
Society, environment, human security: The Arctic Barents region

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Kamrul Hossain and Dorothee Cambou (eds.)

Society, environment and human security in the Arctic Barents region.

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Society, environment, and human security matter not only in the Arctic but worldwide. In the light of current global changes, however, the Arctic region has a greater focus than ever before. This timely volume – and its scientifically holistic and convergent approach – gives the reader insights into Arctic lives and security issues in theoretical and practical contexts. The geographical pivot of the Barents region provides a case study which can also be shared among other parts of the Arctic. These parts may at first glance appear unique, but are on closer inspection both alike and rather different. The Barents Arctic region is a relatively accessible transborder society with the number of inside and outside stakeholder interests. This brings economic development and prosperity to the region but also leads to the “unequal benefit sharing resulting in tensions amongst the various groups living in the region” (p. XIV).

The book, edited by *Kamrul Hossain and Dorothee Cambou*, is the collective work of 15 authors combining the research outcomes of the project entitled Human security as a promotional tool for societal security in the Arctic: Addressing multiple vulnerability to its population with specific reference to the Barents region (HuSArctic). Divided into two main parts, the book sets the theoretical background to the discussions on practical knowledge and the assessment of the current state of human security in the Barents Arctic.

In the theoretical part, *Kamrul Hossain* discusses the triple concept of societal-community-human security in the Arctic by featuring the “we” feeling within the transnational communal identity of the Barents region residents (p. 5). The transforming social structure of the Barents region holds social inequalities and threats, as well as opportunities. Analysis of the changing understanding of the theory of “securitisation”, shifting from narrow military relations towards political, economic, societal, and environmental dimensions, leads the reader to the second part of the book. The main institutional basis, transforming past and current achievements of the geographically broad Barents region, is discussed by *Dorothee Cambou* and *Lassi Heininen* in Chapter 1.2 (p. 19). This institutional outlook reveals the importance of existing cooperation for the strategic strengthening of human security in the region.

The second part of the book is a gateway to the many dimensions of most if not all levels of regional security and safety. In Chapter 2.1, *Sarah Mackie* discusses environmental threats such as climate change and vast industrial and nuclear pollution in the region, and proposes a preliminary action plan to safeguard the environment. Chapter 2.2 analyses the economic security at stake by comparing the main indicators (unemployment, demographics, education, transport, etc.). *Anna Petrétei* and *Dorothee Cambou* conclude by identifying the key needs that the region has, and highlight beneficial cross-border cooperation. In Chapter 2.3, *Susanna Pääkkölä* and *Dorothee Cambou* argue that improved cooperation, digitalization, and new technological solutions will enhance health security in the region, where there are substantial differences within health care and well-being among the presented countries. *Shaun Cormier* and *Dele Raheem* discuss regional food (in)security in Chapter 2.4. The comprehensive overview of the threats to food security is complemented by an assessment of a number of interrelated factors such as climate change, globalization, water and food security, and others. As a case study, the water security in the Barents region is featured in Chapter 2.5 by *Antonia Sohns*. This chapter emphasizes the reciprocal and changing relationship between water security and human security (p. 105) by examining the main insecurity factors identified and underlined by the theoretical part of this book. Energy, one of the essential resources in the world, is discussed in Chapter 2.6 by *Hanna Lempinen* and *Dorothee Cambou*. The societal perspectives on and recommendations for energy security are proposed within the context of the “four A’s” – accessibility, acceptability, affordability, and availability at the individual and community levels. Individual security as an indicator of the umbrella concept of human security is assessed in Chapter 2.7 by *Tahnee Prior* and *Patrick Ciaschi* through three dimensions: suicide, domestic

violence, and in- and out-migration (p. 135). Personal security is also interconnected and influenced by other dimensions of human security including community security. In Chapter 2.8, *Giuseppe Amatulli* and *Joëlle Klein* discuss community security in the Barents region and consider the geographic significance of indigenous groups (p.151) living in the area. Their thorough assessment of cultural preservation, justice for language and education rights, and the rights on the use of land and natural resources leads to their recommending substantial improvements in the existing legislation. This takes us to the political security in the Barents region, which is analysed by assessing the contemporary political challenges in Chapter 2.9 by *Dorothée Cambou*. Such challenges include political rights and freedoms, inclusion and self-determination, and peace and stability. In a highly digitalized modern world, digital security also takes its place within the discussion on human security. Chapter 2.10 by *Mirva Salminen* concludes the book by addressing and examining six themes: access to digital networks, availability of digital services, access to information, digital awareness and skills, digital inclusion policies and protection of human rights, and the state of cybercrime and digital abuse (p. 189).

As the book shows, all the factors, levels, and dimensions of human security are interconnected in the very structure of this volume. Each chapter is a part of the logical narrative towards the big picture and a holistic overview of Barents human security. The editors conclude that while all levels and pillars of human security are important, “one thing is certain: the protection of the environment remains a major source of insecurity in the region” (p. 205).

For me, the book was a great reading experience not only as a scientist but also as a resident of the Barents region. It enhanced my understanding of the multilevel security issues for my own well-being. The book is aimed at a specialist audience but will certainly be of interest to the general public and is indeed worth reading by the Barents region residents. It can be recommended as a textbook for college- and university-level courses on human security and the Arctic studies. And, by summarizing recommendations on strategies indicating effective measures for societal sustainability, the book is a comprehensive guide for policy- and decision-makers in the Barents transnational region.