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Abstract:

Traditional approaches to security studies are based on state sovereignty. With the emergence of the human security discourse in the beginning of the 1990s, focusing on the well-being of individuals gained popularity within the security debate. The concept of human security is broad and incorporates many aspects, such as environmental, economic, or food security. Human beings are also usually part of a community that shares a common set of values from which they derive a common identity, and which provides them a feeling of security. Human security and community well-being are closely intertwined, as community viability depends on individual well-being as much as individual well-being is related to a healthy community. Yet, in traditional security discourses the state or a state's society remain the referent object of security, meaning that it is the entire society of a nation state that need to be protected. However, communities can be defined on different scales and levels, such as the subnational, national, transnational, or international levels. An individual person may be a citizen of a state, member of a municipality, and member of an ethnic minority, with associated ties to each group. Within the Barents Region many communities have their particular characteristics which often differentiate to that of the national majority, which lives closer to the political and economic centers in the southern parts of the Barents states. Low population density, less developed infrastructure, higher dependence on non-marketed economic activities, diverging cultural traditions, or an own language – such as the Region's indigenous peoples have – set unique features for the communities in the Barents Region. Such particularities shape common values within these communities and characterize societies of regional scale. Thus, societal security needs to be approached from a flexible and multilevel perspective, to enable meaningful and targeted policies that promote human well-being.

This book introduces episodic and empirical evidence addressing multifaceted aspects of human security in the Barents Region that potentially affect societal security on various levels. The book will discuss the interconnectedness of the rapid developments currently taking place in the Region with individual and community well-being. The aim of this book is to support the importance of a multifaceted and flexible approach to societal security in the Arctic, with a particular focus on the Barents Region. The findings of this book shall support the development and implementation of meaningful sustainable policies that target the needs and wants of the

local population of the Barents Region.

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