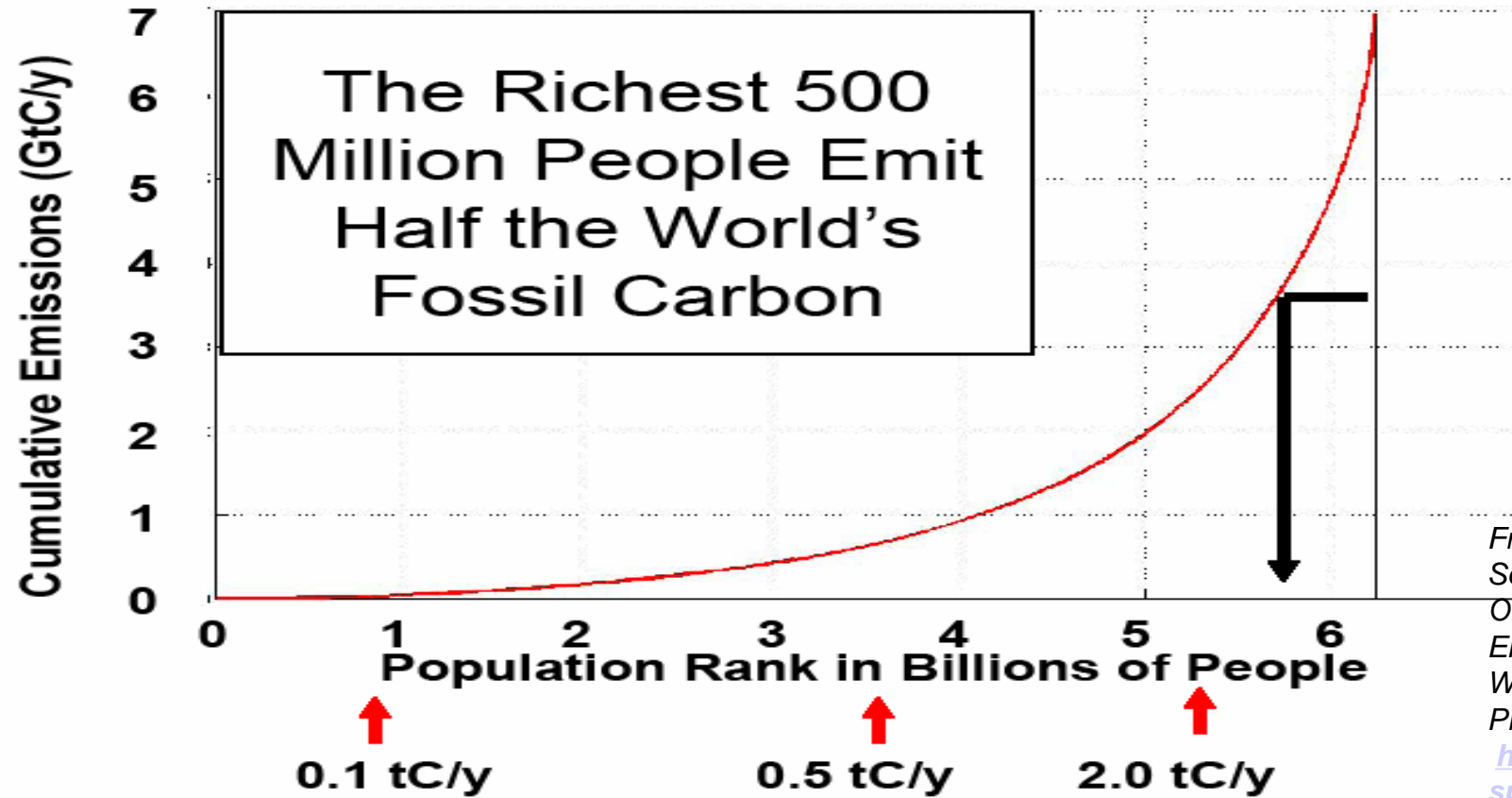
As for most people and regions in the world:

Also for the Arctic: causes of climate change **originated from outside**

The Arctic has become a key region in global climate change dynamics because of

- strong **self-accelerating processes**, for example by Albedo effect
- **repercussions for** other parts of the planet,
- ✓ to temperature of the **Atlantic and thereby the weather in large parts of Europe.**
- ✓ **thawing of permafrost ==> more methane emissions**

Causes of climate change - Global distribution



From: Pacala S.W.: *Equitable Solutions to Greenhouse Warming: On the Distribution of Wealth, Emissions and Responsibility Within and Between Nations*. Princeton, at IIASA, November 2007
<http://www.iiasa.ac.at/iiasa35/docs/speakers/speech/ppts/pacala.pdf>

Arctic as a sensitive socio-ecological region

Unforeseeable consequences

Not only for the polar bear

changes in

- x sea ice,
- x permafrost,
- x precipitation patterns,
- x acidification of the polar oceans,
- x composition of the Arctic biota

There are also implications for the **health**

Changes until now are significant

but they are insignificant in relation to the scientifically forecast changes that will occur later in this century.

**Longterm
complete
melting of
Greenland ice**

→ 6 m • Textmasterformat bearbeiten
Sea level rise

Zweite Ebene

Dritte Ebene

Vierte Ebene

*Aus: Al Gore, **Fürchte***

Unconvenient Truth,

2006, p 204

What about positive effects of climate change?

- ◆ increases in greenness and biological productivity
- ◆ increasing agricultural and forestry opportunities,
- ◆ better access to marine resources,
- ◆ new opportunities for trade and shipping
- ◆ lower operational costs for the oil and gas industry,
- ◆ easier access for ship-based tourism, and
- ◆ lower heating costs

Economic positive effects of climate change?

But substantial investments will be also needed to adapt physical structures (infrastructure) and residential buildings due to thawing permafrost

+ecological harms

So “the effects of the melting ice have only minor, short-term positive aspects for economic development in relation to the far greater long-term environmentally destructive developments in the Arctic region” (GUENGL 2014)

IPCC: “unprecedented challenges for northern communities”

Remarkable “social turn” in the latest IPCC-assessment report:

*“The physical, biological and socio-economic impacts of climate change in the Arctic have to be seen in the context of often interconnected factors that include not only environmental changes caused by **drivers other than climate change but also demography, culture and economic development**”*

*“For example, food security for many indigenous and rural residents in the Arctic is being **impacted by climate change and in combination with globalization** and resource development projected to increase significantly in the future... The rapid rate at which climate is changing in the Polar Regions will impact natural and social systems... and may exceed the rate at which some of their components can successfully adapt”.*

IPCC: “unprecedented challenges for northern communities”

*“There is increased evidence that climate change will have **large effects on Arctic communities**, especially where **narrowly based economies** leave a **smaller range of adaptive choices**”
(accentuation JB)*

*Although Arctic residents have a history of adapting to change, the complex inter-linkages between societal, economic, and political factors and climatic stresses represent **unprecedented challenges for northern communities**, particularly as the rate of change will be faster than the social systems can adapt.*

Neoliberalism in the last 35 years

also in Arctic regions :

- deregulation and privatisation
- (balanced) regional development policies were downgraded

==> increase of regional concentration

==> increase of regional and social disparities in the Arctic

.... Paradoxically also **since ~1980, the scientific knowledge of climate change** generally and the function of the Arctic region has become definitely clear.

Lock-in of fossil capital

Fossil capital is able to shift social costs, especially those arising from climate change, to the general public (oligopolies!)

Accumulated capital in the field of fossil exploitation - vested interests - “lock-in” (but devaluation sooner or later)

==> Pressure to advance into the more ecological sensitive regions to exploit fossil fuels

Irreversible change in the energy pattern in periods of climate change

In earlier stages of industrialisation fossil energy had an important function for development by supporting and relieving labour

Now industrialised countries (mainly causing climate change) can and should get out of fossil energy asap because of the necessities of climate change.

Other countries then would follow the non-fossil example.

Arctic as a “second middle east”?

~ **20 %** of the world’s undiscovered hydrocarbon resources are located in the Arctic region

Climate change mitigation ==> only **20 %** of all global fossil fuel reserves can be exploited in order to keep the average temperature increase below two degrees Celsius

“Curse of resources” or window of opportunity?

At the moment, increased (off-shore) drilling is postponed because of low oil prices. This should be used as a window of opportunity to change the basic strategies.

Even Saudi-Arabia with extreme riches and highest military budget p.c. recently announced plans for a quick exit from oil-dependency

Leave the fossil fuel in the Arctic seabed!

„Leave

the Oil in the Soil,

the Coal in the Hole,

the Tar Sand in the Land,

the Fracking Shale Gas under the Grass”.

And for the sensitive Arctic region:

Leave the fossil fuel in the Arctic seabed

Socio-ecological transformation

- ◆ Anyway: **No further investments** to exploit Arctic fossil resources;
- ◆ Transformation to a system of **renewable energy and energy saving**
- ◆ with a focus on **erasing energy poverty**, cheap minimum energy supply p.c. and progressive energy fees.
- ◆ **Immense opportunities** presented by low-emission energy technologies

EU-policy: claims and reality

On paper:

“sustainable multi-source energy systems, eco-tourism and low-emission food production”

“on- and off-shore wind power, ocean energy, geothermal energy and hydropower”.

But dominating: “The EU has a strategic interest in playing a key role in the Arctic region”, “

“Investment opportunities in the Barents region alone (are) to be EUR 140 billion”;

In a corporate orientated framework future oil and gas activities are taken for granted

EU-policy: claims and reality

Decarbonisation would also relax conflicts and imperialist rivalry and facilitate conversion

But commodification, fossil lock-in and geopolitical interests are dominating EU-policy whilst EU-documents on the Arctic claim to be “coherent” and promote sustainable development

Inspired by the positive example of the Antarctic treaties...

Since the 1950s a set of international treaties on the Antarctic has developed resulting in an **actual moratorium on exploiting of resources and demilitarization.**

Although only partly comparable as a populated zone , the perspective of limitation of exploitation of nature and the demilitarization and the safeguarding by international agreements can and should be a model for the Arctic.

...for a moratorium of exploiting of (fossil) resources and demilitarization of the Arctic

2008 the European Parliament adopted a resolution with the inspiration by the Antarctic Treaty and to start negotiations

But after a trial actually this was replaced by stressing the Law of the Sea and principles of international law of freedom of navigation

For a moratorium of exploiting of (fossil) resources and demilitarization of the Arctic

The GUENGL 2004 was insisting on a

“**moratorium on industrial exploitation of the Arctic Ocean region**, which has hitherto been covered in ice, and that this moratorium must remain in force until a legally binding, superordinate framework has been adopted to provide full protection for the ecosystem and people of the Arctic; stresses that any agreement on a moratorium must be agreed with the countries and with the peoples, particularly the indigenous peoples.” It is considered

“that a fund should be created to compensate the people of the Arctic for abstaining from the use of their natural resources”. “Whilst there are obvious differences between the Arctic and the Antarctic, there are also obvious similarities; points out that the text of the Antarctic Treaty successfully creates a framework for peaceful research and cooperation“

Perspectives: society of solidarity and harmony with nature and peace

From the relation of exploitation of man and nature
and militarisation we can envisage also

**a positive perspective of the interconnection of
society of solidarity and harmony with nature
and peace, specifically as a concrete target for
the Arctic, and later on globally.**

