

these two sorties stand out as really special experiences for the author. The relatively pristine Prince Edward Island is still today only visited irregularly (roughly once every five years) as part of scientific expeditions, maintaining its extraordinary status as one of the least known and unspoilt pieces of land anywhere on the globe.

The book concludes with a *Postscript* and *Annexes*, which provide a short overview of how the research programmes (run through the South African National Antarctic Programme) and management plan of the islands have evolved during the past six decades or so.

Each theme and sub-theme is introduced by a short section providing some background to the topic covered in the subsequent section. These are generally very useful, providing relevant context to the diary entries that follow, particularly by introducing the people mentioned later on. They also often offer some interesting bits of historical information on topics such as the early understanding of the geology of the islands, origin of its fauna and flora, as well as human impacts on the islands. I found some of these bits of trivia to be superfluous (for example, we are reminded more than once about the advent of the internet), although this is probably personal preference. While there are very few errors, spelling or otherwise, in the book, I could not help but notice the niggling erroneous description of the location of the islands as being ‘some 1400 km southwest of the southern tip of Africa’. The islands are actually situated approximately 2000 km *southeast* of the southernmost point of Africa. This

error would not have been so conspicuous had it not been printed on the cover flap!

All in all *Exploring a sub-Antarctic wilderness* is a testimony to the inquisitive nature of the author and the seemingly endless enthusiasm and drive he must have had to continue working so hard, taking breaks very rarely (such as for Christmas celebrations). And this as a 20-year-old without any direct supervision! The book provides a good viewpoint on what it meant to do field science in the 1960s before the dawn of the current metric-driven, super competitive scientific era. It will obviously be of interest to more recent visitors to Marion Island and unsurprisingly contains a few ‘South Africanisms’ (which are perhaps tricky for others to follow). However, I can happily recommend it to anyone with an interest in the early days of ‘modern’ scientific work in remote places, particularly the sub-Antarctic. (Trevor McIntyre, Mammal Research Institute, Department of Zoology and Entomology, University of Pretoria, Private Bag X20, Hatfield 0028, South Africa (tmcintyre@zoology.up.ac.za)).

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Northern sustainabilities: understanding and addressing change in the circumpolar world. Gail Fondahl and Gary N. Wilson (editors). 2017. Cham: Springer Nature. xv + 342 p, illustrated, hardcover. ISBN 978–3319461489. €114.99.

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The present edited volume tackles the blurry, but prominent, concepts of ‘sustainability’ and ‘sustainable development’ in the Arctic. These concepts, which gained presence on the world stage particularly after the 1987 report by the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) and subsequently the 1992 Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro, have become some of the most integral elements of Arctic research and governance. But what do we actually mean when we talk of ‘sustainability in the north’? This is what the authors of the 28 chapters have set out to critically examine. Based on papers presented at the 2014 International Conference of Arctic Social Sciences (ICASS) in Prince George, Canada, the editors and authors make abundantly clear that there is not just one ‘north’ and not just one understanding of ‘sustainability’. Instead, depending on time and space, cultural background and social setting, the terms are charged differently. Given the blurry understanding of what ‘sustainability’ means, this, as is argued, is indeed the reason for it to be ‘such an interesting and politically potent concept’ (p. 14). In order to better understand that this blurry concept means in the Arctic, the content of the short chapters are geographically located in a many different locations all over the circumpolar north—the reason for which, the editors explain, simply lies in shedding light on a diverse region such as the Arctic.

Thematically, the book is subdivided into three parts: Conceptualizing and measuring Arctic sustainability, Challenges in sustainability, and Advancing sustainability. Given the vast number of contributions to this book, it is not possible to tackle each and every single chapter individually. Generally speaking, however, as with the geographical scope the book, there is also a large number of different topics that in one way or the other shed light on how differently ‘sustainability’ or ‘sustainable development’ are generated in the north. The red thread throughout the book is the focus on the people(s) of the Arctic—indigenous, non-indigenous, as well as outsiders coming to the Arctic. The terms ‘sustainability’ and ‘sustainable development’ are thus clearly linked with the social and human dimensions while the book does not tackle any natural or earth sciences. One may, of course, criticise the editors for not having included chapters on at least the interplay between the natural and social sciences, but I personally, as a social scientist, felt deeply rewarded by having read the book. The reason is simple: many of the topics covered are topics that have, at least to my knowledge, found rather little reflection in the Arctic social sciences. A chapter that I found particularly intriguing, for example, is that of Rémy Rouillard on the adaptation of the bodies of ‘oil nomads’ in the Russian north. Rouillard tackles a whole new dimension on sustainability—namely that of the outsider’s body in the harsh Arctic natural and economic environment.

In fact, many of the chapters deal with the socio-economic conditions in the Russian north. This is a particularly laudable element of this volume, especially since it also allows for comparative reading of the different chapters. What I mean is, for example, the topical parallel between Wilson’s and Ringholm’s chapters. While the former deals with the interaction between local communities and oil companies in Russia’s Komi

Republic, the latter approaches the same issue in Norway's Finnmark. The reader is therefore able to gain insight into two Arctic regions which face the interest of oil companies, but with significantly different outcomes. In Komi Republic, there appears to be distrust between the local population and the regional branch of *Lukoil*, especially since the 1994 oil spill, despite the company's official policy of consultation of the local population. In Finnmark, on the contrary, the Italian *Eni Norway* and four municipalities affected by the development of the Goliat oilfield have established a climate of trust between one another—however, also out of strategic motivations.

But not only empirical elements are tackled under the umbrella of 'sustainability', also theoretical ones. Particularly noteworthy in this respect are Rasmus and Ulturgasheva's chapter on peer observation of research, meaning collaborative anthropological research, as well as Gordon's chapter on community-based participatory research. Both chapters aim to counter the 'traditional' fly-in, fly-out type of research and emphasise the need for community inclusion. Indeed, I had up to this point not come across the concept of peer observation of research, which essentially frames the linking of observations and experiences of two or more researchers of the same social

situation. The concept appears to be a necessary approach to 'diversify' and thus legitimise anthropological observations and findings.

The present volume is an impressive one. Particularly since the chapters make the reader fully understand that there is simply not one type of sustainability in the Arctic, but that there are many. Hence the title of the book is very well chosen. One might criticise the short scope of the chapters which in some provides merely a snapshot of the topic addressed. Nevertheless, if the chapters were longer, neither the geographical nor topical scope would have been covered. In this sense the book is an extremely rich source of inspiration for further research and for further reading. I am fully convinced that particularly for social scientists dealing with Arctic issues *Northern sustainabilities* is recommendable, but also for policy-makers and natural scientists the complexity of northern societies within modern market economies and within current and developing Arctic discourse becomes apparent upon study of this book. (Nikolas Sellheim, Polar Cooperation Research Centre, Graduate School of International Cooperation Studies, Kobe University, Rokkodai-cho 2-1, Nada-ku, Kobe 657-8501, Japan (nikolas.sellheim@people.kobe-u.co.jp)).

International politics in the Arctic. Contested borders, natural resources and Russian foreign policy. Geir Hønneland. 2017. London: I.B. Tauris. 401 p, illustrated, hardcover. ISBN 978-1784538989. £75.00.

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Currently, the geographical space of the Arctic is one of the potential geopolitical grounds on which major world powers have focused their attention and developed national strategies for the region. One of the main reasons underlying a particular Arctic interest of the leading countries is the vast hydrocarbon energy reserves which are concentrated beneath the Arctic sea ice.

Under the influence of globalisation in the Arctic space, there is an intensification of international cooperation in the oil-extracting sector of the economy and commodity exchange between the Arctic countries is strengthening. In the course of my own experience as a political scientist, it is usually revealed that Russian Arctic policy seems controversial and mysterious for many Western countries. The work of Geir Hønneland illustrates the content of Russian Arctic policy and shows the socio-cultural characteristics of life in the Russian north.

The book consists of seven major parts and 13 chapters. The work is a collection of scientific observations of the author, published at different times: from 'early tentative reflections on potential cultural conflicts' in Chapter 1 (originally published in 1998) to increasingly well-documented observations of the same concerns in Chapters 2–3 (published in 2003 and 2004), Chapters 6–7 (published in 2004 and 2005), Chapters 8–9 (published in 2010) and Chapters 12–13 (published in 2016) (p. 5). The book represents a collection of short stories, which can be read separately and in any order for the convenience of readership with different backgrounds.

We can already get from the book's title that the author devoted his research to Russian international policy in the Arctic. However, in the first part of the book the object of the study is

not the entire Arctic region of Russia, but only the northeast of the country. For the Western reader the interviews with residents of the Russian north might be of special interest because respondents answer questions such as 'how to be a Northerner' and 'how to be a Russian'. These interviews illustrate the stereotypes in use by and of Russian northerners: well educated, hardworking, calm, considerate and friendly. According to the author the level of education, the high living standards and the harsh northern climate are represented by the four Cs of Russian northernness: competent, cultured, calm and considerate (p. 182).

Throughout the entire book, we can observe the author's attempts to understand and explain the peculiarities of the Russian approach to the Arctic, caused by a special Russian mentality and Russia's eternal fate. The author assumes that the Arctic for Russia is more than just a region. The Arctic is the shrine of Russia's national idea, a new political and spiritual continent, a promised land, Russian destiny. At the same time, the declared goal of publishing this work corresponds with the trend of modern anti-Russian rhetoric in the West: 'Above all, the book aims to show the Janus face of Russian foreign policy, in relation to the Arctic as elsewhere' (p. 5).

Direct analysis of the history of Russia's contemporary Arctic policy is presented by the author in the final seventh part 'Arctic talk, Russian politics'. Russia was the first Arctic state to file a claim with the Continental Shelf Commission, as early as 2000. According to the author, planting a metal Russian flag into the sea bed at the North Pole proved the starting shot for the 'race for the Arctic'.

Analysing the large number of Russian articles, the author comes to the conclusion that Russia is preparing for a global battle in the Arctic (p. 267). The author mentions that the common theme in foreign-policy oriented media articles is the perception that the other Arctic states are 'actively flexing their muscles' and that Russia must necessarily respond. The other Arctic states are not only fighting to defend their own rights in the Arctic, they are actively mobilising to wipe Russia off the