

Sustainabilities', Or The Politics of a Many-Faced Concept

Workshop RG Circumpolar Regions and Siberia
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Undoubtedly, 'sustainability' has become a widely used buzzword not only in our daily lives, but also on both domestic and international political stages. With regard to the Circumpolar North, it has recently been suggested that "sustainability research in the Arctic has moved to the forefront of intellectual and policy realms" (Petrov et al. 2016: 166).

Historian Jeremy Caradonna remarked that the concept of 'sustainability' ('Nachhaltigkeit') emerged in the context of conflicts over resources, especially wood, induced by the proto-industrialist economies of Early Modern Europe at the beginning of the 18th century (Caradonna 2014). He did not pay, however, much attention to the political effects of this particular development. In contrast, historian Joachim Radkau argued that the articulation of 'Nachhaltigkeit' essentially relates to the emergence of the modern, bureaucratic state and that therefore the invocation of 'sustainability' has to be understood in clearly political terms (Radkau & Schäfer 1987; Radkau 2011).

In line with this rather critical stance towards 'sustainability', we propose to shift attention to the politics of its invocation: What are the consequences of the introduction of the concept in specific ethnographic settings? What kinds of actors are mobilized and what types of alliances are formed (e.g. NGOs, governmental organizations etc.)? How do these actors deal with potentially different notions of 'sustainability'? How does 'sustainability' relate to the emergence of intensive resource extraction and the (colonial) bureaucratic state? To what extent do invocations of 'sustainability' shape the discursive frames of political processes, limiting the field of potential articulations of 'collectivity'?

The proposed workshop explicitly attempts at breaching narrow regional as well as disciplinary perspectives and therefore welcomes contributions not only from other parts of the globe, but also from related disciplines.

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Please note that the "two-role" rule applies to presentations, the organisation of workshops or roundtables, and the role of discussant: each conference participant is allowed to take on roles in a maximum of two categories (presentation, discussant, the organisation and chairing of a workshop or roundtable); it is not possible to take on two roles in the same category. Please send a text of max. 1.200 characters (incl. spaces) and also a short version of max. 300 characters (incl. spaces) directly to the workshop organizer(s). **Deadline: 02/15/2019** ABSTRACT SUBMISSIONS: Andreas Womelsdorf: aawomelsdorf@gmail.com