Collaborative research in the Arctic: How to address community concerns in a changing environment?

Sylvie Blangy*, Monique Bernier*, Pierre Philie†, Najat Bhiry‡, and Dominique Marguerie*

1Centre d’écologie fonctionnelle et évolutive (CEFE) – CNRS : UMR5175, Université Montpellier II - Sciences et techniques, Université Montpellier I, Université Paul Valéry - Montpellier III, École Pratique des Hautes Études [EPHE] – Campus CNRS - 1919 route de Mende - 34293 Montpellier cedex 5, France

Abstract

The presentation focuses on increasing interest coming from Indigenous Peoples and the broader research community in collaborative research and co-production of knowledge. Local and regional community-focused research centers have emerged and are looking at ways to collaborate with universities to help address questions related to the rapid and critical economic, physical and social changes being experienced in the Arctic and sub Arctic regions. New research methodologies have been developed lately in the course of these projects using narratives, qualitative information, web, ITC (Information and technology communication), participatory action research approaches. Protocols, research guidelines, codes of ethics are used to bound the different partners and lead their collaborations. Partners are faced with the challenge of how to collect, share, interpret, manage, use, further develop and preserve these data and information resources. We will base this presentation on the Nunavik OHMI project, the 8th CNRS labeled OHM (Observatoire Hommes Milieu) a network of observing networks around the world. The OHMI Nunavik is a collaborative effort between the Kativik Regional Government (KRG) in Nunavik, the Nordic Study Centre (CEN) at Laval University, and the French National Research Centre (CNRS) in France and is located in the Inuit community of Kangiqsujuaq In Northern Québec. French and Canadian academics have joined forces to address community concerns, developing research projects looking at major issues such as mining and tourism impacts, ice safety, environmental changes, health and well being. Projects are designed together through a collaborative approach using participatory action research workshops and techniques developed by Chevalier and Buckles at Carleton University (www.sas2.net). The workshops are documented by a group of youth. Processes and results are filmed, posted and commented on line. Comparative studies and cross cultural research programs are developed with other Arctic and sub Arctic communities through a web site. Narratives, qualitative data, local knowledge are merged with scientific data. New research protocols are developed. Our talk aims at raising questions related to the status of participatory action research and its relevance for indigenous peoples dealing with environmental changes.

*Speaker
†Corresponding author: monique.bernier@ete.inrs.ca
‡Corresponding author: PPhilie@krg.ca
§Corresponding author: najat.bhiry@cen.ulaval.ca
¶Corresponding author: dominique.marguerie@univ-rennes1.fr
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