

# A REFRAMING OF SUSTAINABILITY AND “SUSTAINABLE” DEVELOPMENT: GENDER, INDIGENEITY AND THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Meaghan Angell | Supervisor: Stephen B. Scharper | MScSM Research Paper

## BACKGROUND

- Sustainable development described by the UN in the 2030 Agenda, does not do enough to consider alternative worldviews nor address the colonial origins and ideologies of its inception.
  - Alternative worldviews of sustainability and sustainable development, namely those held by women and Indigenous Peoples offer a different development agenda, one that is based on relationality, reciprocity, autonomy and self-determination.
  - Both women and Indigenous Peoples are subject to the consequences of colonialism, yet are not sufficiently included in development policymaking that impact their ways of being.
    - Although women and Indigenous peoples bear the brunt of the negative impacts of the climate crisis among others, they are equally positioned to catalyze the transformative change required to realize the SDGs.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- In the context of sustainable development and the SDGs, where are women and Indigenous Peoples positioned?
- How can the 2030 Agenda be attained or improved through the accommodation of critiques from Indigenous and feminist perspectives?
- How do these perspectives and critiques inform a reframing of sustainability and what does that look like?

## METHODOLOGY

- Analysis and critique through a framework of Indigenous and gendered lenses by drawing on feminist and Indigenous scholars and other existing frameworks like UNDRIP

## SDGs OF FOCUS



## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Lack of inclusive and explicit language used in the SDGs limit the effectiveness of their implementation and their capacity to transform systems
- The 2030 Agenda is missing emphasis on the underlying connections between the Goals
- Recognition of Indigenous Peoples in passing limits their ability to be agents of change and increases their vulnerabilities
- Lack of consideration of women in areas of economic development overlooks their integral roles in local economies and domestic work
- Disaggregation of data is necessary in progress measurements towards the attainment of the SDGs to recognize both Indigenous Peoples and women and ensure no one is left behind

## CONCLUSIONS

- The success of the SDGs is strongly dependent on the meaningful inclusion of these perspectives which decentre the Global North in development policymaking
- There is a need for bottom-up development policy that prioritizes local development and the right to self-determination
- Indigenous self-determination and sovereignty as well as women’s empowerment can underpin all the SDGs and will be necessary in fully realizing the Goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda

## REFERENCES

- Esquivel, V. (2016). Power and the Sustainable Development Goals: a feminist analysis. *Gender & Development*, 24(1), 9–23. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13552074.2016.1147872>
- Gilbert, J., & Lennox, C. (2019). Towards new development paradigms: the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a tool to support self-determined development Towards new development paradigms: the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. *The International Journal of Human Rights*, 23(1–2), 104–124. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13642987.2018.1562921>
- Hope, J. (2020). Globalising sustainable development: Decolonial disruptions and environmental justice in Bolivia. *Area*, April, 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.1111/area.12626>
- Sandoval-Rivera, J. C. A. (2020). Environmental education and Indigenous knowledge: Towards the connection of local wisdom with international agendas in the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). *Diaspora, Indigenous, and Minority Education*, 14(1), 14–24. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15595692.2019.1652588>
- Watene, K., & Yap, M. (2015). Culture and sustainable development: Indigenous contributions. *Journal of Global Ethics*, 11(1), 51–55.