

Sustainable Development or Sustaining Development?

Arctic governance in a changing climate

The crisis consists precisely in the fact that the old is dying and the new cannot be born.

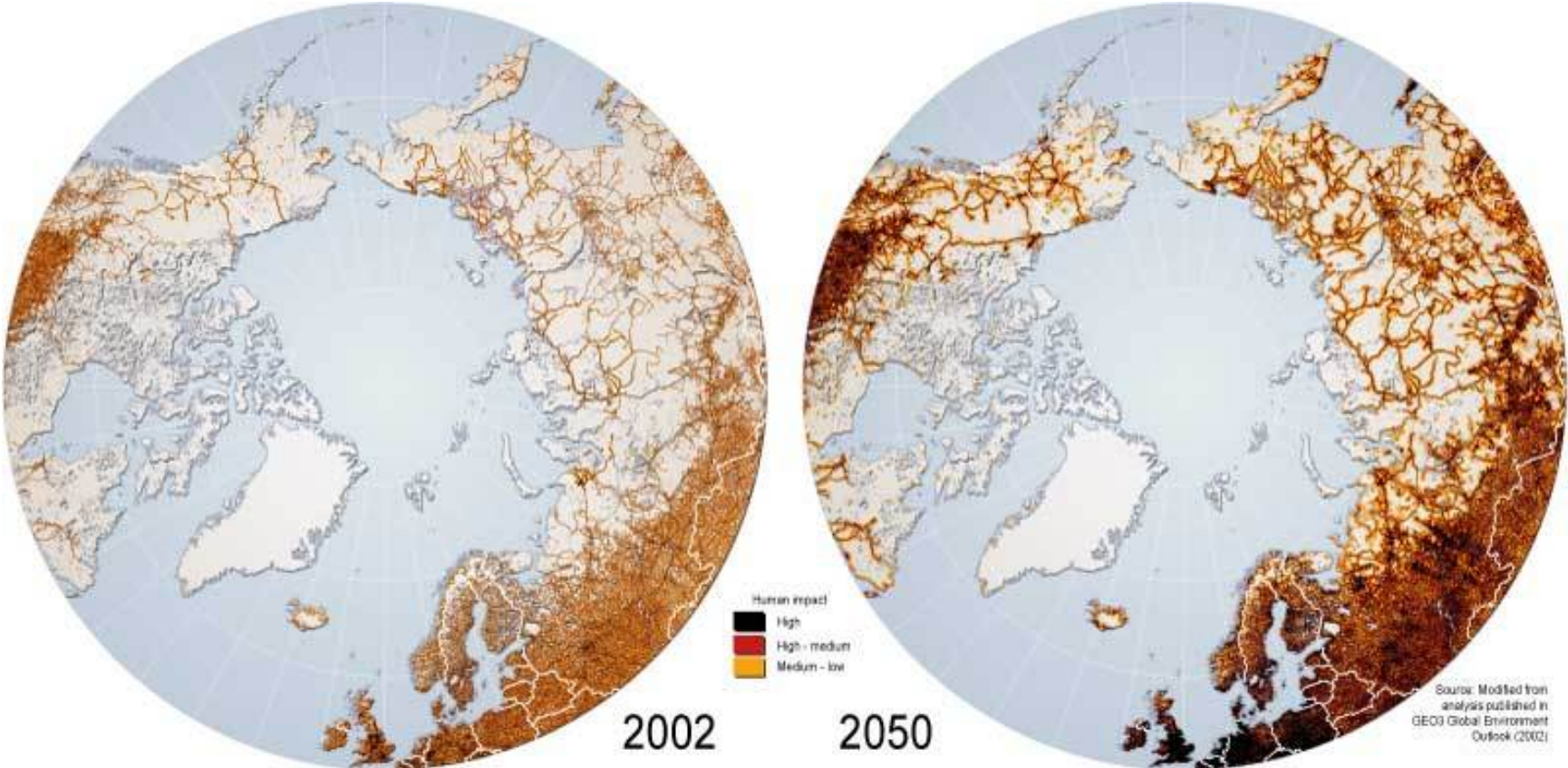
Antonio Gramsci

Brundtland definition: “sustainable development”

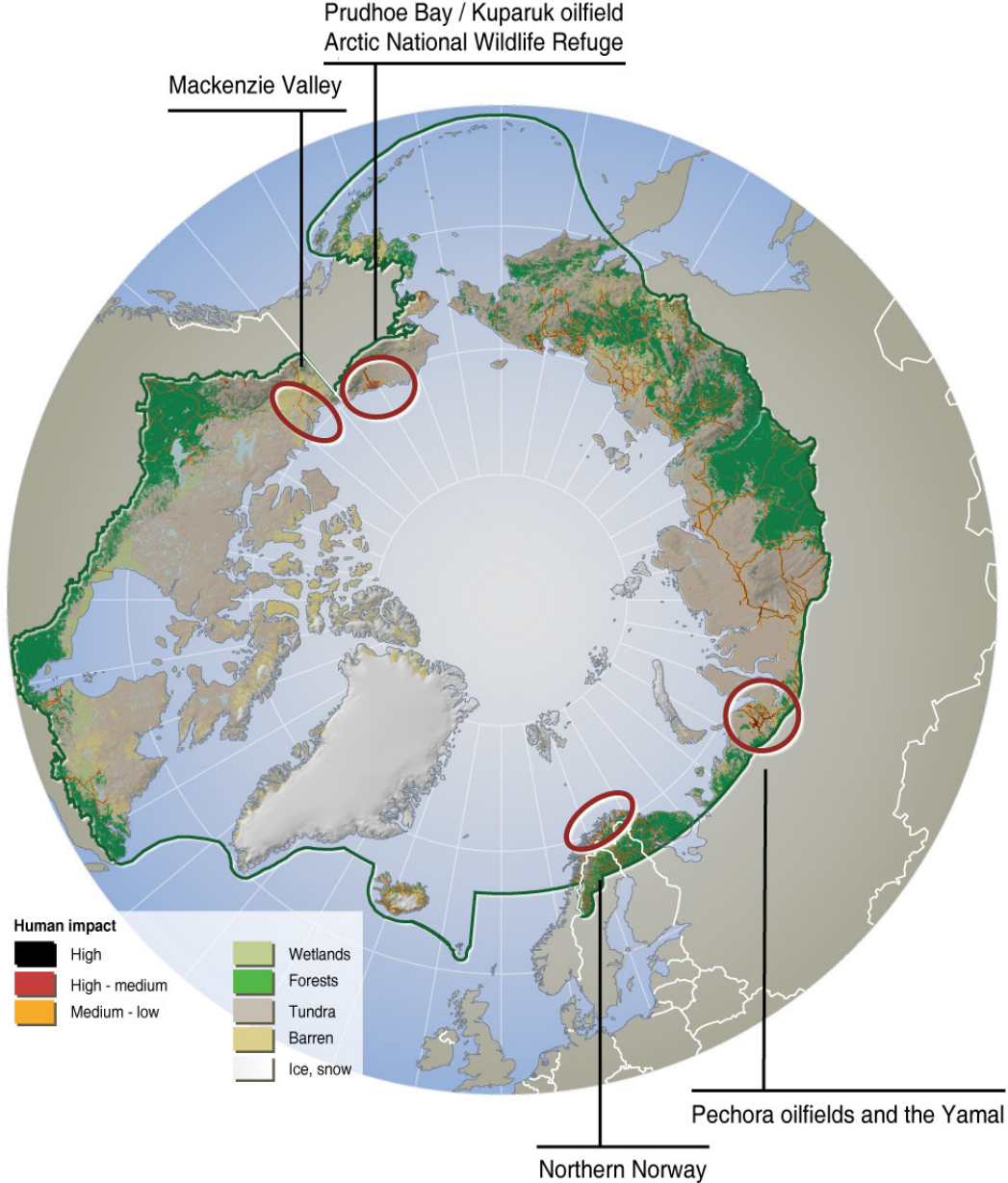
Humanity has the ability to make development sustainable to ensure that it meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

The concept of sustainable development does imply limits - not absolute limits but limitations imposed by the present state of technology and social organization on environmental resources and by the ability of the biosphere to absorb the effects of human activities.

Arctic development scenarios 2002 and 2050



Cumulative effects



UNEP and Arctic Governance

- The Monaco Decision on Sustainable Development of the Arctic (2008) encourages UNEP to support “the efforts of Arctic States, individually and collectively, to protect the Arctic environment and manage activities in the Arctic to minimize the impact of those activities” on the region’s environment.
- Entitled *Sustainable Development of the Arctic region*, this decision of the governing council encourages UNEP “to co-operate, as requested, with the Arctic Council, relevant Multilateral Environmental Agreements and other relevant regional and international bodies, as appropriate”.

Two views of the governance challenge



Alternative jurisdictional representations of the Arctic Ocean that emphasize boundaries based on the: **(a)** sea floor as a source of conflict among nations with sovereign areas and outer continental shelf claims (different colors);^[1] and **(b)** overlying water column as a source of cooperation among nations with the High Seas as an unambiguous international space in the central Arctic Ocean.^[2]

[1] International Boundaries Research Unit, University of Durham (<http://www.dur.ac.uk/ibru/resources/arctic/>)

[2] Berkman, P.A. and Young, O.R. 2008. Arctic State-Changes: National Interests or Common Interests? *Science* (in review)

UNEP and Arctic Governance

- Follows UNEP decision recognizing Arctic as a barometer for global environmental health, and
- Arendal Seminar *Multilateral Environmental Agreements and their relevance to the Arctic* (2006) called on UNEP to evaluate the effectiveness of MEAs in the Arctic



- As UNEP's Key Polar Centre, GRID-Arendal has the responsibility for coordinating a project that will assess and monitor the performance of MEAs in slowing the rate of biodiversity loss in the Arctic, analyze gaps and present options for improvement.
- Will produce report on Arctic biodiversity and relevance to MEAs in the Arctic

Multilateral Environmental Agreements and Arctic Biodiversity

- United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea – UNCLOS (1982)
- Convention on Biological Diversity (1992)
- International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships - MARPOL (1973)
- Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (1979)
- UN Fish Stock Agreement (1995)
- Stockholm POPs Convention (2001) -- *first to mention Arctic*
- RAMSAR Convention on Wetlands (1971)

Recommendations (1)

1. (Preamble?): UNESCO recognizes the efforts now underway to come to grips with governance in the Arctic and its implications for biodiversity in the Arctic, including the analysis of Multilateral Environmental Agreements being led by UNEP through its Polar Centre in at GRID-Arendal.
2. As a matter of equity, the UNFCCC Copenhagen climate change agreement scheduled to be completed in December of this year must provide sufficient resources to allow the world's vulnerable regions to adapt to rapid climate change. In the Arctic, this means that these resources must be provided by the states which have sovereignty in the region;

Recommendations (2)

3. In light of the latest scientific findings, and in order to preserve the Arctic's role as the planetary cooling system, UNESCO supports efforts by the Small Island Developing States and other vulnerable regions, including the Arctic, to achieve a climate change treaty that will ensure that global average temperature increases are kept below 1.5 degrees Celsius (above pre-industrial levels);
4. UNESCO urges Arctic nations to recognize the importance and value of non-Arctic stakeholders in efforts to preserve the region's unique biological, social and cultural heritage, and reduce the effects of climate change.