

Article

Gender Equality for a Thriving, Sustainable Arctic

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Abstract: On 21 May 2021, a milestone Pan-Arctic Report: Gender Equality in the Arctic was published in tandem with the Arctic Council’s Ministerial Meeting held in Reykjavík, 19–20 May 2021. This article provides a brief review of the report and its major findings across six chapters that address key themes concerning gender equality in the Arctic: Law and Governance, Security, Gender and Environment, Migration and Mobility, Indigeneity, Gender, Violence, Reconciliation and Empowerment and Fate Control. A major conclusion of the report is that accessible, comparable, gender-disaggregated, and Arctic -specific data is severely lacking. Further, all chapters highlight the importance of gender-based analysis and gender mainstreaming in all decision-making processes at national and regional levels. The varying roles that gender—and its intersections with existing inequalities—plays in mediating the impacts of climate change and other socioeconomic transformations are also discussed throughout the report. The Arctic Council is identified as the main driver for implementing recommendations that were provided and discussed at the Council’s Ministerial Meeting and in the Reykjavík Declaration 2021, where the eight ministers of Arctic states “Emphasize[s] the importance of gender equality and respect for diversity for sustainable development in the Arctic . . . encourage[s] the mainstreaming of gender-based analysis in the work of the Arctic Council and call[s] for further action to advance gender equality in the Arctic”. This report and its policy relevant highlights, address these priorities and serve as a knowledge base for promoting gender equality and non-discrimination in the Arctic.

Keywords: gender; equality; empowerment; engagement; Indigenous; data; mainstreaming; diversity and inclusion; migration; mobility; security; intersectionality; youth; Arctic Council

1. Introduction

There is an inherent gender imbalance in the on-going policy discussions and decision-making about the Arctic, as women are underrepresented in Arctic governing bodies, administration, business, and science. Although generalisations should be avoided, given the cultural and social diversity of the North, economic development throughout much of the region affects men and women differently. It is a cause for concern that future development in the North, for the most part, focuses on traditional male sectors such as oil and gas, mining, shipping, and tertiary industrial development. Moreover, disproportionate out-migration of adult females characterises many rural areas of the Arctic, primarily as a result of diminishing employment and due to a lack of educational opportunities for women. The resulting sex-ratio imbalance negatively affects the resilience and future sustainable development of Arctic communities, some of which are seeing very high death rates for males, especially from external causes.

The geopolitical and global economic significance of the Arctic region is growing, *inter alia* because of climate change. The Arctic Council (AC) and its Sustainable Development Working Group (SDWG) have emphasised gender equality in previous projects and initiatives and the importance of issues of gender and diversity is increasingly evident. Some examples of previous work and valuable input in this field with gender issues in the Arctic as their focal point, include the 2002 Conference in Inari, Finland, which focused on themes of women and work, gender, the self-determination of Indigenous peoples, and violence against women [1]. Furthermore, the first edition of the Arctic Human Development Report, published in 2004, featured a specific chapter on gender [2]. In the second edition, published in 2014, a different approach was taken, and gender issues were not addressed in a specific chapter but rather mainstreamed into individual chapters to various degrees [3].

Given the gender imbalance in Arctic policy discussions, and the pace of the changes transforming Arctic societies, further information is needed about the various impacts of gender. The milestone Pan-Arctic Report: Gender Equality in the Arctic [4], published by the Icelandic Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Icelandic Arctic Cooperation Network as a product of the Icelandic Chairmanship in the AC from 2019–2021 [5] on 21 May 2021, addresses this gender imbalance by providing a comprehensive overview of issues related to gender equality in the Arctic. The report was published in tandem with the AC Ministerial Meeting held in Reykjavík 19–20 May 2021. Gender equality has been one of Iceland's priorities during its AC Chairmanship 2019–2021, under the theme of People and Communities. The report is a part of an international collaborative project under the AC's SDWG on Gender Equality in the Arctic [6] (GEA), dating back to 2013. Leads and co-leads include Iceland, Sweden, Finland, Canada, the United States, the Saami Council, the Aleut International Association, and a host of other additional partners. Initiated by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in Iceland, in collaboration with the Directorate for Equality in Iceland and the Stefansson Arctic Institute the project has been led by the Icelandic Arctic Cooperation Network (IACN) under the leadership of Embla Eir Oddsdóttir, Director of IACN, and the GEA Team in Akureyri, Iceland. This article provides an overview of the GEA project phases to date as well as a review of the themes of the report, with major findings.

2. Background and Progression of the GEA Report Process

The purpose and objective of the GEA project has been to raise visibility and understanding of the importance of gender issues in the Arctic, to identify priorities and concrete strategies for increased diversity and gender balance in policy- and decision-making processes, and to provide information to facilitate sustainable policy-making for the future.

Phase I of the GEA project (GEA I) was an international conference Gender Equality in the Arctic—Current Realities, Future Challenges, which took place in Akureyri, Iceland in October 2014. It resulted in an eponymous conference report published in 2015 by the Icelandic Ministry for Foreign Affairs [7]. The main objective of the conference was to

promote an extensive, policy relevant dialogue on gender equality putting current realities and future challenges into context, in light of climate and environmental changes as well as economic and social developments in the region. Another goal was to raise decision-makers' awareness of the situation of women and men in the Arctic and to strengthen cooperation among different people working with gender issues. The conference was organized into seven different themes, and in the conclusions of the conference, the participants identified issues that are relevant to the on-going discussions on gender equality in the Arctic. The conference in Akureyri brought together government representatives, policymakers, academics, and a wide range of stakeholders including members of the business community, resource managers and users, community leaders, and NGO representatives. Special emphasis was placed on Indigenous representation at the conference.

Following the success of GEA I, Phase II (GEA II) was launched in 2017. GEA II involved the building of a network of experts in the field and the creation of a website for the purpose of: promoting and expanding the dialogue on gender equality in the Arctic, providing a formal network of groups and experts interested in the topic, encouraging cooperation with and amongst existing networks, and providing an online platform for material and events relevant to Arctic Gender Equality.

Phase III of the Gender Equality in the Arctic project (GEA III) was launched in 2019 and includes a regular newsletter—the GEA Times [8]—in addition to various other networking and dissemination activities, through online media and events, expanding its database of gender related material. However, the focus of GEA III has primarily been a pan-Arctic report addressing the gendered dimensions of selected themes and gauging the current state of affairs to better understand how gender affects, and is affected by, policy- and decision-making processes within the Arctic. The report was developed by 10 lead authors and approximately 80 contributing authors from 15 states, including all eight Arctic States. The report's engagement process was a vital component in knowledge generation and development of the report and significant efforts were made to ensure inclusion and transparency during the process by actively soliciting feedback from peers and interested parties. A special emphasis was on the partnership with AC Permanent Participants and other Indigenous representatives, both through our Partners, the Editorial Committee, the Youth Advisory Group, the SDWG Social, Economic and Cultural Expert Group (SECEG), and through contributions to chapters from Indigenous experts, including from the Saami Council, the Aleut International Association, and the Arctic Athabaskan Council, as well as the Paktuutit Inuit Women of Canada.

The 2021 report is intended to inform policy and provide the AC, policymakers, researchers, and stakeholders with a departure point from which to foster further dialogue and actions on gender issues in the Arctic. Each chapter provides a list of policy relevant highlights, almost 70 for all chapters, with suggestions for actions and/or opportunities for further research on the topics. In addition, the report provides recommendations for the Arctic Council based on the main conclusions of the report as a whole. The report's recommendations were discussed at the AC Ministerial Meeting in Reykjavík on 20 May 2021 and were included in the Ministerial Meeting declaration (the Reykjavík Declaration 2021) the AC “Emphasize[s] the importance of gender equality and respect for diversity for sustainable development in the Arctic and welcome[s] the Pan-Arctic Report, Gender Equality in the Arctic, Phase 3, encourage[s] the mainstreaming of gender-based analysis in the work of the Arctic Council and call[s] for further action to advance gender equality in the Arctic” [9] (p. 9). Moreover, chapter 4 on Sustainable Social Development in the Council's Strategic Plan 2021 to 2030, also accepted at the Ministerial Meeting in Reykjavík, the Council resolves to “promote gender equality and non-discrimination in the Arctic with the aim of contributing to sustainability and balanced participation in leadership and decision-making both in the public and private sectors” [10] (p. 5).

3. Methods and Approach

The GEA report process engages an international, multidisciplinary, multi-stakeholder and mixed method approach, including both ongoing state-of-the-art quantitative and

qualitative research in addition to literature review and discourse analysis. Themes for the report were decided in a collaborative process that included diverse research communities, SDWG partners in the project, AC permanent participants and other Indigenous experts, youth representatives, and members of the SDWG's SECEG. The consultative process was instrumental in developing priority themes for the report as well as providing regular feedback on the process and development of chapters. Following the consultation process six themes emerged that became the focus of the report with chapters led by a total of 10 lead authors, with additional contributing authors ranging—depending on chapter themes—from six to 31 per chapter, all in all close to 80 contributing authors

Each lead author had significant freedom in their methodology for developing the chapters, thus some variations exist in their approaches. All chapters include contributions from multiple contributing authors which in some cases were weaved into the lead author's writing, whereas in other cases presented in a more clearly separated fashion, such as through case studies.

Once initial drafts were ready, feedback sessions for each chapter were held in October and November 2020. These were public online sessions in which lead authors—along with colleagues, contributors, and Indigenous and youth representatives—presented and discussed each chapter theme. All feedback sessions were recorded, transcribed, and sent to lead authors for review and integration into chapters.

Review and feedback on draft chapters was solicited from the project partners, the Editorial Committee, the Youth Advisory Group (YAG), all contributors, and other additional and relevant experts. Specific YAG Reviewers were asked to review each chapter. Finally, a formal peer review took place through external reviewers for each chapter. The Law and Governance chapter, as well as legal sections in the chapters on Gender and Environment (environmental law) and Empowerment and Fate Control, were reviewed by legal scholars and experts. Finally, the draft report went through the formal review process of the Arctic Council SDWG and its Heads of Delegations.

4. Results

On the basis of the multidisciplinary and multi-methods approach, six overarching themes were identified as central issue areas for gender equality in the Arctic. The first theme addressed law and governance, examining the formal obligations regarding gender equality in the public governance of the Arctic region, as expressed in political and legal documents, including special consideration of Indigenous Peoples. The second theme is security and, in particular, human security, focusing on the impacts of inequalities in the Arctic that are exacerbated by climate change, thereby identifying trends in insecurities from the individual and community levels to the state. Gender and the environment informs the third theme, providing an overview of the gendered dimensions of issues connected to a broadly understood Arctic environment, including the climate, oceans, land, biodiversity, natural resources, waste, and pollution. The fourth theme is migration and mobility, examining how migration and mobility issues in the Arctic are constructed through gender and why an understanding of migration and mobility requires a gendered approach. A fifth, crucial theme is the combination of Indigeneity, gender, violence, and reconciliation, demanding a mapping of the complex relations amongst violence; gender; social, economic, political, and legal systems; human health and well-being; culture; identities. Lastly, the overarching theme of empowerment and fate control identifies concrete strategies for political, economic, and civic gender empowerment in order to facilitate sustainable policy-making for the Arctic.

Each theme is represented as a chapter in the GEA III report. The report opens with the chapter on **Law and Governance**, led by Eva-Maria Svensson. It explores the political and legal commitments for which public governing bodies are accountable, how these bodies express their ambitions regarding gender equality in the Arctic, and how the commitments are fulfilled.

The political and legal obligations for the accountable subjects regarding equal rights between men and women, and gender equality, are extensive. The Arctic States are committed to following international, as well as corresponding regional, federal, national, and territorial, legal instruments and political agendas. The international legal instruments (treaties, conventions, or covenants) legally bind those states that choose to accept the obligations contained in them by becoming a party. States determine, for themselves, which instruments they will accept according to the principle of state sovereignty [11]. However, states are expected to ensure that their international obligations are upheld, and the degree to which they meet their international obligations is explored through comments made by monitoring bodies of international legal instruments.

Arctic States and Indigenous Peoples cooperate in several intergovernmental bodies, and the Arctic Council (the Council) is the leading intergovernmental forum for cooperation in the Arctic [12–14]. The Council has been criticised for not adequately prioritising gender equality, both internally and among Arctic States [15,16]. However, since 2013 the Council has been one of many supporters and cooperative partners in the Gender Equality in the Arctic Project, and it can be an important promoter of gender equality. Arctic States, Indigenous Peoples' Organisations, non-Arctic states, and a variety of international organisations issue Arctic policy documents, some of which include a focus on gender equality. The policies of Arctic States are of analytical relevance as they are representations of governments responsible for international, federal, regional, and national legal and political obligations, and included in the analysis are Arctic policies issued by Arctic States and two of the Indigenous Peoples' organisations (IPO) that are Permanent Participants in the Council.

Gender equality is a primary concern for the global community and all Arctic States, except for the U.S., have ratified the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW, adopted 1979), which implies that they are obligated to ensure full equality of women before the law, protection against discrimination in the public and the private spheres, improve the de facto position of women, and address gender-based stereotypes that uphold unequal gender relations.

What emerges from the analysis in the chapter on Law and Governance is that governance in the Arctic does not prioritize gender equality and, more generally, that the goal of gender equality is not met within the region. Work regarding gender equality has tended to be reactive rather than proactive, and “gender equality, as well as equality between different ethnic groups, has not, so far, been prioritized despite far-reaching obligations for the concerned states” [14].

While most of the Arctic States have a gender equality policy in place, the Council's “rules of procedure contain no reference to gender and there is no gender policy for the Council as a whole. [Furthermore], while the secretariats are subject to gender regulations in accordance with the State in which they are located; there is no overall gender policy or guidelines which inform the Council's activities” (T. Barry, personal communication, 16 October 2020). Written policies rarely explicitly express, or take as their starting points, the political and legal obligations regarding gender equality and/or equal rights for men and women. With few and vague exceptions, the only genders addressed are men and women, and policies addressing gender equality and diversity are scant and vague.

The CEDAW Committee has expressed concerns about the lack of awareness of CEDAW in all Arctic States that have ratified the convention (all but the United States) and pointed out that some groups of women in the Arctic are vulnerable, especially Indigenous and rural women, and Arctic States do not adequately uphold their rights, for example when it comes to exposure to violence, equal participation in governing bodies, and economic self-support. The Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples has repeatedly raised serious concerns about the situation of Indigenous women and girls in Canada and the Native Women's Association of Canada and other institutions have reported that many Aboriginal women have been murdered or reported missing. Further, discriminatory and gender bias in policing is signaled, as is overrepresentation of Native

women in the prison system. The rapporteur concluded that there appears to be a need for an Aboriginal program strategy for women sentenced at federal level.

Policy relevant highlights include a recommendation that the Council launch a gender equality policy, and a collaboration around gender equality in the development of new strategies is encouraged. Public governing bodies of the Arctic should acknowledge and apply a more far-reaching gender equality concept, including through an intersectional gender equality approach. Suggestions for research initiatives include identification and further analysis of controversial concepts imposed on the region and its population, such as individual rights, power, culture, and tradition.

The chapter on **Security**, led by Gunhild Hoogensen Gjørsvik and Sarah Seabrook Kendall, examines the links between inequalities in the Arctic and the experience of insecurity. Most Arctic States are characterized as examples of peace, security, and gender equality to the degree that the Arctic has been singled out as exceptional regarding peace and security. This characterization has, however, been contested, not least as it, all too often, ignores and even misrepresents insecurities experienced at individual or community levels [17]. Indeed, the “exceptional” peace, security, and gender equality image relies on a militarised understanding of security that is divorced from perceptions of security of Arctic peoples (Indigenous and non-Indigenous). A broader understanding of (human) security is based on the interaction of a combination of five factors: actors, practices, values, survival, and future [18], where it is further understood that perceptions of security are both subjective and context based [19,20]. Human security—which focuses particularly on the individual and community levels of security—has been broadly defined to include environmental, food, health, economic, political, personal, and community security [21]. Rather than arguing for a problematic, state-centric notion of Arctic exceptionalism, the chapter draws from global insights about insecurity and identifies important challenges and insecurities within the Arctic region itself. The chapter addresses gendered and human insecurities associated with climate change and provides brief examples of some of the gender/human insecurities experienced across the Arctic today.

Although Arctic governance has made significant strides, both with regards to priorities and representation of Arctic peoples, the developments have not been without critique (see section above; [22,23]). The applicability of the human security concept to the Arctic has likewise been debated and criticised [24,25]. A human security lens has, however, also been used to highlight the inequalities and injustices of governance systems. Inequalities often lie within the structures of formal institutions and informal social practices. Applying the concept of human security with an intersectional analysis—that is, examining how law and governance can contribute to inequalities depending on combinations of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, class, etc.—can be a useful framework for understanding the nature of security threats in the circumpolar Arctic, including the impacts of climate change [25–28]. For example, changes in the Arctic often result in insecurity and vulnerability of social and ecological systems, which are often rooted in marginalisation of northern populations through colonisation and continued oppression of Arctic Indigenous Peoples [29]. Women and girls, Indigenous Peoples, elders, and Two Spirit people are regarded as the most vulnerable Arctic populations [3].

The chapter on Security concludes that gender security perspectives are crucial to improving Arctic societal well-being and stability, and it emphasises the need for a broader, research-based understanding of security. It further highlights the tendency of inequalities and centre–periphery imbalances to lead to insecurities, as most Arctic regions are neglected or bypassed regarding services, support, and inclusion in broader political goals.

As such, security in the Arctic cannot be reduced to a militarised understanding and narrow, geopolitical considerations of states, and Arctic peoples generally remain more preoccupied with everyday security issues. While some scholars and policy makers have resisted the use of the human security concept for Arctic contexts based on the assumption of inclusion in welfare states. In reality, gaps remain, for example, in issues of health, housing, food, economy, environment, and personal and community violence. Further,

male voices remain privileged in contemporary security dialogues, not least those relating to state-centred security interests. Recognition of the rights of northerners to participate in their own security dialogues, as well as identifying barriers for women's participation in these dialogues, is required as is understanding how security is perceived and experienced. Intersectional analysis including gender and other identity markers is integral to moving forward towards a more comprehensive understanding of security.

A broad and comprehensive approach to security is necessary to capture the nature and nuance of human insecurity in the Arctic. The most pressing human security threats in the region across the environmental, social, economic, and cultural dimensions can only be properly understood in collective terms. Consequently, far from being an inappropriate analytical framework, human security offers significant analytical traction through its capacity to capture physical and non-material security problems in the circumpolar Arctic that are scalable to smaller or larger communities, distinct peoples, or the region as a whole, and for its intersectional approach that understands the compounding and mitigating effects of distinct security issues and identities.

Policy relevant highlights, directed at Arctic States and the Arctic Council, include a call for the application of a comprehensive security approach with intersectional analysis to better address current and future insecurities. Further, reduced inequalities and consequent tensions, greater inclusion of local and regional bodies in broader political goals should be fostered. Moreover, a responsive climate change policy and mitigation should be based on an intersectional analysis and understanding of impacts, of climate change, on societies and inequalities. This requires a comprehensive, people-centric understanding of Arctic security.

The chapter on **Gender and Environment**, led by Malgorzata (Gosia) Smieszek and Tahnee Prior, claims that the Arctic cannot be fully understood without recognition of the relationship of Arctic Peoples and the environment, in which gender plays a central role. Gender and gender norms have implications for interactions with, activities in, and observations of the environment, as well as for access to, and participation in, management of natural resources. It influences conservation efforts and participation in decision-making bodies at all levels, as women and men are impacted differentially by environmental change and have important roles in environmental sustainability, only achieved through equal access to opportunity and shaping political agendas [30]. The chapter gives particular attention to variations in how people of different genders relate to their environment. It addresses the gendered impacts of development and environmental change, highlighting central dimensions of the gender–environment nexus in an Arctic context through illustrative cases in various localities and sectors, including mining, fisheries, and forestry.

A gender-specific analytical approach provides the basis for a comprehensive view of environmental and social issues, which can lead to more effective policies [31,32]. Gender equality is integral to effective and equitable sustainable development, and there has been a clear shift in the commitment to gender equality and recognition of gender in international environmental agreements over the past decades [32]. Still, gender remains marginal in the overall body of scholarship on climate change adaptation, resilience, and vulnerability [33–35]—both globally and, to an even greater extent, in the Arctic. A deeper comprehension of the vulnerability of Arctic Peoples and communities is required to strengthen necessary adaptation efforts [36,37], but approaches that are insensitive to gender and other indicators of social inequalities risk reinforcing existing vulnerabilities and can result in maladaptation [33,36,38]. Adaptation to climate change, in Arctic research and policy, should thus be reframed to systematically account for health, education, food security, and Arctic economies, all of which are simultaneously differentiated by gender.

Natural resources are vital to the livelihoods of all Arctic peoples and many Indigenous populations continue land-based lifestyles, central to communities' well-being and cultural survival [39]. Simultaneously, natural resource extraction and development are promoted as a pathway to creating better living conditions in the north [40–42]. Resource-based industries in the North are male-dominated, and the effects of resource development

strongly gendered [43]. Gender equity has important multiplier effects in sustainable development through women's empowerment, and moving beyond statements on equity, diversity, and inclusion toward the implementation of policies that ensure principles of inclusion is crucial [44].

The chapter on Gender and Environment reflects how gender equality is a prerequisite and accelerator of progress towards sustainable development, and it reflects that centring gender equality in efforts to respond to changes can tap into underexplored potential that fosters people's ability to become agents of change in the face of future challenges.

As noted, the Arctic environment is central to its peoples' health, lifestyles, cultures, and livelihoods, and gender plays a central role in human–environment relations. There is an understanding that women and men are not only differently affected by the primary and secondary effects of climate change and other socioeconomic transformations, but they also play important and distinct roles in achieving environmental and social sustainability. However, research sensitive to gender is still fragmented and, until recently, remained on the margins of a rapidly growing body of Arctic scholarship and policy-relevant science [45–47]. The research agenda on gender and climate change, extractive industries, renewable energy, marine resources, and pollution in the North is far from complete; large gaps remain in knowledge which has predominantly been based on individual case studies, which do not provide a comprehensive gender-sensitive overview of developments in the Arctic. There is also a paramount lack of sex- and gender-disaggregated data, or reliance on patchy, outdated ones, across all environment-related issue areas. Furthermore, there is an overall gender blindness and lack of incorporation of gender-sensitive approaches or insights generated by gender analysis into most mainstream environmental, conservation, marine, and natural resource decision-making processes. To this extent, these processes, as noted in the first Global Gender and Environment Outlook, do not fully serve environmental or social interests [32] (p. 23).

The chapter concludes that gender equality is integral for effective, efficient, and equitable environmental protection. Further, all regions of the Arctic exhibit only sporadic engagement with gender and gender analysis, and there is a dearth of sex- and gender-disaggregated data across the Circumpolar North. Finally, there is a lack of systematic engagement with gender-based analysis and gendered perspectives within the Arctic Council and across its Working Groups.

Policy relevant highlights include a push for new data collections that are gender- and sex-disaggregated, as this will support policy- and decision-making and enhance adaptive capacity. Further, a call for the strategic application of a gender lens to the work of the Arctic Council, including through gender mainstreaming and intersectional approaches, as this supports policy development and decision-making, allows for more tailored actions, plans, policies, and programs. Finally, it is recommended that Arctic studies be expanded to incorporate a specific gender focus to account for the region's particular traits and characteristics.

The chapter on **Migration and Mobility**, led by Erika Anne Hayfield, discusses how migration and mobility in the Arctic are constructed through gender combining statistics with a qualitative context-based approach to understand space as gendered and the contextual nature of migration and mobility. The Arctic remains a place where people are constantly on the move and mobility across the region is complex with globalisation and technological developments further transforming mobility potential. Place-specific contexts are important for understanding Arctic mobilities and addressing migration and mobility requires a gendered approach [47].

Arctic places have diverse opportunity structures with “different conditions and barriers that directly and indirectly promote or hinder opportunities for individuals” [48] (p. 64). At the same time, local opportunity structures intersect with overarching macro structures, for example, national gender equality policy, the spatial patterning of economic development initiatives, or access to education. Therefore, migration decisions are complex and situated within local and national opportunity structures, but they are firmly woven into individual, social, and relational contexts.

Gendered migration is a major factor leading to an unequal balance of men and women in the Arctic [49], and in most regions, men outnumber women, especially in younger age groups. Women outnumber men in terms of out-migration, and there are higher levels of immigration, as well as domestic in-migration, of men. A skewed sex ratio may reinforce inequalities of women and men and is a driving force of female out-migration. The skewed sex ratio across the Arctic is a cause for concern for future social sustainability of the region.

Migration and mobility in the Arctic are as diverse as the peoples and the places they live. Low population density has implications for access to work, education, welfare, markets, and more. Distances and climate provide conditions for movement, and from these contexts local mobile cultures emerge. Mobility structures are complex but must be understood within local mobile cultures. The Arctic has a long history of Indigenous Peoples practicing mobilities, but these practices have been somewhat transformed through colonisation. The field must move beyond mobilities associated with globalisation and urbanisation to better understand contemporary Indigenous mobilities.

The chapter on Migration and Mobility emphasises how studies on migration and gender need to employ an intersectional research approach and improve at involving other social categories. Gendered migration and mobility are still neglected areas in Arctic literature, and much of the extant literature is oriented to differences between women and men. Too few studies are grounded in feminism, masculinity studies, intersectionality, LGBTQIA2S+ and Indigenous gender perspectives.

An imbalance between women and men in the Arctic emerges, sometimes with highly skewed sex ratios where women are more educated than men, more inclined to seek higher education or work in larger urban areas, and thus more likely to out-migrate, whereas men are more likely to seek vocational education closer to home but travel further for work. The Arctic is a masculine space and women may perceive a lack of opportunities, not least in industries heavily dominated by men. There is evidence that masculinities are structured around work and being breadwinners, as opposed to attaining higher education and being primary carers. Colonisation has transformed gender within Indigenous cultures, and, as a result, Indigenous women have become relatively marginalised within traditional economic and subsistence activities and are more likely to hold paid work.

Indigenous People are overrepresented amongst the homeless worldwide, as is the case for Alaska, Greenland, and Arctic Canada [50]. Histories of displacement, experiencing a loss of home, and being forced to move have resulted in intergenerational trauma, which, in some cases, is the root cause of homelessness. Such trauma is linked to racism towards Indigenous Peoples along with mental health issues, violence, incarcerations, and addictions [50]. Additionally, homelessness is a gendered phenomenon. For example, in Alaska, surveys indicate that women are overrepresented in figures for homelessness [50].

Young people, and especially young women, out-migrate from small communities in the Arctic, and there are indications that for those ascribing to LGBTQIA2S+ identities, cultures in small communities, and the Arctic in general, are not open enough.

Given that migration and mobility in the Arctic are highly gendered, the lack of knowledge on this topic, from a gender perspective, is both surprising and concerning. Young people, and especially women, out-migrate from the Arctic, yet most studies that address migration and mobility in the Arctic fail to include gender perspectives. What is more, studies on gender in the Arctic rarely include significant life issues such as migration. Thus gender, migration, and mobilities tend to be approached as standalone and isolated research topics.

Policy relevant highlights point to the need for further understanding of the complex processes involved in migration and mobility processes in the region, including those leading to out-migration of young people and women, and context sensitive integration strategies related to immigrant populations. Focus should be on developing, improving, and sustaining local opportunity structures—as well as material and welfare structures. Using a gendered intersectional approach, such a focus must also encompass industry

development in the Arctic. Gender-sensitive support and recovery policies and services, including in terms of housing and homelessness, should be provided.

The chapter on **Indigeneity, Gender, Violence, and Reconciliation**, led by Karla Jessen Williamson, argues that discussing gender in the Arctic calls for awareness of the imposition of a foreign understanding of gender—binary and patriarchal—forced on Indigenous Peoples through colonisation. States tend to view gender and violence through a binary lens, and prevention of gendered violence is often organised through policies that do not adequately consider diversity or context.

The chapter addresses terminology related to gender, sexuality, and diversity as well as problems related to the imposition of Western binary perspectives on Arctic Indigenous communities. It further explores violence—not yet covered in a comparative fashion for the Arctic—including violence against Indigeneity and the consequent persistent inequalities between Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations. Worldviews and value systems of Western states have encroached upon Indigenous worldviews and value systems through processes of colonisation which impacted most aspects of Indigenous lives, reflected in persistent inequalities between Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations. Indigenous Peoples have a minority status in their respective states with direct implications for sense of belonging and quality of life in Indigenous communities; the inherent marginalisation of Indigenous Peoples means that Indigenous interests may not be aligned with the rest of the population.

Criminology studies suggest a high prevalence of violent crimes among Indigenous communities worldwide, partly due to the breakdown of Indigenous informal social controls because of dispossession and colonisation processes which involved traumatic “[i]mposition of foreign law, institutions, peoples, economies and beliefs” [51] (p. 33). Gendered violence continues to be a serious issue across the Arctic and the connection between socioeconomic inequalities and violent crimes is explored. However, Indigenous women and girls face disproportionate violent victimisation in the context of ongoing settler–colonial relations and a long history of targeted colonial violence against Indigenous Peoples. New governance structures are rapidly evolving as responsibilities are transferred from states to Indigenous Peoples amidst calls for decolonisation, self-determination, and devolution efforts. Although levels of capacity vary, different Arctic Indigenous Peoples address and develop their own responses to gender-based violence within Indigenous communities.

Truth and reconciliation commissions have been used in various contexts, although perhaps the most widely known is the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission [52]. Broadly speaking, these commissions investigate human rights abuses by engaging with affected populations and attempting to “clarify the national narrative of affected populations”, and “establish a set of facts as a basis of the truth about the history and evolution of a given conflict, to devise a new and more acceptable national narrative” [53] (p. 1). They have become an important mechanism in promoting accountability, reform, and fostering reconciliation [54]. While truth and reconciliation processes are subject to debate and their outcomes vary a great deal, reconciliation commissions have been established in the Arctic, including Canada, Greenland, and through the Sámi Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

The chapter on Indigeneity, Gender, Violence, and Reconciliation explored how data indicates socioeconomic disparities between Indigenous and non-Indigenous individuals in the Arctic while at the same time, Indigenous Peoples carry the burden of collective trauma from alienation and marginalisation brought on by processes of colonisation and assimilation policies. To some extent, such trauma may be addressed through Truth and Reconciliation processes to improve relationships, confront previous colonisation practices, and address social inequalities.

Women are overrepresented as victims of violent crimes, inclusive of acts such as sexual abuse, rape, and domestic violence. Indigenous women and girls face disproportionate violent victimisation in the context of ongoing settler–colonial relations and a long history

of targeted colonial violence against Indigenous Peoples. States, self-governments, and communities strive to find ways of handling this serious and ongoing concern.

Gendered and intersectional data, including specific data on Indigenous and LGBTQIA2S+ populations, are severely lacking. To effectively analyse and understand the intersection of violence against Indigeneity, inequality, and social-economic contexts, as well as gendered violence in the Arctic, disaggregated and meaningful data is required for comparison.

Policy relevant highlights include a call for the Arctic Council and its working groups to promote the use of inclusive terminologies and apply gender mainstreaming. Further, a reminder that the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is relevant to all Council states, and a better understanding of inequalities faced by Indigenous populations is vital for effective policy-making. The Arctic Council is encouraged to create a mechanism—either through a task force or an expert group—to monitor the status of Indigenous Peoples within the Arctic states, provide status reports and recommendations on ways to address systemic inequalities. Finally, a call should be made to the SDWG to initiate a project on sharing knowledge of best practices to prevent and raise awareness of gendered violence in the Arctic.

The final theme addressed in the **Empowerment and Fate Control** chapter, led by Marya Rozanova-Smith, Andrey Petrov, and Varvara Korkina Williams, seeks to identify concrete strategies for political, economic, and civic gender empowerment in order to facilitate sustainable policy-making for the Arctic. Gender empowerment is defined as the capacity of all genders to exercise power in decision-making and the process by which they, individually and collectively, can help themselves and others maximise the quality of their lives. The term is closely linked to the concept of fate control, which is defined as the ability to guide one's own destiny and refers to a process that creates power in individuals over their own lives, society, and their communities [55].

Enabling gender equality by empowering all genders to effectively participate in modern society is one of the most important advances towards sustainable development, encompassing equal representation in the politics and public administration, labour market, and civil society [56] (SDG5). Recent studies demonstrate that, despite an increasing global trend towards gender equality in general, and women's empowerment in particular, it varies dramatically across countries, regions, and communities, as well as across spheres of engagement [57–60].

While the theme of gender empowerment in the Arctic regions has received limited attention, gender empowerment processes are particularly important in the Arctic, which is experiencing unprecedented climate-induced environmental change [61–64]. Simultaneously, divergent social, economic, and institutional changes are being observed in many Arctic regions [3,65]. These changes require novel approaches to understanding gender equality and empowerment in the Arctic that accounts for socioeconomic, political, cultural, and ethnic diversity.

The authors pursue the idea that all social, economic, ethnic, demographic, and gender groups must have an ability to thrive, in order to ensure the communities', regions', and nations' sustainable future. Gender empowerment is one of the most important elements of such thriving, as it encapsulates the ability of all genders to possess fate control and pursue their individual and collective goals and aspirations as a part of a community.

The chapter on Empowerment and Fate Control suggest moving gender empowerment and fate control from the periphery to the centre of public discourse and decision-making, as well as making sure to incorporate Indigenous Peoples' traditions and perspectives on gender and gender equality in the theoretical and practical framework of gender knowledge building and policy.

Studies do not indicate a strong trend towards increasing female leadership and women's deeper involvement into regional economic and political affairs. However, local self-government institutions and civic initiatives in the Arctic are increasingly engaging women [66]. Despite the importance of the topic of gender empowerment and fate control, there is a significant gap in both public information sources and academic knowledge

about the current state and emerging trends of political, economic, and civic gender empowerment in the Arctic. Gender indicators and indices are instrumental in capturing gender equality and empowerment processes across all sectors and at all levels of politics and government, economy, and civil society. The authors suggest a system of key variables to provide a basic framework for analysing gender empowerment in the Arctic (GEA indicators). This set of indicators will help monitor and compare the current state of gender empowerment across Arctic regions and communities and identify key patterns over time.

Gender empowerment is key to community sustainability, resilience, and thriving. However, the Arctic is diverse, and there is no one-size-fits-all policy solution to gender empowerment gaps. Underrepresented genders' access to and participation in political, economic, and civic spheres needs to be improved. In some Arctic communities, a particular focus should be placed on men's empowerment and individual fate control. Gender mainstreaming in policy and research plays an important role in attaining gender empowerment at the circumpolar and national scales, and should be continued while placing more emphasis on regional to local (community) levels.

Policy relevant highlights include a call for the need to improve gender and sex-disaggregated data collection and access, to provide comprehensive, comparable and trackable data across the region; a suggestion to establish a system of monitoring based on gender empowerment indicators; to acknowledge and incorporate Indigenous Peoples' traditions and perspectives on gender and gender equality into legal, theoretical, and practical frameworks of gender knowledge; to mainstream gender equality and empowerment at all levels and in all spheres; to ensure an inclusive approach to gender equality.

5. Conclusions

What emerged during the process of writing the report was that accessible, comparable, gender-disaggregated, and Arctic specific data was severely lacking. Furthermore, where data is available for the Arctic, it is still lacking in specific data on Indigenous populations and LGBTQIA2s+. This makes any meaningful comparison between, and within, states near impossible in most cases and severely impedes efforts to adequately understand the dynamics of gender across the Arctic. One of the main recommendations of the report is, therefore, that the Arctic Council, as the leading political body within the Arctic with members from all Arctic states and the Indigenous Permanent Participants, as well as observer states, "should encourage and facilitate the development of guidelines for consistent and comparable data and definitions throughout the Arctic. This would entail, at a minimum, gendered and ethnically disaggregated data" [4] (p. 17).

All chapters also highlighted the importance of gender-based analysis and gender mainstreaming in all decision-making processes at national, regional, and local levels. This entails evaluating the effects of all actions, policies, and programmes on all genders to ensure that decisions do not perpetuate existing inequalities and create new ones. Moreover, temporary, special measures to reverse existing inequalities are recommended as necessary. Again, the Council is identified as the main driver for implementing the recommendations, both in its own work and by encouraging its Member States to set an example at national and regional levels. Indeed, the report's recommendations were discussed at the AC Ministerial Meeting in Reykjavík on 20 May 2021, and in the Ministerial Meeting declaration (the Reykjavík Declaration 2021) the AC "Emphasize[s] the importance of gender equality and respect for diversity for sustainable development in the Arctic and welcome[s] the Pan-Arctic Report, Gender Equality in the Arctic, Phase 3, encourage[s] the mainstreaming of gender-based analysis in the work of the Arctic Council and call[s] for further action to advance gender equality in the Arctic" [9] (p. 4). In Chapter 4 on Sustainable Social Development in the Council's Strategic Plan 2021 to 2030, also accepted at the Ministerial Meeting in Reykjavík, the Council resolves to "promote gender equality and non-discrimination in the Arctic with the aim of contributing to sustainability and balanced participation in leadership and decision making both in the public and private sectors" [10] (p. 5). The recommendations outlined in this report will help forward gender

equality and non-discrimination in the Arctic, and it should, therefore, be seen as a key means of achieving the goals outlined by the Arctic Council at the Ministerial Meeting in Reykjavík.

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