The Globalization of Ecocide:

with an Emphasis on the Arctic Region

Juliana Aracely Rocha, Sociology Criminology

Mentor: Dr. Jack Fong

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Introduction and Thesis

Conquering the unknown has been a habit developed by humankind as a product of the Enlightenment. With the introduction of technologies thought to facilitate everyday life, came the domination of nature, others, and nature within the self, known as the dark side of the enlightenment by critical theorists Adorno and Horkheimer. Contemporarily, global trade, in the act of globalization and the technologies utilized to achieve capitalist desires, can be noted as a form of modern conquering. In light of the Arctic region, natural resource extraction machinery, transportation vehicles for global trade, and media technologies are of focus. Technologies have been used inherently as part of daily life; therefore, society has accepted and surrendered to them. Consequently, the technologies utilized to extract and transport resources in the Arctic have been noted as intrinsic given that the media controlled by corporation capitalist ideology emits artificial messages that resources are infinite and utilizing earth as a commodity is innate. However, technology is in fact destructive and its effects are apparent in traveling to the remote Arctic frontier where ecocide has begun to take place. The melting of Arctic sea ice, due to the global warming effects of modern technologies, gives urgency to analyze the Arctic frontier as a region of ecocide since its remote location has diffused society's sense of responsibility given that they are not directly affected and lack awareness. Corporations have taken advantage of this to reap resources in hopes of monetary gain. Accordingly, geopolitical claims for resources have transpired, transforming the Arctic into a new arena for nationalism to emerge. Incorporating Adorno and Horkheimer's argument on the culture industry and the dark side of the enlightenment found in the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* and Carson's strong ecological sustainability environmental agenda initiated in *Silent Spring*, supplies a framework in which to analyze the current state of the Arctic and the manners in which to out maneuver the media for genuine social change. This study reveals the reality that **technology has been complicit in the erosion of the Arctic environment and ecosystem** which, in turn, has initiated the globalization of ecocide in the Arctic.

Theoretical Basis

Horkheimer & Adorno

Rachel Carson

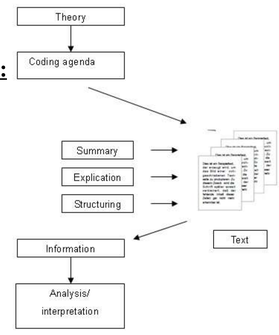
- **Culture Industry:**
  - -Media and cluttered information
- **Dominations:**
  - -Domination of Nature
  - -Domination of Nature within the Self
  - -Domination of Human Beings by Others
- **Post-WWII Culture of Science:**
  - -Nature conquering technologies
  - -Distant relationship between humans and nature

Methodology

Content Analysis—Qualitative Research

Data Collection Resources:

- Peer-Review Journals
- News Articles
- Books
  - -Relating to research on the Arctic region, globalization, and ecocide



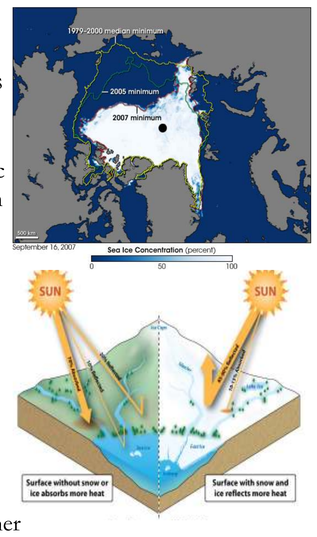
Research Categories:

- Globalization and Modern Technologies
- Global Warming and Climate Change
- Air and Water Pollution
- Arctic Vegetation and Fauna
- Arctic Indigenous Populations
- Approaches to Resolving the Issue

Systems Affected

Climate Change:

- Climate change continues to be exacerbated by the technologies used in human activities
- The temperature on the Earth's surface has increased by 0.6°C over the last two centuries
- In the past three decades, Arctic sea ice has lost ½ its area and ¾ of its volume
- The possibility of once legendary shipping lanes that global warming has provided in the Arctic has created environmental problems and given rise to the globalization of ecocide in this region

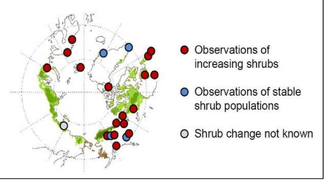


Water and Air Pollution:

- Technicalities with oilrigs and collisions between Arctic tankers have led to **water pollution** via oil spills
- The emission of Black Carbon (BC) particles by Arctic marine vessels contribute to **air pollution** and add to Arctic warming via the albedo effect

Arctic Vegetation:

- In the last couple of decades trees have shifted to the north due to preferences of colder weather
- Accordingly, vegetation which prefers warmer weather such as shrubs have claimed dominance over land
- This has contributed to the **"greening"** of Arctic vegetation zones thus Arctic warming since absorption of solar radiation has been cited as dominating its reflection
- Trees have also been experiencing an increase in insect outbreaks and forest fires due to a warming Arctic climate



Conclusion & Recommendations

Conclusion:

Technology has been complicit in the globalization of ecocide in the Arctic. The Arctic's remoteness in addition to the emission of cluttered messages by the culture industry has diffused society's sense of responsibility while distracting them through media. Consequently, corporations have seized this chance to claim natural resources and extract them for self-profit. Extraction technologies have been cited in the Arctic which have aided in accelerating global warming, reducing sea ice in shipping lanes, and increasing pollution in the environment. This, in turn, has produced the globalization of ecocide in the Arctic given that the environment once present to Arctic fauna and indigenous populations has been transformed into a commodity for global trade.

Recommendations:

- Strong Ecological Sustainability
- Environmental Social Movement Organizations such as Greenpeace
- Social Change and the realities of the Culture Industry
- Green-Based Policies such as those targeting Black Carbon emissions
- Endorsing Ecocide as the missing 5th Crime Against Peace

Populations Affected

Arctic Fauna:

- Polar bears have been noted to move northward to colder climates for salvation
- Populations in the south have experienced a decrease in their quality of life and increased rates of mortality and infertility
- Reduction in sea ice has restricted polar bears with a shorter period to hunt for prey, this has forced them onto land for longer periods at a time with a lack of fat reserves
- Two phenomenon which include polar bears drowning as they attempt to reach sea ice and polar bears resorting to cannibalism in order to survive have been recorded

Society:

- The domination of human beings by others has generally occurred through the manipulation of individuals via mass media in which corporations have utilized advertisements to form a socially inactive culture of consumerists

Geopolitical Claims:

- The contemporary melting Arctic region has created an Arctic battle ground for national power due to geopolitical claims for natural resources and ownership of recently available shipping lanes
  - -In an effort to symbolically bolster their claim, Russia used a submarine to plant a flag under the North Pole in 2007
  - -Russian President Putin plans to reestablish military presence in the Arctic to protect shipping lane interests
  - -The availability of the once legendary Northwest Passage has created disagreements between Canada, who claim the passage is located in Canadian historical waters, and other countries, which claim the passage is an international channel
  - -Countries which are not part of the Arctic Council (Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden, and the United States) such as China, India, Italy, Japan, Singapore, and South Korea have sought observer status permission in attempts to gain from the prospect of wealth in the Arctic
- Although many nations have portrayed territorial behavior, America has not ratified UNCLOS (UN Convention on the Law of the Sea) which has excluded them from exploring resources and certain Arctic policies
- Currently, countries are cooperating due to a shared interest of profit; nevertheless, the Arctic can quickly become a new place for nationalism to emerge and perpetuate war
- The remote location of the Arctic in combination with distracted societies around the globe has allowed corporations to take dominance over Arctic indigenous populations' traditional form of livelihood given that the resources needed to create and mobilize the commodities desired in industrialized nations are currently being extracted from native Arctic land

Arctic Indigenous Populations:

- Currently, there are about four million Arctic inhabitants with a little over ¼ consisting of indigenous peoples
- Indigenous communities are more reliant on natural resources, thus are affected by vegetation and fauna shifts as well as extraction technologies and their pollution negatively more so than non-indigenous Arctic populations
- This is noted in their higher rates of deterioration in quality of life, characterized by lower life expectancy, higher infant mortality, higher rates of infectious diseases, and much higher incidences of injuries and suicide