

Final Report: Junior Research Stay at University of British Columbia

Natasha Donevska

Free University Berlin

Environmental Policy Research Center

Integrating nature conservation and sustainable development: the case of
Clayoquot Sound Biosphere Reserve

04.07.2016-01.08.2016



The research stay at the University of British Columbia was particularly beneficial for my second field research in Canada, investigating the case study of the Clayoquot Sound Biosphere Reserve on the west coast of Vancouver Island. The main issue I have been focusing on is the integrated approach to sustainable development and environmental protection policy making related to social-ecological systems. Particularly, the focus lies on the participatory governance in the decision-making process, which in the case of Clayoquot Sound Biosphere Reserve is based on advisory round tables composed of relevant stakeholders. The decision-making process is rather complex, occurring on various levels of government, local, regional, provincial and federal, but also involving a wide range of stakeholders, such as NGOs, First Nations representatives, industry representatives, other state bodies, such as Parks Canada and Fisheries and Oceans Canada, etc. During my research stay, I have

been trying to unveil the complexity in the decision-making processes, which have developed through a long history of struggle over the use of the natural resources. The region is extremely rich in natural resources that have attracted a great number of actors interested in their exploitation. Furthermore, through court decisions some of the First Nations have managed to restore their rights to manage their traditional territories as well as participating in the policy making-processes. Therefore, the region offers a unique opportunity for this kind of research since it is the few places in the Northern America where the First Nations are formally involved in the policy-making and have a significant role in the decisions regarding sustainable development and the nature protection.

During my stay at the University of British Columbia I used to opportunity to get in touch with researchers from the Institute for Resources, Environment and Sustainability (IRES). We got a chance to exchange our interests and findings in the common cases we have been researching, such as the Mt. Carmel Biosphere Reserve and the Clayoquot Sound Biosphere Reserve. This meeting has widened my views in sustainability issues surrounding these areas from anthropological and cultural theoretical lenses. The findings from this research enriched my views on the cultural differences in the multiple stakeholders' mental models of the contested spaces and the natural resources.

Comparing the cases of the Clayoquot Sound Biosphere Reserve and the Mount Arrowsmith Biosphere Reserve, which I have researched during my first research stay in Canada through the University Alliance for Sustainability is particularly interesting and exciting. The two cases of Biosphere Reserves, although neighboring ones differ greatly in the management their models, providing a great opportunity for a most similar research design as well as in the design of the decision-making processes. The comparative analysis of the two cases provides an opportunity to critically analyze the implementation of the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere Program on one side; and on the other side to analyze the implications of participatory governance processes in the urge of sustainable use of natural resources.