FINAL REPORT
HuSArctic Conference Outcomes

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Photo credit: Afroja Khanam
The Final HuSArctic Conference

REPORT OF CONFERENCE OUTCOMES

HuSArctic - Human Security as a promotional tool for societal security in the Arctic – is a four-year research project funded by the Finnish Academy and based in the Northern Institute for Environmental and Minority Law in the Arctic Centre, University of Lapland. The project connected researchers from numerous countries and various backgrounds with various stakeholders from Arctic communities to elaborate on multiple vulnerabilities and challenges to human security in the Arctic, with a specific reference to the Barents region. The HuSArctic project held its final conference from the 23-27 of October 2018.

The aim of the final conference was to address human security challenges in the Arctic from different aspects, and to offer recommendations on how to enhance human security in the region.
Conference Structure

The day began with a brief overview of the project’s development, and presentation on the objectives of the conference. Over the course of the conference, participants were placed into working groups consisting of international and local experts, scientists, and local stakeholders. Group discussions were organized world café-style, and all participants were divided into three predetermined groups. During each parallel session, the groups discussed one of the three given themes:

1. Arctic communities: identity, culture, community values and challenges
2. Human and societal security challenges in Arctic governance
3. Local implications of global developments

A moderator and a rapporteur were assigned to each of the themes, while the predetermined groups changed themes after each session. In addition, a moving rapporteur was assigned to each group. By the end of the conference, every group discussed each of the three themes. Cumulatively, this means that over the course of two days, nine different discussions occurred, as each group rotated through each of the themes. Following a closed discussion between moderators, rapporteurs, and conference coordinators, a plenary session culminated the discussions to elaborate on a joint summary of action items to further human security in the Arctic. The outcomes
of the plenary session were published in an executive summary of action items, and made available to policy makers and relevant actors.

Format and Summary of Discussion

The following themes were established for discussion during the conference:

1. Arctic communities: identity, culture, community values and challenges
   a. Moderator: Gudmundur Alfredsson
   b. Rapporteur: Miguel Roncero

2. Human and societal security challenges in Arctic governance
   a. Moderator: Will Greaves
   b. Rapporteur: Adam Stepien

3. Local implications of global developments
   a. Moderator: Kamrul Hossain
   b. Rapporteur: Gerald Zojer

There were three predetermined groups, with approximately 8-10 participants per group. These groups rotated every hour and a half to discuss the next theme, with the fixed moderator and rapporteur from that theme. In order to follow the tight schedule, each session followed a set structure. The framework was kept deliberately broad and open, to allow participants from various backgrounds to interpret and address challenges intuitively. A basic structure for discussion was given (see below) although flexibility was still encouraged.

1. 30 minutes: Addressing the theme
   Discussion: Currently, what are the main issues in the Arctic related to the theme?

2. 30 minutes: Problems and challenges
   Discussion: How can the identified issues be addressed?

3. 30 minutes: Recommendations
   Discussion: Who are the main actors to identify this issue? How would the group suggest that the actor addresses the issues?
The following sections elaborate on some of the main elements of discussions on each theme, from each group.

**Theme 1: Arctic Communities**

In all three groups, the issue of Arctic uniqueness was discussed as both a benefit and a challenge to understanding northern contexts. This included the power dynamics of and positionality of using Arctic uniqueness as a concept both as an internally and externally applied definition. Regarding communities in the Arctic, it became important to differentiate between commonalities and differences of the region’s populations, and their representation. For example, the inclusion and representation of Arctic Indigenous peoples in the Arctic Council was seen identified as unique, but also including its own inherent challenges, and the limited scope for the participation of Indigenous peoples in the Arctic Council was seen as problematic. Furthermore, an important aspect of discussion centered on a need to understand that Arctic Indigenous cultures have not been and are not homogenous, but diverse and plural. Furthermore, the traditional nation-state driven approach to addressing challenges in the Arctic, particularly regarding Indigenous peoples, was critiqued given that many Arctic Indigenous communities are spread across state borders and that human security is fundamentally a bottom-up process. However, while acknowledging the differences across the Arctic, the challenges faced at the human and societal levels are comparable. This is of particular relevance for issues such as climate change, economic development, and cultural and societal presentation, and ultimately holistic and harmonized approaches to common problems and challenges should be prioritized. To this degree, the collaboration model of the region could serve as a model for other regions.

Arctic uniqueness was also linked to an increasingly intense interest in the Arctic region, from an economic, geopolitical, and military perspective. The delicate balance of benefit vs. challenge regarding interest in the region was discussed in particular regarding new and developing industries in the region, such as tourism and natural resource extraction. Industrialization, population concentration and rapid urbanization and reindustrialization are also taking place, and local needs are not always acknowledged. In regards to industry, corporate social responsibility was both discussed as a benefit and at times problematic in areas of compliance. This included discussion on the unequal distribution of the economic benefits of such industries, and the need to contextualize benefits for local communities. For example, discussions on infrastructure development...
and urbanization, as an impact of state policies and economic development in local communities, need to occur and reflect active local involvement in decision-making. As part of this, it was discussed that the human security implications of military activities in the region need to be fully considered. Military activities were considered just as disruptive as extractive industries to aspects of human security (e.g. gender, environment, health, community etc.).

Human rights were also a prevalent subject of discussion. Fundamentally, the lack of certain states’ implementation of specific legal frameworks and fulfillment of legal obligations across the Arctic was problematized, and the need to actively involve Indigenous peoples as partners in projects was emphasized. In addition, the need to better recognize and implement the socioeconomic and cultural rights of communities in the Arctic was discussed. Although social and economic policies exist, their implementation is complicated and sometimes limited. To this degree, research on how state policies, infrastructure, and economic development projects in Arctic regions involve local communities, and analysis on whether they are working, is needed. Local inhabitants should not be considered as objects of research, but as active participants. Ethical aspects of research need to be applied, and consent is needed (including Free, Prior, and Informed Consent, or FPIC). Gathering data with consent across Indigenous groups in order to share and compare approaches may be a way to understand and address governance and other challenges in the Arctic. Finally, there is a need to recognize and address the historical context of the Arctic, and the reality that the region has been colonized, colonial policies have been applied, colonial abuses have been made, including systematic violations and abuses of human rights. Acknowledging this past is the first step to addressing the many human security threats and challenges deriving from it.
Theme 2: Human and societal security challenges in Arctic governance

Discussion began with a contextualization of challenges to governance in the Arctic and northern regions such as climate change and gaps in the governance of rural, as opposed to urban, areas. Implicit in such discussions were challenges to understanding the Arctic, and therefore its governance. This included misconceptions of the region as an empty and homogenous area, which leads to furthering inequalities. Climate change was discussed not only as a challenge to the natural environment in the Arctic, but also as a governance challenge in regards to emergency preparedness. Environmental concerns were also prevalent, with a focus on the implementation of human rights regarding local communities and their meaningful participation in issues of importance in the region. Along these lines, the lack of data on the effectiveness of government interventions in dealing with local issues, or building the capacity of local governments, were highlighted as major issues hindering effective governance in the region. Additionally, the need for more interaction in all levels of governance (municipal, regional, national), as well as across borders and with other countries was emphasized as important for emergency preparedness, but also for local governance and mutual competency. In addition, the need for governments to reinforce local institutions and decentralize power in rural regions was discussed.

Furthermore, social challenges at the community level were also discussed as governance issues. In particular, gender imbalances and the outmigration of young people and women from rural communities, alongside pressing issues such as gender based violence, as well as health issues such as increasing rates of obesity, suicide, access to appropriate and quality healthcare and health services were discussed. In addition, the need to involve communities in the identification of local issues to health, well-being, and gender-based inequalities were emphasized. This also included discussion on the need for both short- and long-term data on changes to health and wellbeing in communities tied to places that are rapidly changing as a result of climate change, especially for Indigenous communities. In addition, the appropriation of Sámi culture in the Nordic regions, especially in relation to tourism was highlighted. Regarding sensitive issues such as suicide, or gender-based violence, the need for mobilizing new narratives to counteract stigmas or silence around certain issues was discussed. Education was highlighted as a key component to furthering capacity and the knowledge base of
resident populations, as well as fostering integration and a greater understanding of different groups of people present in communities. An increase in polarization has also affected the nature of decision-making processes for communities and local governance, where division has in some cases strained meaningful participation and obscured consent processes, and compromises are less possible. This also included the need for a discussion of values, and their importance in underlying governance issues in the region.

Another issue related to governance included the need to consider not only the resident populations in assessing public needs, but rather also the needs related to other groups of people (such as tourists, fly-in fly-out workers, etc.) that are utilizing services in an area. Fly-in and fly-out workers in the Russian north served as an example of the need to consider strategic planning in rural areas, especially in relation to the role of private actors and institutions in the Arctic. Participants also expressed that wealth from resource extraction in the Arctic does not remain in the region, and that the meaningful participation of Indigenous rights-holders is not always respected, but rather diminished by processes that rather empower corporations. Furthermore, it was emphasized that benefit sharing is understood as a right, and therefore underscores the need for participation of Indigenous and local populations in economic decision-making, and the rights of peoples as well as companies in given contexts. Communication with locals, and a good-will and honest approach to partnership from all involved actors was emphasized – in addition, the need for companies not to offer altruistic motives, but rather to be honest about their motivators was underlined. Discussion also focused on the need to diversify northern economies to move away from extractive industries, as well as the need for new economic options for remote communities that allow different activities (both subsistence and mixed cash economies) to be combined, and the value of micro-loans and micro-grants to develop such options was emphasized.

In addition, the need to reconsider economic models and motivators in the region, and redefine the mechanisms by which growth is understood were discussed. This included a particular reference to discussing and collecting data from communities directly about their economic needs. This was a bridge to discussing the general lack of data or information available regarding Arctic communities and their needs. Specifically, funding data collection to be led by communities themselves, or involving local communities in filling existing gaps in data knowledge (ex. air quality observation, etc.) was suggested.
Furthermore, digital and communication infrastructure was a key factor linking community access to, and the availability of, information.

Finally, discussions also focused on mechanisms for enforcement of state responsibilities, in relation to governance. The role of state judiciaries in furthering accountability was initially highlighted, and the importance of the international community and international mechanisms in enforcing such accountability. As part of this discussion, international human rights were again discussed, and the need for Arctic states to implement the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), and for Finland to ratify the International Labor Organization’s Convention 169. From a strategic perspective, participants discussed that UN frameworks, such as Human Security or the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) could be used to identify existing problems and politically push for certain actions to be taken or implemented in regional governance and planning processes.
Theme 3: Local implications of global developments

Discussions on local implications of global developments in the Arctic, like the previous discussions, focused on an overlap of global phenomena and developments that are impacting communities, livelihoods, and dynamics on a local level. This includes climate change, global industrial development, technological developments and digitalization, increases in energy production and the use of natural resources, tourism, migration, and social change through increased awareness of gender issues and minority rights. To this degree, environmental, energy, food, and economic security were the main topics of discussion.

Changing societal perceptions were also discussed, in particular dominant narratives in major events, and the cultural impact of such changes. It was purported that in some ways, the cultural impact of the global entertainment industry and new technologies is much greater than the cultural impacts attributed to migration, for example. Ultimately, an underlying existing theme that emerged was also a need to decouple development activities from economic growth ideologies, and that a fundamental paradigm shift on approaches to development in the Arctic needs to occur.

Climate change was at the forefront of many reflections on the local impact of global phenomena. For example, in the Arctic, the implications of climate change include more accessible northern sea routes, and therefore the potential for increased shipping and economic activity in the region. However, the environmental impacts of such a trend, as well as the production and use of natural resources were discussed as a potential insecurity, and a challenge for community security in relation to cultural traditions and livelihoods in the Arctic. This has impacts on food security, and the availability of a local and sustainable food source which, in turn, has implications for health security and the general health of Arctic populations. In addition, the remote nature of many northern communities was seen as problematic for the deliverance of services, especially healthcare, and it was suggested that solutions such as digitalization and the advent of tele-health or e-health services might assist in closing existing gaps.

Digitalization also served as a discussion point regarding traditional knowledge. It was suggested that technology could serve to preserve aspects of traditional knowledge, through storage or through facilitating the sharing of traditional knowledge. To this
degree, the use of technology in learning or practicing an Indigenous or minority language in the age of migration and movement over vast distances was seen as a potential aid in maintaining cultural traditions. In addition, it was suggested that the promotion of teaching and preparing local communities for digitalization, with an emphasis on Free/libre and open source software (FLOSS) could serve to support empowerment in the region. Education was also a source of discussion regarding understandings of traditional knowledge and other cultures, and allow for conversations about values and mutual understanding and cooperation to occur. In particular, discussions on colonization and decolonization, and their relevance or value in a modern and historical context could serve to better facilitate understanding across cultures.

Regarding culture and community security, it was discussed that the boom in tourism in the Arctic presents both opportunities and challenges for the region, and benefit sharing is a concern for the economic security of local communities. One potential strategy to increase benefit sharing included the potential of local communities to revise their tax structures to better serve communities dealing with an influx in external activities or extractive industries, and thereby provide greater potential for local governments to increase the provision of services such as education and health. However, the commercialization and appropriation of culture and by extension, identity, was seen as potentially problematic for some groups of people, and by others as an opportunity for growth and economic development. In any case, it was also suggested that a cultural impact assessment is necessary in project planning, that external and social costs need to be accounted for, and that traditional knowledge needs to be more highly valued in planning processes. Regarding Indigenous peoples in the Arctic, the need for contextual cultural understanding in approaches to tourism and local development was emphasized.

It was also emphasized that local perceptions on climate change were not always represented in existing regional decision-making processes, and that there needs to be a greater involvement of local peoples in such processes. In addition, discussion briefly turned to the nature of information used by decision-makers and policy-makers to ultimately implement policy, as well as their accessibility for members of the public. It was stressed that scientific and technical papers or reports do not always communicate information in a consumable or clear manner, and that therefore the meanings behind such information may not be accurately conveyed in decision-making processes. In
addition, decision-makers responsibility to visit communities or include peoples in decision-making as a conduit for participation was discussed. Ultimately, the need for Arctic populations to be treated as partners in collaboration was a strong and recurrent theme.
Plenary Session

Prior to the plenary session, a closed session between all moderators, rapporteurs, and conference coordinators was convened to synthesize and prioritize the main aspects of discussion under each theme. During the meeting, rapporteurs and moderators presented feedback on each of the sessions, and how each group conceptualized the main problem, challenges, and solutions to human security in the Arctic in their respective themes. Ultimately, a rough bullet point outline of main themes and issues was developed to represent the project team’s synthesis of the conference discussions and recommendations.

During the Plenary session, this rough outline was presented to the group, which then was able to provide cursory and preliminary feedback on the synthesis. This allowed participants to follow-up on highlighted areas of importance, to add emphasis or include other elements, and to suggest changes or reconsiderations.

One suggestion that developed out of the discussion included changing the format of the final document from a summary of recommendations to a summary of action items. This revolved around the formality of the document, and a collective decision to broaden the audience addressed in the outcomes, to go beyond legal scholars and policy-makers and involve all relevant individuals, communities, institutions, and organizations. Other elements of discussion involved the exclusion of certain key ideas in the drafted outline, and these were subsequently added to the document.

Feedback was then incorporated into the final Executive Summary as best as possible while maintaining a concise message, yet general framework.
Summary of Outcomes

The following outcomes were published in the Executive Summary distributed to policymakers. The full documents are available in English, Finnish, Swedish, Norwegian, Russian, and Northern Sámi, and are available to download on the HuSArctic website: http://www.husarctic.org/en/news/executive-summary-final-husarctic-conference-available-several-languages

Background

The concept of human security widens the scope of security studies and replaces the traditional focus on the state as referent object with individuals and their communities. It seeks to ensure societal well-being by addressing threats to the community, personal, political, economic, health, food and environmental dimensions of security. The Arctic encompasses a broad geographic region and, despite its common representation as a barren, uninhabitable frontier, is home to vibrant societies comprised of diverse communities (including Indigenous peoples), connected and shaped through regional histories of colonialism, globalisation, and international cooperation. As such, security in the Arctic is conceivable through its human aspects and the structures that support its societal functions. Identifying and achieving human security in the Arctic requires a broad understanding of the region as comprising communities undergoing rapid changes under unique social, political, environmental and economic conditions. The final conference of the four yearlong HuSArctic research project (Human security as a promotional tool for societal security in the Arctic) brought together expert practitioners and academics, as well as members and representatives of local and Indigenous communities, to bridge policy and decision-making addressing different aspects of security in the Arctic with academic and stakeholder input. Three major themes relating to human security in the Arctic were discussed:

1. Arctic communities: identity, culture, community values and challenges;
2. Human and societal security challenges in Arctic governance;
3. Local implications of global developments.

Summary of Discussion & Outcomes

Understandings of the Arctic are heavily debated, both in terms of physical and conceptual limits. Collective identity building is complex and fluid in a changing and dynamic global environment where Indigenous peoples, local communities, transitory populations such as industry or other workers, students, tourists, as well as recent
migrant and refugee communities (all of which can also be compounded identities themselves), are globally connecting, such as in the Arctic. However, it was emphasized that solutions to common human security issues must still be contextual at the local level, and address the unique concerns of diverse identities within communities.

Human security threats are interconnected and influence each other. For example, health, environmental, and food security all impact each other and, although under certain circumstances can be addressed independently, a holistic approach is needed to fully achieve human security. Digital security, or infrastructural and systemic access to digital services through increased education on existing technologies, programming, and opportunities to develop digital knowledge, is also vital for community security. It is also necessary to adopt an intersectional approach to viewing human security concerns such as personal, health, and community security and their impact on multiple and compounding identities including indigeneity, gender, age, and sexuality. Alongside these concerns, discussion also included aspects of traditional security regarding increasing militarisation in the Arctic and its impact on human security.

The expectations of rapid environmental change resulting from climate change have a disproportionate cost for communities facing the negative impacts of environmental degradation, species loss, exposure and vulnerability to hazards and the risk of disasters, especially in relation to traditional livelihoods. Furthermore, developing industries in the Arctic including tourism and extractive resources and mining, need to respect the best practices for building relationships between businesses and communities. On a local level, a clear understanding of the impacts of international cooperation, law-making, and national legislation is needed in the context of increasing centralisation of governance and services, which is straining rural-urban interactions and placing burdens on rural and remote communities.

In addition, human security intersects with international human rights law. In particular, Indigenous rights and the importance of principles such as Free, Prior, and Informed Consent, self-determination, and meaningful participation were emphasized. There is a need for effective participation of rights holders (both Indigenous and local communities) in projects and investments in the Arctic. These rights are more explicitly articulated in the context of increased development, industrialisation, and modernisation, with specific concerns regarding the role of tourism, marine and
extractive resource industries. Fundamentally, the need for Indigenous peoples and local communities to be treated as collaborative partners in developing economies and going beyond consultation is a priority. There is also a need to explore alternative economic models, and revise the values of existing economies.

**Avenues for Action**

Discussion on human security in the Arctic illuminated broader threats based on current global trends, a failure to address the legacy of colonialism, the urgent threat of climate change, as well as unsustainable consumption patterns. This fundamentally requires states to fulfil their legal obligations to uphold and implement international human rights and standards set through international agreements at all levels of governance. Human security in the Arctic requires the recognition of local environments as the fundamental basis for realizing the human right to a healthy environment, and the collective responsibility to promote sustainability.

This includes a need to promote tools for self-reliance, and an awareness of the role and responsibilities of individuals, communities, industries, corporations and other existing actors towards this aim. Such tools also include understanding the opportunities and risks of digitalisation, and the need to support increased access to digital education and services. However, individual and community responsibilities need to be balanced with the obligations of public authorities to provide services for the public good. Policies regarding Arctic engagement should encourage partnership and collaboration with Indigenous peoples and local communities that goes beyond consultation and consent, and recognises the responsibilities of all actors in the Arctic.

A paradigm shift needs to occur in contemporary approaches to Arctic policy-making. A re-evaluation of norms across the systemic, community, and individual levels is required in order to achieve sustainability for current and future generations. A shift towards the inclusion of Indigenous and local knowledge and practices, as well as holistic approaches to societal well-being, are necessary for the co-production of knowledge and capacity in the Arctic. Ultimately, development agendas must be decoupled from an ideology based on economic growth, and Indigenous philosophies to re-evaluate contemporary economies should be explored and considered in contemporary decision-making. This fundamentally requires an acknowledgement and response to the historical legacy and current impacts of colonisation in the Arctic. As such, contemporary awareness of
different identities and histories in the Arctic need to be raised, and challenges addressed, through education and community engagement.

In addition, contemporary decision-making needs to address the unique human security challenges faced by multiple, intersecting identities in the Arctic through intergenerational, gender, and minority inclusion and participation. Societal inequalities distributed by ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation, (dis)ability and income need to be addressed, and especially considered in the context of minorities within minorities. Achieving this requires increased financial support to close gaps in data collection and knowledge regarding Arctic communities. Specifically, funding must meet the need for disaggregated, contextualized data that is collected in a culturally appropriate manner, and includes local and Indigenous communities and their knowledge.
Post-conference events

The final day of the conference included a book launch and networking excursion to Porvoo, Finland.

On October 26, 2018, the conference hosted the official launch of the HusArctic project’s most recent book publication, *Human and Societal Security in the Circumpolar Arctic: Local and Indigenous Communities* edited by Dr. Kamrul Hossain, Jose Miguel Roncero, and Anna Petrétei. The book is the first volume in a new series by Brill, Studies in Polar Law, and the series editors, book editors, and contributing authors as well as conference participants attended the launch.

*Human and Societal Security in the Circumpolar Arctic* addresses a comprehensive understanding of security in the Arctic, with a particular focus on one of its sub-regions – the Barents region. The book presents a comparative and interdisciplinary perspective to which the Arctic is placed as referent, and special attention is paid to the viewpoint of local and indigenous communities. Overarching topics of human and societal security are touched upon from various angles and disciplinary approaches, and the discussions are framed in the broader context of security studies. The volume specifically addresses the challenges facing the Arctic population that can be better understood when analyzed from a human security perspective.

The book is available online via the publisher, Brill at: https://brill.com/view/title/36346?format=HC&offer=373321