Erasmus Mundus

ENVIRONMENTAL SECURITY AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLES: PERSPECTIVES FROM THE ARCTIC

July 2022

Student Numbers:

2567964P (University of Glasgow)

20109903 (Dublin City University)

38434983 (Charles University)

Presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of International Master in Security, Intelligence and Strategic Studies

Word Count: 20320
Supervisor: JUDr. PhDr. Tomáš Karásek, Ph.D.
Date of Submission: 22.07.2022

UNIVERSITY OF TRENTO

CHARLES UNIVERSITY

Acknowledgments

This work is dedicated to my family, whose continuous support warms my heart, and to all the communities in the world who find their voices often muffled, but whose efforts will never go unnoticed.

I would like to thank professor Karásek for his guidance and support. Many thanks to the mouse house, that have made these past years weathering a global pandemic while being stranded in a foreign country not only bearable but fun. A special thanks to all my friends, old and new, for making my life better every day.

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Abstract

The Arctic region has recently received renewed attention because of the effects of climate change and the prioritisation of the threats posed by it in the security policies of the Arctic states. The consequences of climate change, however, most severely affect the indigenous peoples that inhabit the territories of the Arctic states, which perspectives have usually been excluded from security studies. While in some ways ahead of other indigenous peoples of the world in terms of rights to autonomy and self-determination, this dissertation will present how colonial mechanisms still persists in the relationship between the indigenous communities and their national governments, and how this contributes to their insecurities. In particular, the focus will be on the relations between Canada and its Inuit communities, Norway and the Sámi people, and Greenland and the Inuit of Kalaallit Nunaat.

The aim of this dissertation is to investigate whether indigenous perspectives of security correspond to and are reflected in the security policies of the Arctic states they inhabit. It will do so while at the same time analysing whether climate change and its rise in importance in terms of security concerns has helped to overcome the colonial heritage in the relationship between Arctic states' governments and their local Indigenous Peoples.

1. Introduction: climate change and its role in changing security perspectives in the Arctic Region

Climate change has become one of the main issues in the current global security context. With the deepening and widening of security beyond the realm of traditional, hard security issues, climate change has emerged as a global environmental phenomenon of fundamental importance. However, its impact, especially in the short-to-medium term, appears to be very localised. In the Arctic, in particular, where cooperation between and peaceful coexistence of the Arctic Eight has characterised the region since after the Cold War, this impact has been so severe to have led to a prioritisation of the environment as a central issue in the security perspectives of the Arctic states. Most severely impacted by the changing climate have been and continue to be the local indigenous populations that inhabit and live off the Arctic environments. These populations, who had lived on these frozen lands long before the arrival of the European explorers, still experience the residues of these countries' colonial pasts, through episodes of discrimination, marginalisation and by being excluded from security decisions that concern them, literally in vital ways, but for which they are not consulted.

More recently, with the realisation of the importance of climate change for the global security, indigenous peoples, especially Arctic ones, have become involved a little more on such matters, both at the national and international level. For example, indigenous organisations sit as Permanent Participants at the Arctic Council, the body of cooperation, coordination and interaction between the Arctic States, indigenous peoples and other Arctic inhabitants formally established in 1996 to deal precisely with issues of sustainable development and environmental protection (Arctic Council Secretariat, 2021). The six Indigenous Permanent Participants in the Arctic Council are the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC), representing the Inuit in the countries of Greenland/Denmark, Canada, the United States, and the Russian Federation; the Saami Council or *Sámiráđđi*,

representing the Sámi of Norway, Finland, Sweden, and Russia; the Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North (RAIPON), which represents 41 different Indigenous groups throughout northern Russia, Siberia, and the Russian Far East; the Aleut International Association (AIA), representing indigenous communities from Alaska and Kamchatka, Russia; the Arctic Athabaskan Council (AAC), representing the indigenous peoples descending from the Athabaskan in Alaska and the Canadian territories of Yukon and the Northwest Territories; and the Gwich'in Council International (GCI), representing the Gwich'in peoples from Alaska and Canada (Wilson, 2020: 30-31).

In recent years indigenous peoples of the Arctic have achieved, in one form or another, varying degrees of autonomy and self-determination, that have allowed them to have a greater say in security matters, contributing with their traditional knowledge to discussions on the threats posed by climate change. In fact, since the most severe effects of the changing climate are felt by and put in jeopardy the indigenous peoples that inhabit the Arctic territories and share a deep connection to the land, these peoples could provide a first-hand insight based on their experience on how to adapt to such changes. However, a deeper analysis of the national governments' attitudes towards their indigenous populations often shows that the residues of the Arctic states' colonial pasts still weigh on their relationship with their indigenous communities. Indeed, often these states have shown attitudes of tokenism towards them, investing them only formally of the possibility of expressing their interests and concerns while not translating such promises into political practice.

This dissertation, focusing on the case studies of Canada, Norway, and Greenland, will aim at analysing whether indigenous perspectives of security correspond to and are reflected in the security policies of the Arctic states they inhabit. At the same time, the dissertation will investigate whether climate change and its rise in importance in terms of security concerns has helped

overcome the colonial legacy in the relationship between Arctic states' governments and their local Indigenous Peoples.

The Arctic region has been chosen as a focus as it is warming faster as a consequence of climate change, as the newest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report shows (IPCC, 2022), and these changes in Arctic environments have the potential of severe effects in the rest of the world. When referring to climate change in the Arctic, the phrase "what happens in the Arctic does not stay in the Arctic" is a common slogan that highlights this interconnectedness between climate events taking place over the Arctic region and the impact they have for the environments of everywhere else.

The discussion will proceed as follows. Firstly, an overview of the available literature on the concept of Arctic security will be provided, as well as why environmental security perspectives are a relevant lens through which is worth approaching this topic. This will be followed by a presentation on how environmental security relates to indigenous peoples, and how all this is connected to the experiences of colonialism of the Arctic indigenous communities and their national states. The next section on research design will briefly present what informed the choice for the three case studies under investigation, a brief introduction of the three cases, and the methodology employed in the research. It will also mention the limitations worth mentioning before delving deeper into the discussion.

The following three chapters, 4, 5, and 6, will be dedicated to the presentation and analysis of the case studies. They will describe and compare the central governments' security interests as expressed in their individual security strategies or Arctic policies with indigenous security interests taken from interviews, surveys, and analyses. The first chapter will focus on the Canadian government's approach towards the Inuit peoples, and in particular towards the four Inuit regions of Nunavut, the Inuvialuit Settlement Region, Nunavik, and Nunatsiavut. It will present the differences between the former conservative

approach and the new liberal government's one, then move on to investigating whether the new government brought about real changes in the relation with indigenous peoples or whether it has merely shown attitudes of tokenism. Chapter 5 will then present the case of the Sámi of Fennoscandia, with a particular reference to the state of Norway and its approach to the Sámi who live in its territory. It will show how Norway, while being at the forefront in terms of efforts in the fight against climate change, is actually practicing renewed forms of the old colonial approach towards its indigenous communities, through what has been defined as "green colonialism". The last country that will be presented is the peculiar case of Greenland, and how the Greenlandic Inuit have developed, through different agreements with the Kingdom of Denmark, a form of de facto governance that has the possibility to translate in total autonomy if and when the population so chooses.

The last chapter will be dedicated to a comparison between the three case studies, through the presentation of similarities and differences among both the three states' governmental approaches to security and to their indigenous peoples, as well as among the Canadian, Norwegian, and Greenlandic indigenous communities.

In the conclusion, the results of what emerged from this project will be presented, as well as potential routes of further research in the field of environmental security in the Arctic and its impact on indigenous communities.

2. Literature review

The Arctic as a (literally and figuratively) "hot" topic

Over the past two decades, Arctic security has re-gained international attention as a hot topic in international relations and, more particularly, in security studies. After the Cold War, during which time the Arctic was an important arena for competition and deterrence, tensions subsided, leaving the region in an 'exceptional' state of geopolitical stability and constructive cooperation (Käpylä and Mikkola, 2015). Now, interest in the region has sparked again, as a direct consequence of climate change. As the most recent scientific evidence shows (IPPC, 2021), the Arctic is the region most impacted by the consequences of climate change, that are severely affecting Arctic environments. The security issues at the centre of the debates on the Arctic are tightly linked to climate change itself: the scramble for resources and the potential for new sea routes are both factors that contribute to an increased risk of conflict and tensions (Bergman Rosamond, 2011). Arctic security, over the years, has also been studied through diverse theoretical lenses, ranging from more traditional, state-centric perspectives to less traditional views centred on individuals. According to Gjørv (2021: 201),

> "Arctic security scholarship and policy has been dominated by a largely realist-based understanding of security, rooted in state security and the protection of state borders, economies, and political power through the use of militaries, as encapsulated in classical geopolitics. Through such a lens, perceptions of security in the Arctic find their roots in frameworks of fear and the perceived militarization of this vast region".

According to Huebert (2021) and Borgerson (2008; 2013), while less traditional approaches are valid and greatly contribute to the debate, the traditional security theoretical approach remains the only one able to explain the renewed interest in the Arctic and the security challenges that arise from this. Other authors

employ different non-traditional approaches to Arctic security, analysing how climate change is affecting Arctic indigenous populations' livelihoods and survival. Among these is Gjørv (2021: 201), who argues that traditional security approaches disguise and minimise "different levels of security, where the focus on cooperation *between* states might indicate exceptional stability, but examining perceptions of security *within* these Arctic states among people or groups of people might reveal profound and complex insecurities".

In this dissertation, the theoretical lens of environmental security will be used to analyse security discourses of Arctic states and their indigenous peoples. Furthermore, environmental security will be contextualised within the theoretical field of colonial and post-colonial studies, to investigate the largely unexamined relation between security and colonialism in the Arctic context.

Environmental security perspectives and their relevance for the Arctic

Environmental security, originally defined by Barry Buzan (1991: 19-20) as concerning "the maintenance of the local and the planetary biosphere as the essential support system on which all other human enterprises depend", is a security perspective that has seen different degrees of support and attention in the field of security studies. In the past, authors such as Deudney (1990) argued that environmental problems and their solutions had little in common with traditional security issues, such as interstate violence. Since interstate violence, that according to the traditional realist's views of security was one of the major issues, is not likely to be caused by environmental degradation, it must follow that environmental degradation does not pose as a threat to national security (Deudney, 1990). Today, however, in what has been defined as a new geological era, the so-called 'Anthropocene' (Crutzen, 2002: 23), calls for a reassessment of the meaning of security which is able to take into account the shift in the

relationship of humans with the biosphere (Greaves, 2016). Security studies today reflect this need, and conceptions of securities that connect environmental affairs with different other types of (in)security are more widely accepted (Sam-Aggrey & Lanteigne, 2020).

The Arctic region, in particular, has traditionally been approached through the traditional security lenses of realist-leaning points of views, which focused mainly on hard security issues. This can be traced back to the Arctic's Cold-War "military legacy" (Hossain et al., 2017: 52). However, this region has more recently been identified as a fitting case-study to understanding why and how environmental concerns can, and often actually do, feed into insecurity (Sam-Aggrey & Lanteigne, 2020). The reason behind this is that the Arctic Region, that extends over 14.5 million square kilometres and encompasses the territory of eight states, is the region that is most severely affected by climate change, warming at a rate of two to three times faster than the global average (IPCC, 2021). This is due to the phenomenon known as Arctic amplification:

> "When bright and reflective ice melts, it gives way to a darker ocean; this amplifies the warming trend because the ocean surface absorbs more heat from the Sun than the surface of snow and ice. In more technical terms, losing sea ice reduces Earth's albedo: the lower the albedo, the more a surface absorbs heat from sunlight rather than reflecting it back to space" (NASA Earth Observatory, 2013).

This has a series of detrimental consequences that impact the Arctic environmental security, such as changes in wildlife and traditional hunting practices, rises in sea levels and changes in weather patterns and iceberg distributions, and the thawing of permafrost that challenges infrastructures and transportation practices of the inhabitants of the region. Such effects, in turn, give rise to and are closely interconnected with other kinds of insecurity, such as economic, health, food, and human security. In other words, what

characterises the Arctic as a peculiar region is that “climate conditions have structured conditions of security” (Greaves, 2016: 665). The environmental sector has thus been acknowledged as the defining characteristic of circumpolar relations, so much so that the founding declaration of the Arctic Council, the forum in which most of these relations occur, the Ottawa Declaration of 1996, recognises the importance of environmental matters and sets them at the heart of the Council’s mandate (Arctic Council, 1996). The focus on environmental matters that characterises the Arctic has led authors such as Exner-Pirot (2013) and Chater and Greaves (2014) to argue in favour of viewing it as *regional environmental security complex*.

Environmental security and indigenous peoples

While the impact of environmental damage is complex and widespread, the ones who suffer the most serious consequences of climate change and its impact on the Arctic region are indigenous peoples. More than 400.000 indigenous individuals inhabit the region, surviving on traditional practices in different nations with different languages and traditions. At the same time, these peoples, while citizens of the nation states that host their territories, have often been negatively impacted by their states’ national security policies, which pursue interests frequently different from or even directly opposite to their own (Greaves, 2020).

This being said, indigenous perspectives are still largely ignored or overlooked in security studies, and this is even more true in the case of indigenous peoples of the Global North, and more specifically in the field of Arctic security (Greaves, 2020). This is the gap this dissertation aims to contribute filling, by investigating whether indigenous perspectives on security correspond to and are reflected in the security interests of the Arctic states they inhabit, through an analysis of official discourses from both governmental and indigenous sources.

Indigenous peoples of the North, on the one hand, have largely benefitted from the deepening and widening of the concept of security. This allowed for a move from traditional understandings, which often were irrelevant to indigenous peoples and opposed to their conceptions of security (Kuokkanen and Sweer, 2020), to include human and environmental security perspectives (Greaves, 2020). On the other hand, however, what still remains largely unexamined in security studies, and in particular in Arctic security, is the relation between security and colonialism in the context of the Arctic region.

Security, colonialism and the environment in the Arctic

When considering the colonial history of the Arctic region and its indigenous inhabitants, a dichotomy emerges. While the indigenous Arctic communities enjoy (in different forms and at varying levels) higher degrees of political freedom compared to indigenous peoples elsewhere, they are still constrained by a settler-colonial political framework (Greaves, 2020). Most Arctic states, in fact, are strong democracies and provide indigenous communities with a space for voicing their own interests and rights to self-determination, both at the local and national level as well as at the regional and international level in institutions such as the Arctic Council. For example, the Sámi, indigenous peoples of Fennoscandia, have separate parliaments in Norway, Sweden, and Finland, and the Canadian Inuit exercise a form of self-government in the areas of Nunatsiavut, Nunavik, Nunavut, and the Inuvialuit Settlement Region (Sam-Aggrey, Lanteigne, 2020). Moreover, six organisations representing Arctic indigenous communities, among which the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC) and the Saami Council, occupy a consulting position within the Arctic Council as Permanent Participant. In this role, through the facilitating efforts of the Indigenous Peoples' Secretariat, indigenous peoples are given active participation in the workings of the Council (Arctic Council Secretariat, 2021). However, even if not all areas of the Arctic share the same exact colonial past, they share a lingering connection with such past,

through persisting colonial agendas which "have had a controlling (systemic) effect in privileging national (white) interests at the expense of Indigenous rights" (Maaka and Fleras, 2005: 12). Such imposition of non-indigenous forms of political authority represents and produces, for indigenous peoples, conditions of insecurity and contributes to the marginalisation of the indigenous communities (Greaves, 2020; Coates, 2020).

Such colonial imprint on Arctic security is important to take into account in the context of environmental security because colonialism can be considered as one of the main factors in the region's environmental degradation. The imperialism of the West, in fact, has reshaped the landscapes and natural environments and equilibria of colonised lands at an unprecedented speed and rate (Mount and O'Brien, 2013). The Arctic region was not immune to it, and in the context of its indigenous peoples, the impact of colonialism becomes *existentially* threatening: most of what threatens indigenous peoples lives and livelihoods is "directly linked to the degradation of complex human–animal–ecological–cultural systems on which Indigenous identities and interests are based" (Greaves, 2020: 370). In fact, while different from one another, the indigenous communities across the Arctic strive to keep and maintain their nature-based sustainable livelihoods (Hossain and Petrètei, 2016). They share such a deep connection to the nature and the land they inhabit to consider this relation with the natural world at the basis of their culture, their identity as Peoples and at the heart of their security interests. In the words of Cocklin (2002: 159):

> "Cultural survival, identity and the very existence of Indigenous societies depend to a considerable degree on the maintenance of environmental quality. The degradation of the environment is therefore inseparable from a loss of culture and hence identity".

Indigenous peoples of the Arctic, despite being the least responsible when it comes to pointing the finger of who to blame the most for contributing to the

changing climate, are the ones that are the most affected by its consequences (Lindroth and Sinevaara-Nisakanen, 2013). Their own survival, and their community security, is severely endangered by changing water patterns and the thawing of the ice caps, as well as the impact that climate change has on the wildlife on which they base their economy and sustenance (Hossein et al., 2017).

> "Indigenous peoples around the world have strong connections to the land and the marine environment. In the Arctic, traditional activities such as hunting, fishing and gathering are not only important parts of the local economy and the sustenance of individuals and families, they carry a cultural and spiritual significance that cannot be quantified. These traditional activities are a critical link to the time before colonization and the establishment of settled communities. *Maintaining and strengthening these traditions is absolutely essential to the survival of Indigenous peoples in the Arctic*" (Wilson, 2020: 28-29. Emphasis added).

This dissertation thus aims at further exploring Arctic Indigenous perspectives and their security discourses, to verify what Kuokkanen and Sweet (2020: 80) have identified as the "connection between (ongoing) colonialism and the creation of insecurities, including environmental change" in the context of three more specific case studies: the Inuit of Canada, the Inuit of Greenland, and the Sámi of Norway.

3. Case studies and methodology

Before delving deeper into the analysis of the findings, it appears beneficial to provide some introductory definitions which will help set the stage for the discussion and delineate the scope of this dissertation. This is necessary, in particular, when referring to "indigenous peoples". This dissertation employs the definition of indigenous peoples as provided by the Arctic Human Development Report (2004: 46), i.e., "those peoples who were marginalized

when the modern states were created and identify themselves as indigenous peoples. They are associated with specific territories to which they trace their histories". Moreover, indigenous peoples share other characteristics, such as

> "they speak a language that is different from that of the dominant group(s), they are being discriminated (against) […], their cultures diverge from that of the remaining society, they often diverge from the mainstream society in their resource use by being hunters and gatherers, nomads, pastoralists, or swidden farmers, they consider themselves and are considered by others as different from the rest of the population" (Arctic Human Development Report, 2004: 46).

When considering indigenous peoples of the Arctic, it becomes complicated to precisely make a distinction between different communities in the territories of different states. Moreover, the scope of the terms used to identify different Arctic indigenous populations adds another layer of complication to the issue. In particular, this dissertation will focus on the Inuit and the Sámi.

"Inuit" and "Sámi" are both terms employed to identify members of different groups of indigenous peoples that are present in particular territories, that transcend the typical boundaries between states (Hossain and Petrètei, 2016). In fact, the transboundary reality of indigenous peoples reminds of the circumpolar pre-colonial occupancy and use of land, since "the sociological boundaries of Arctic Indigenous peoples are not consistent with the colonial borders imposed upon them" (Greaves, 2020: 366). What this implies is that a single community may occupy territories of different states, and thus be subjected to different legal systems and have different levels of recognised autonomy. This factor makes it complicated to analyse a single community within the bounds of a single state. However, for the scope of this dissertation, a selection will need to be made following single states to allow for a more meaningful comparison between security interests as expressed by governmental sources and indigenous sources. Another aspect to keep in mind is that there is no single indigenous approach to

security matters, since every community defines their own security interests and each perspective is not always aligned (Kuokkanen and Sweet, 2020).

Methodology

The overall aim of this dissertation project is to explore indigenous perspectives on security and how they relate to the security perspectives of their nation states. In particular, the goal is to investigate whether colonial practices still impact the relationship of Arctic states with their local indigenous inhabitants. This will be done through the lenses of environmental security, to understand how the climate crisis impacts indigenous perspectives on security in the Arctic and whether their respective states share their vision. This analysis will be conducted by comparing how Arctic governments perceive indigenous security interests in their official discourses on Arctic security versus indigenous peoples' definitions of their own security interests.

To do so, the research will be carried out through primary and secondary sources, both produced by governmental authorities and indigenous speakers. Particular attention will be paid to the environment, as to employ an environmental security approach to the research.

The main documents that have been taken into account are those produced directly by the governments of the three chosen countries, in particular those relating to their Arctic or Northern policies and security strategies. In addition to this, numerous secondary sources commenting or analysing these policy documents have been used as a basis for the research.

On the indigenous perspectives' side, documents produced by regional and international indigenous organisations have been analysed, alongside interviews already available in English with important members of the Inuit and Sámi communities of Canada, Greenland, and Norway. For examples, material produced by the Inuit Circumpolar Council, the Saami Council, and the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami have been analysed and included in the research.

The choice of the cases that will be analysed in this dissertation has been informed by a few factors. First of all, Canada has been chosen for the peculiarity of the indigenous territories such as Nunavut and their status as autonomous territories. Another element that has played in favour of the choice of Canada as a case has been the language aspect and the possibility of accessing numerous sources in English. Norway has been selected because it hosts the largest number of indigenous Sámi within its national borders. Moreover, it is the only country that hosts this indigenous community to have ratified and implemented into its national legislation the International Labour Organisation 169 Convention concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries. Last but not least, Greenland has been chosen as a case study for its peculiar status of *de facto* indigenous self-governance and the fact that its population is very predominantly indigenous.

At this stage an important limitation comes into play. The sources used for the analysis in this dissertation have been almost exclusively in English, including English translations of other languages' documents. This has limited the number of sources that were available to analyse relating to the topics discussed in this dissertation, while at the same time raising the issue of representation. What this means is that, often, the material available in English is published by the organisations that represent the indigenous populations as single peoples rather than by the indigenous bodies of the specific countries (Greaves, 2016b). To give an example, the Saami Council, which usually publishes also in English, represents the Sámi from Fennoscandia as well as from Russia, while the Norwegian Sámi Parliament (or *Sámediggi*), which represents exclusively the Norwegian Sámi, usually publishes in the official Norwegian or Sámi languages. This also means that the indigenous material in English might have a slightly different meaning than in the original language. Hence, to provide a deeper, truer analysis of indigenous security interests, it would be essential to go directly to the sources in the original languages.

Another disclaimer and limitation of this work consists in being aware that academic research in general, and international relations and security studies in this particular case, have often ignored indigenous peoples and their perspectives. By doing so these fields of study, willingly or not, have contributed to reproducing "indigenous non-dominance through the explicit and implicit privileging of settler perspectives" (Greaves, 2016a: 464). With this awareness, it is important to acknowledge that this dissertation will consist in what Greaves (2016a: 464) defines as a "hybrid indigenist" project: it involves examining indigenous perspectives through a theoretical non-indigenous lens by a non-indigenous person rooted in a Western social sciences' *forma mentis*.

A final disclaimer is necessary to be made. The start of the current war following the Russian invasion of Ukraine will inevitably have an impact on the current dynamics of the Arctic region. This is because Russia is the state with the largest Arctic territory, and the current chair of the Arctic Council. The Arctic Council's operations have currently been suspended until further notice, and the new developments with Finland and Sweden being on the cusp of joining the North American Treaty Organisation (NATO) will cause the dynamics to change even further since at that point seven out of the Arctic Eights will be part of NATO. While it is certain that the current dynamics between the Arctic states for what concerns the Arctic region will change, the repercussion of this change on the cooperation in the region is not yet clear, since it is an ongoing and developing situation. Even further, what is still unknown is the impact that these new dynamics will have on indigenous peoples and on their voices in advocating their interests. Further complicating these issues is the potential for this new war to further hasten climate change in case Russia or any of the other Great Powers will decide to access natural resources to be used in war endeavours, disregarding the agreements on environmental cooperation that are currently in place. For all these reasons, this dissertation will not deal with the most recent developments in the Arctic region since the start of the war, and it will limit the analysis to the dynamics preceding these

events. This decision is informed by the fact that these events are still too recent and in continuous evolution, hence it would make the analysis too complicated and bound to become obsolete. It will be interesting once the events will have unfold to understand how the dynamics in the Arctic region have changed following the Russian war on Ukraine and their impact on indigenous peoples' voices.

Before delving deeper into the analysis of each country, this section will provide a brief introduction of the case studies chosen for the analysis: Canada and the Inuit, the Kingdom of Norway and the Sámi, and Greenland and the Inuit of *Kalaallit Nunaat*.

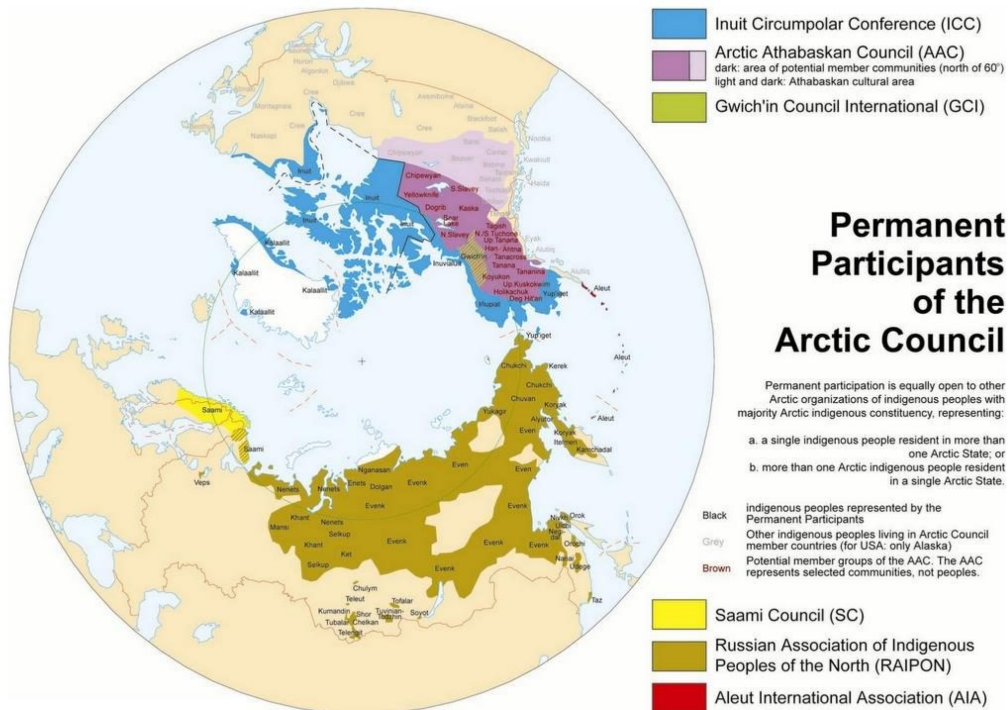

Figure 1. Indigenous peoples across borders. Dallmann, 2003.

Case study 1: Canada and the Inuit

Inuit, one of the three Aboriginal people that are constitutionally recognised in Canada, make up the most numerous and the most politically empowered

indigenous peoples of the Canadian Arctic, with approximately 55.000 people leaving in different communities in an area known as *Inuit Nunangat*. This area comprises the four Inuit regions of Nunavut, the Inuvialuit Settlement Region (Northwest Territories), Nunavik (northern Quebec), and Nunatsiavut (northern Labrador) (Greaves, 2016). In the territory of Nunavut, for example, the Inuit constitute the 85% of the territory's population. Nunavut's Inuit in 1993 obtained collective ownership of about 140.000 square miles of land and marine area, after 20 years of negotiation with the Canadian government. In 1999 the Nunavut Act established the Nunavut Government, a majoritarian government system with *de jure* autonomy over a variety of matters. According to Grydehøj (2020), if with Greenland it shares being an indigenous arctic territory with autonomy, Canadian Inuit do not have as of yet a set path towards obtaining independence, despite having scope for indigenous self-government through Land Claims and Self-Government Agreements. These agreements and future ones are explicitly recognised and guaranteed under the *Canadian Constitution Act* of 1982, section 35:

> "(1) The existing aboriginal and treaty rights of the aboriginal peoples of Canada are hereby recognized and affirmed.
> (2) In this Act, aboriginal peoples of Canada includes the Indian, Inuit and Métis peoples of Canada.
> (3) For greater certainty, in subsection (1) treaty rights includes rights that now exist by way of land claims agreements or may be so acquired.
> (4) Notwithstanding any other provision of this Act, the aboriginal and treaty rights referred to in subsection (1) are guaranteed equally to male and female persons".

Canadian Inuit have also obtained important positions in the international and regional political arena, through for example the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK), the national Inuit organisation, providing them a pan-Canadian representation, and through their membership in the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC). The ICC

is, alongside other indigenous organisations, one of the Permanent Participants of the Arctic Council, having "full consultation rights in connection with the Council's negotiations and decisions" (Arctic Council Secretariat, 2021: 6).

Case study 2: Norway and the Sámi

"Sámi" refers to the indigenous minorities that are present in the territories of Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia. Within the European Union (EU), they are the only officially recognised indigenous people living in the territories of continental Europe (Sheehan, 2016). The main Sámi area, identified as *Sápmi*, comprises peoples speaking different languages and of different economic, political and cultural characteristics. Since 1956 Sámi of Norway, Finland, Sweden, and Russia are organised in a voluntary, non-governmental organisation with the goal of promoting Sámi's interests and supporting their rights, the Saami Council (Szpak, 2020). This body is also one of the Permanent Participant in the Arctic Council, alongside the Inuit Circumpolar Council and other indigenous organisations. While acknowledging the "transboundary reality" (Hossain and Petrètei, 2016: 6) that characterises the Sámi, this dissertation will focus on those that live within the territory of Norway. This is because, notwithstanding the fact that all four Sámi countries do have constitutional provisions that recognise and protect the Sámi as an indigenous minority, Norway is the only one of the four to have ratified the 1989 International Labour Organisation's (ILO) 169 Convention and transposed it into internal legislation (Ravna, 2016). This Convention, also known as the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples' Convention, is the only international binding treaty on indigenous people's rights. It binds the ratifying states to protect indigenous peoples and guarantee the respect for their integrity, by recognising "the aspirations of these peoples to exercise control over their own institutions, ways of life and economic development and to maintain and develop their identities, languages and religions, within the framework of the States in which they live" (ILO, 1989: preamble).

The special status of the Norwegian Sámi is recognised by Article 108 of the Norwegian Constitution, which states that "it is the responsibility of the authorities of the state to create conditions enabling the Sámi people, as an indigenous people, to preserve and develop its language, culture and way of life". Since 1989, Norwegian Sámi are represented by the *Sámediggi*, the Sámi Parliament of Norway, which has authority over any matter involving the Sámi, including decision-making authority (Sámediggi, 2018). An example is the adoption of the Finnmark Act in 2005, after a period of consultation with the Norwegian Parliament, which "forms a legal and organisational framework for the managing of natural resources in Finnmark, taking into consideration the particular rights acquired by the Sámi as an indigenous people in this area" (Fløistad, 2010). Finnmark is a county located in the Northeast of Norway, which is the ancestral land of the Norwegian Sámi, and this Act recognises Sámi's rights to land in this area.

Case study 3: Greenland and the Inuit

The third indigenous community that will be considered in this dissertation is the Inuit living in the territory of Greenland. They constitute the majority of the Greenlandic population, whose territory is considered having a "legally established roadmap towards independence" (Grydehøj, 2020: 217). This makes *Kalaallit Nunaat* different to the other two case studies under analysis. In fact, differently from both the territories of Sápmi and of Nunavut, Greenland is a self-governing indigenous arctic territory which is part of the Kingdom of Denmark, but which has gained extensive powers of self-government and the possibility to eventually separate itself politically from its former coloniser state.

Greenland's current position was obtained first through the 1979 Home Rule system, which established an independent legislative and executive authority. It also made Greenland an administrative region with some legal responsibilities and in charge of its own internal affairs, while still economically dependent on

the Danish Kingdom (Ackrén, 2019). After a non-binding referendum in 2008, the Danish Parliament agreed on a new Self-Government Act which included new competences for Greenland, in particular the administration of natural resources. However, security matters are excluded from the *de jure* jurisdictional capacity of Greenlanders to self-govern. Thus, foreign relations and policy remain under the Danish authority, as well security and defence policy, even though Denmark is supposed to involve Greenland in cases concerning it directly (Rasmussen, 2019; Ackrén, 2019).

4. Canada

Figure 2. The Canadian Arctic. Patterson, D.G., & Bovey, P., 2019, p. 17

The Canadian approach to its Northern and Arctic indigenous citizens was not always an accommodating one. The residues of Canada's colonial past did (and in some ways still do) weight on the indigenous populations, through the adoption of policies often in sharp contrast with indigenous interests and through episodes of violence against the peoples themselves. Towards the Inuit, for example, episodes such as the 1950s-60s mass slaughter of sled dogs by the federal and provincial police forces and the forced relocation of Inuit families

come to mind, alongside the residential schools' abuses that recently have shocked the news. All of this was justified as an attempt by the Canadian government to assert its Arctic sovereignty (Greaves, 2016b). Over time, however, this approach towards indigenous peoples has changed and improved in some respects, while some attitudes remain still fundamentally colonial, as it will be presented later on in the discussion. Over the years, Canada also has seen a change in how the Arctic was perceived in relation to climate change, and its relation to colonialism.

Harper's conservative government's approach towards the Arctic: "use it or lose it"

During the term of the conservative government of Prime Minister Stephen Harper (2006-2015), the Arctic was viewed merely as a buffer, and climate change as an economic opportunity more than anything else.

> "The ongoing discovery of the North's resource riches—coupled with the potential impact of climate change—has made the region an area of growing interest and concern. Canada has a choice when it comes to defending our sovereignty over the Arctic. *We either use it or lose it*. And make no mistake, this Government intends to use it. Because Canada's Arctic is central to our identity as a northern nation" (Harper, 2007, emphasis added).

This perspective was reflected in the documents concerning the Arctic, for example in the 2009 Northern Strategy. This document expressed Canada's policies in the North, and it had a clear focus on resources extraction and militarisation of the region as the most direct way to protect Canadian sovereignty over its Arctic territories. This was, at the time, in sharp contrast to the more co-development and cooperative-driven approach with the local inhabitants of the region that the next government would take, and even more so it contributed to worsen the ecological changes that the Inuit themselves were

identifying as threatening their own existence and survival (Gricius, 2021; Greaves, 2016a). And when the same communities protested against the governmental policies that were contributing to their insecurity through the favouring of natural resources extractions, Harper's government labelled them as criminal and as a threat against Canadian national security, put in place increased surveillance mechanisms against many indigenous groups and individuals, and in its Counter-Terrorism Strategy categorised them as perpetrators of "domestic issue-based extremism" alongside other environmentalists (Government of Canada, 2013: 9; Greaves, 2016d; Dafnos, 2015). This legitimised a new wave of discrimination and criminalisation, that perpetuated colonial attitudes towards the Canadian indigenous peoples, that same colonial attitude that was contributing to making them even more vulnerable to environmental change (Smith and Parks, 2010).

Notwithstanding the fact that indigenous voices were largely ignored at the federal government's level, the Inuit were (and they still continue to do so) "ringing the alarm bell over climate change for decades", to quote Mary Simon (2011: 890), the first indigenous person to hold the position of Canada's Governor General and one of the lead negotiators during the creation of the Arctic Council as Canada's first ambassador for circumpolar affairs. According to Simon (2011: 890), indigenous peoples of the Canadian Arctic occupied since ever the position of "environmental watchdogs and police", calling for the connection between ongoing colonialism and the exacerbation of insecurities, among which environmental change is of great importance (Kuokkanen and Sweet, 2020). The significance that Inuit and other communities of the North give to climate change and environmental insecurity is reflected in the statistical surveys conducted with Arctic populations, in particular in the *Arctic Security Opinion Surveys* of 2010 and 2015. The environment emerges from these data as one of the most important security issues for the people of the Arctic, as well as the greatest threat to the Arctic (The Gordon Foundation, 2015). Closely linked to the environment is societal security, that according to Sheila Watt-

Cloutier, Canadian Inuit activist and former International Chair for the Inuit Circumpolar Council, for indigenous peoples means the fight to protect the environment is also the fight to protect their own way of life and culture (Watt-Cloutier, 2015)

Inuit's close connection with the natural land and its resources and their front-seat witnessing of the consequences of the changing climates puts them and other indigenous communities of the Canadian North in a unique standing "in ensuring that the development of Arctic resources is done in ways that are measured, informed, transparent, and accountable, and that make the wellbeing and cultural continuity of Inuit necessary and central considerations" (Simon, 2011: 889-890). Such attitude shows, for example, in the Circumpolar Inuit Declaration on Resource Development Principles of 2011, demonstrating the Inuit's awareness of the global dimension of the environmental risk connected to resource development in the Arctic and the need for all actors, indigenous and non-indigenous alike, to "evaluate the risks and benefits of their actions through the prism of global environmental security" (ICC, 2011: section 5.1).

Over the years, the Inuit have made clear their interest in being present at the table where decisions on the Arctic are made, especially when these decisions involve the environment and its resources, as "active and equal partners" (ICC, 2011: section 4.1). Being engaged in the discussion would allow indigenous peoples to be better prepared for the inevitable changes to come, and their impacts on their own societal security and livelihood. In the words of Nancy Karetak-Lindell, Nunavut's first MP from 1997-2008:

> "We have to be part of the planning and be at the table to decide what framework will be used to come to decisions and what research will be done and how. This will ensure solid decisions are made that will mitigate changes that we know are coming in the future. We cannot turn back the tide, especially on climate change, but we can be better prepared to

> successfully adapt. We, Inuit, have relied on our resilience to meet our challenges and we will continue to do so" (Karetak-Lindell, 2017: 31).

The interest in being involved in the decisions concerning the environment stems from the perception of security that Indigenous Inuit share. For them, the protection of the environment means more than the simple conception of environmental security, as mentioned above (Watt-Cloutier, 2015). This shows how Inuit's perception of security is a broad one, that covers more than a single security threat, and one that is not constrained to hard security issues: "just as health is more than the absence of disease, so, too, security is more than the absence of military conflict" (Simon, 2011: 891). All these threats and facets of security, according to the Inuit perspective, are strictly interrelated, interdependent, and indivisible.

> "What's at stake is our cultural security, our environmental security, our economic security, whether it is our traditional economy of hunting, harvesting and fishing, or if it's in relation to newer forms of economic development and activity, there are a host of different impacts. Our food security and ultimately our overall cultural security as distinct Indigenous Peoples across our homelands – Inuit Nunaat are at risk" (Dorough et al., 2020: 16).

Inuit's security perspectives concerning environmental security also stress the importance of responsibility. Responsibility, understood as the commitment to the protection of their environment, links back to the importance of evaluating the risks and the benefits of resource development in the Arctic through the prism of environmental security (Larocque, B. in: Dorough et al., 2020).

The current liberal government's approach to government-indigenous relations

The election of a new Liberal Government in 2015 brought along a different, more inclusive approach towards the Canadian indigenous population,

with the intention of integrating indigenous views when considering how to best implement and develop policies concerning the Arctic. The shift in focus, reflected in the new policy frameworks produced in those years, saw *consultation* and *co-development* as fundamental mechanisms of cooperation with indigenous peoples of the Canadian Arctic (Gricius, 2021). The main document concerning Arctic affairs and security, *Canada's Arctic and Northern Policy Framework*, which replaced Harper's 2009 strategy, recognises that previous policies "made in Ottawa" were unsuccessful in bridging the gap with the peoples of the North, and sets out a new framework to be co-developed "for the North, in partnership with the North, to reflect the needs and priorities of the North" (Government of Canada, 2019a).

With this new approach the government wanted to show how the Northern and Arctic peoples of Canada are the centre of the security policy in the region, and the expression of the Canadian sovereignty over its most remote territories (Sproule, D. in: Dorough et al., 2020). In practice, this translated into the creation of what has been called the 'Inuit-Crown Partnership Committee', a permanent organisation with the aim of jointly advancing shared interests and priorities, as for example the implementation of measures of reconciliation and that of land claims agreements (Government of Canada, 2019a). The new framework, co-developed among the different levels of governments (federal, territorial, and provincial) as well as northerners, Indigenous governments and organisations, includes an Inuit Nunangat chapter drafted by the Inuit-Crown Partnership Committee and aimed at guiding the implementation of the framework in Inuit Nunangat. According to the framework, this was done to "ensure that the framework respects Inuit rights and that an Inuit Nunangat approach is utilized in the development and implementation of federal policies and programs that are intended to benefit Inuit" (Government of Canada, 2019a).

Differently from previous approaches, the new framework particularly emphasises the important centrality of climate change and its effects on socio-cultural norms, ways of knowing and activities on the land, not only in the Canadian Arctic but in Canada overall:

> "Looking to the future, there is no force likely to reshape the Arctic and the North greater than climate change. Globally, the region is amongst the most affected by climate change, which is redefining the environmental, social and economic landscape, both below the tree line and on the tundra. Arctic ecosystems are at a disproportionately high risk of experiencing the adverse effects of global warming" (Government of Canada, 2019a).

It specifically recognises that indigenous peoples are those most affected by these changes, with their "cultural and social well-being affected at unprecedented rates" (ibid., 2019a), and by doing so linking environmental security to societal and other kinds of security, supporting the broad perception of security that Inuit peoples always shared. And it is precisely in the light of this understanding that the framework argues for a collaborative approach:

> "If there is a single argument for a collaborative approach to a shared Arctic and northern future, it is the shared and complex challenges posed by climate change. The response of all partners to this challenge must be no less transformative in scale, scope or duration" (ibid., 2019a)

With this framework, the Canadian government finally recognises the importance of including indigenous knowledge in the planning and executing a response to climate change, and sets out to fully include indigenous knowledge in guiding decision-making (Government of Canada, 2019b).

Indigenous Knowledge is a specific concept that has been defined by the Ottawa Indigenous Knowledge Principles of 2015. These principles have been created and agreed upon by the Arctic Council's Permanent Participants for use by the

Arctic Council to advance its objectives. Here, Indigenous Knowledge is defined as

> "a systematic way of thinking and knowing that is elaborated and applied to phenomena across biological, physical, cultural and linguistic systems. Traditional Knowledge is owned by the holders of that knowledge, often collectively, and is uniquely expressed and transmitted through indigenous languages. It is a body of knowledge generated through cultural practices, lived experiences including extensive and multigenerational observations, lessons and skills. It has been developed and verified over millennia and is still developing in a living process, including knowledge acquired today and in the future, and it is passed on from generation to generation" (Arctic Council Indigenous People's Secretariat, 2015: 1).

In preparation to the drafting of the Canadian Arctic and Northern Policy Framework, a Senate Special Committee on the Arctic worked on a year-long study with the aim of assisting "in developing a living, comprehensive long-term Arctic policy", with the ultimate goal of eventually devolving the power to make decisions about northern issues to northern institutions themselves (Patterson and Bovey, 2019: 9). This committee recognised that the multiple issues that affect the daily life of peoples of the North are equally affecting Canada's security and international relations, showing how this interconnectedness will necessarily require a common effort from the government together with the Northern and Arctic peoples (Patterson and Bovey, 2019). Most importantly, it recognises the importance for the new governmental framework to focus on the well-being of the Indigenous communities and on their guidance on how to achieve their priorities, to address Canada's colonial past and to move towards reconciliation. The report goes even further in linking such colonial past with the challenges of climate change, clearly arguing for the connection between colonialism, the environmental crisis

and the creation of insecurities: "the current challenges presented by a climate change are compounded by the *legacy of colonialism* and the history of southern-driven policy and program delivery in the 20th century" (Patterson and Bovey, 2019: 19, emphasis added).

Actual change or mere tokenism?

The change in the governmental approach towards Indigenous peoples of the Arctic, their involvement at the highest levels in the form of the Inuit-Crown Partnership Agreement and their contributions to the new framework regulating the Arctic all appear to be steps in the right direction to make up and reconciliate Canada with its colonial past and to make sure that Indigenous communities have a seat at the table. As shown above, Indigenous resilience and knowledge of the land are very important assets in planning a response to the changing climate and adaptation strategies, also given the fact that they are the most impacted by the consequences of climate change. However, it becomes necessary to ask whether or not the steps taken by the government in these regards have been actually effective, if Indigenous interests, perspectives and priorities have actually been taken into consideration and they have translated into polices *for* the North and *with* the North, through genuine participation of indigenous voices in the discussion. Because, in the words of Bridget Larocque (2021: 19), "policies developed without the knowledge and wisdom of Indigenous expertise, which we bring as life-long Northerners, is nothing more than the continuation of the colonial methodology that perpetuates antagonism". There have been instances in which, despite the Liberal government's shift in its rhetoric, in fact, previous colonial narratives still emerged beneath the surface, with Indigenous views and interests put aside in favour of government's agenda (Gricius, 2021). This attitude emerged, for example, from an investigation carried out by Indigenous Climate Action, a Canadian indigenous-led organisation, on the two most recent federal climate plans, the 2016 *Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Energy and Climate Change* and the updated

2020 plan, *A Healthy Environment and a Healthy Economy*. What emerged from this investigation was that such policies failed to include, consult, and accommodate Indigenous peoples, excluding them as rights holders and perpetuating settler colonial relations (Sinclair, 2021), all the while upholding "the importance of traditional knowledge in regard to understanding climate impacts and adaptation measures" (Environment and Climate Change Canada, 2016: 3).

> "As the following pages explain in detail, Indigenous Peoples and our rights, knowledge, and climate leadership were mentioned again and again in both plans, yet we were *structurally excluded* from the decision-making tables where these plans were made. In fact, representatives from a few provinces actively opposed Indigenous inclusion in this process. This active exclusion constitutes a violation of Indigenous rights to self-determination and to free, prior and informed consent (FPIC), as defined by the United Nations. Additionally, this blatant exclusion conflicts with the Liberal government's commitments to reconciliation and Nation-to-Nation, Inuit-Crown, and government-to-government relationships" (Indigenous Climate Action, 2021: 6. Emphasis added).

This represents an example of tokenism, that fails to actually include indigenous perspectives while pretending to do so. It shows how the Canadian government is continuing to fall into the same colonial habits which it has been trying to move on from.

5. Norway

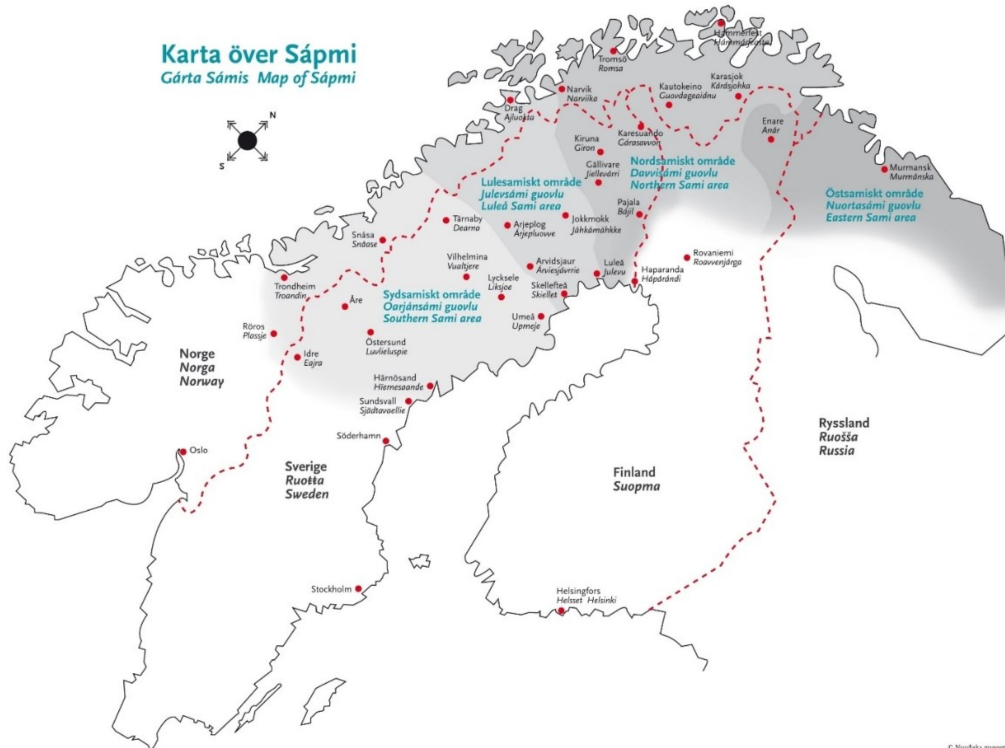

Figure 3. Map of Sápmi. Nordiska Museet, 2007

The next country under analysis is the Kingdom of Norway, whose so-called "High North" region hosts part of *Sápmi*, the traditional homeland of the Sámi. The Sámi are an indigenous people of the Arctic who live in the northern part of the Scandinavian Peninsula and in large parts of the Kola Peninsula, as shown in *figure 3*. The Sámi, thus, are present in the territories of four different states: Sweden, Norway, Finland, and Russia, and share affine cultural characteristics alongside with a similar "geo-environmental and social structure" (Hossain, 2016: 421). The largest number of them, around 50.000 – 65.000 individuals, live within the territory of Norway, making up the 1.06 – 1.38% of the total Norwegian population of about 4.7 million (Vars, 2021). The transnational and transborder characteristic of the Sámi people complicates the effort of analysing the case of the security interests of the Sami within a strictly Norwegian context (Greaves, 2016b). Even more so because the Sámi themselves declared in the

2013 *Murmansk Declaration* to be one people, unaffected by the Westphalian concept of national borders:

> "The 20th Saami Conference, representing the Saami Council's member organizations in Finland, Norway, the Russian Federation, and Sweden, gathered in Murmansk 2 to 4 May 2013:
> Reiterates that the Saami constitute *one* people, and that national borders shall not infringe on our national unity;
> Emphasises that the Saami people has inhabited its traditional homeland – Sápmi – since time immemorial and *long before national borders were drawn*" (Sami Council, 2013. Emphases added).

However, this dissertation will try to focus on the Norwegian Sámi because Norway, as presented, hosts the largest number of them within its borders and because the country is the only of the four to have ratified the International Labour Organisation's 169 Convention concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries in 1999 and implemented it into its national legislation.

The Arctic features of Norway

Before analysing Norwegian security interests versus Sámi's ones, it is useful to make a linguistic and geographic clarification. In Norway there is a distinction between what is considered "Arctic" and what is instead referred to as "High North".

Figure 4. Map of Norway. Østhagen, 2021, p. 78

"Arctic" in Norwegian refers to all that is north of the Arctic Circle (66° 34 N), which includes 1/3 of Norway's landmass and around 80% of its maritime domain, including Nordland county, Troms and Finnmark county, the Svalbard archipelago and the island of Jan Mayen, as can be observed from *figure 4*. According to Østhagen (2021), Arctic is normally used to refer to the Arctic Ocean and the uninhabited lands of the Arctic region. "*Nordområdene*" (the Norwegian word for High North) is instead used to refer to "the more hospitable and populated parts of northern Norway and Svalbard as well as the adjacent maritime and land areas in the European part of the Arctic" (Østhagen, 2021: 77), and it has been geographically defined by the 2006 Norwegian High North Strategy as covering "the sea and land, including islands and archipelagos, stretching northwards from the southern boundary of Nordland county in Norway and eastwards from the Greenland Sea to the Barents Sea and the Pechora Sea" (Norwegian MOFA, 2006: 13).

Since before the Cold War, due to the geographic position of Norway and its close proximity to the Soviet Union, first, and Russia, later, the High North region is considered as the central pillar of Norwegian foreign policy and one of the core and most important national security interests (Greaves, 2016b; 2018; Østhagen, 2021).

Norway's security perspective

When discussing about the meaning of security for Norway, it is necessary to consider that the Norwegian definition of security is shaped by the history of Scandinavian colonialism. Norway itself, in fact, before being a colonial country, was under a quasi-colonial rule from Denmark and Sweden during the 16th-19th centuries of European colonialism. For this reason, together with the fact that the Norwegian colonisation of Sápmi was more gradual and lacked the violence that characterises other instances of European colonialism and that Norwegian political independence was achieved only in 1905, Norway has often dodged critical colonial analysis (Greaves, 2018). Another element that shapes Norwegian definition of security is the colonising effort towards the Sámi territory of Sápmi. This colonisation, according to Lindmark (2013), served the dual purpose of getting access and exploitation rights to *Sápmi*'s natural resources, on one hand, and on the other establishing visible presence and sovereignty rights over these territories which other nations were interested in. This colonisation, during the course of the 19th – 20th centuries, was followed by the governmental effort of reuniting the different collective identities of the people of the North (not only the Sámi, but also for example the immigrant Finns) under the single Norwegian identity, through what has been defined as *fornorskningspolitikk* ("norwegianisation politics") (Berg, 2013).

> "The concept of Norwegianization has been applied to the Norwegian politics of integrating the northernmost counties, Troms and Finnmark, starting in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The concept has embraced a variety of political fields, including economics and culture, and has aimed to counter potential security threats from neighboring Russia and later Finland in a geographical region of the country that was characterized by wilderness, ethnic diversity and lack of (or a feeble degree of) integration with the rest of the kingdom" (Berg, 2013: 155).

Sámi were forced by the Norwegian government to abandon their lifestyle, their language, and their culture and to integrate with the general Norwegian culture, which resulted in almost eradicating completely the Sámi language by the 20th century (Greaves, 2016b). Berg (2013) calls this attitude of the Norwegian governments towards its Sami people a representation of Michael Hechter's concept of "internal colonialism". Such concept was defined by Hechter (1999: xiv) as reserved "for regions that are simultaneously economically disadvantaged and culturally distinctive from the core regions of the host state". This was in a way in line with other experiences of European colonising polices of those years, and it at the time it was considered necessary as to consolidate Norwegian national identity and counterpose it to other foreign, external influences that aspired to lay their claims to the same area (see Denmark, Sweden, and Russia).

> "The drive to penetrate the northernmost counties of the kingdom that has been labelled Norwegianization was to bolster a border area that was exposed to foreign menaces, whether military or ethnic, real as well as imagined. This process might be summed up as "internal colonialism" to grasp that the aim for this policy was not primarily defensive, but rather a *purposeful offensive into the wilderness* to capture it as part of Norway proper" (Berg, 2013: 169. Emphasis added).

In this way, the wheel of colonialism kept spinning: to try to break free from its colonial past and establish its own national identity, Norway resorted to a new wave of (internal) colonialism. However, Norway was not immune to the mutual influence that colonising the Sámi brought about, and that resulted in impacting the Norwegian identity and the shape of the modern Norwegian state:

> "Not only must Sámi be understood as having been constituted through a colonial relationship with Norway, among the other Nordic states, contemporary Norway should also be seen as having been formed, in

considerable part, through its colonization of Sámi territory and incorporation of Sámi into Norwegian society" (Greaves, 2018: 118-119).

The Norwegianisation process is being identified by Greaves (2016b: 208) as one part of the contradictory tendencies that Norway showed in its approach to security in the post-Cold War era: "the state widened the actors involved in security, but the effect of constructing new and diverse issues as security-relevant had the reverse effect of bringing them under the ambit of the central government". As it will be presented shortly, this is not an isolate case of contradiction in the Norwegian approach to policy making.

Divergent security interests in the High North: Norwegian government vs the Sámi

a. Norwegian government's three-fold interests

Similarly to the Canadian government case, Norway has shaped its Arctic security around three main interests: territorial sovereignty, the ever present menacing proximity to Russia, and the attraction to the potential of northern natural resources. It shares with Canada also a wider approach to the concept of security, that is no longer anchored merely in traditional security issues but embraces a wider set of issues. Even more so, traditional security issues were basically missing from the polices concerning the High North. This was true until the period 2007-2014, when there was a shift following the invasion of Crimea and the drop in the prices of oil and gas, that caused hard, traditional security issues to be regarded with increased attention (Østhagen, 2021). The shift is reflected in the different tones of the two Norwegian High North policies of 2006 and 2020, as Østhagen (2021: 76) highlights: while the 2006 policy "was an optimistic promise of increased attention to the North, new economic opportunities and the strengthening of dialogue and cooperation with Russia", the latest phase of Norwegian High North policy is instead

characterised by "great power rivalry and harsh rhetoric outside Norway's borders".

As mentioned, the main security interests of Norway in the High North are threefold. First, territorial sovereignty, meaning keeping hold of their distant, northernmost, and scarcely populated lands as the key for the success of Norwegian defence and territorial control (Greaves, 2016b). Second, and linked to the first interest, is the need to keep Russia from expanding its influence in the north, where Norway shares with it its land and sea borders. In an effort to balance its military inferiority against Russia, Norway leans on its NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation) membership and its bilateral relationship with the United States, which is considered as the "ultimate guarantor of Norwegian sovereignty in balancing the security concerns regarding Russia" (Østhagen, 2021: 84) and "Norway's closest ally" (Norwegian Government, 2021: s. 3.4). This is also connected to the third interest, resource extraction, since a lot of the reserves are located in the northern territories and are becoming increasingly available due to the changing climate. Thus, keeping Russia from reaching them means ensuring Norwegian control over these resources and increased economic security. These interests are reiterated and linked in the 2021 Norwegian Government's Arctic Policy report (s. 1.1):

> "Further developing North Norway as a strong, dynamic and highly competent region is the best way to safeguard Norwegian interests in the Arctic. The region is rich in natural resources that contribute to economic growth for the country as a whole, and the economy and social development of this region are therefore a matter of national importance".

However, most of these resources are located in Sápmi, and the Norwegian interest in them risks jeopardising Sámi security.

b. Sámi's interests

The Sámi "articulate a distinct and conflictual understanding of in/security, and its relationship to environmental change, to that employed by the Norwegian state" (Greaves, 2016b: 228). At the core of the Sámi's conception of security lies societal security, from which other kinds of security, as economic, health, and above all environmental, derive and which can be considered, according to Sheehan (2016: 144), as the "master narrative" when considering Sámi's security perspective. Buzan (1991: 20) defines societal security as being concerned with "the sustainability, within acceptable conditions for evolution, of traditional patterns of language, culture and religious national identity and custom". The insecurities that Sámi are facing, connected to economic, environmental, and other kinds of security, and that can be traced back to the norwegianisation polices mentioned above, all fed into threatening the survival itself of the Sámi as a community of people:

> "The danger posed by the economic, environmental or health security sectors for example is not simply that they threaten to force the Sámi population to move from the Sápmi region in order to escape the effects of environmental change, or find employment or secure better health care. By doing so *the unity and integrity of the Sámi people is undermined*, *the survival of the Sámi languages put in doubt and the Sámi identity of individuals threatened by assimilation into the large populations to the south*". (Sheehan, 2016: 144. Emphasis added).

In particular, at the core of Sámi's insecurity and having the potential to jeopardise their societal security is the impact of climate change and the consequent environmental (in)security. As all the other indigenous communities of the Arctic, Sámi are severely impacted by the consequences of the changing climate, which affects not only the land in which they live but also their livelihood and culture (Mamo, 2020). Sámi, other than being affected by the already dire consequences of climate change, find themselves also deeply

impacted by the strategies that are put in place by the Norwegian government as solutions for fighting climate change. They are affected, for example, by the policies aimed at developing resources, in particular mining, which are said to encourage industrialisation and are a threat to indigenous wellbeing (Greaves, 2016a). They are also threatened by the adaptation and mitigation policies to tackle climate change and reach the objectives of the Paris Agreement (Sheehan, 2016; Mamo, 2020). This paradox has been defined by Aili Keskitalo (2020), President of the Sámi Parliament of Norway as the paradox of green colonialism:

> "The paradox of green colonialism. When colonialism has dressed up in nice, green finery, we are told that we have to give up our territories and our livelihoods to save the world, because of climate change. Currently the state of Finland is planning to build an Arctic railway over to the Norwegian side of the border which will pass through most of the reindeer herding districts on the Finnish side of the bear border and to Norwegian reindeer herding districts. And this is celebrated, because railway is supposed to be environmentally friendly. But it is a major industrial development into our food producing areas that will have consequences for our ability to continue with our traditional reindeer herding livelihood. We have other examples, as well, we are told that we have to allow mining mineral extraction in reindeer herding territories because the world needs our minerals again - to have a green change, to have a shift in technology, again to save the world. And we are told that we have to have wind power plants they all they even call them wind parks but they are really industrial power plants in our reindeer herding areas, because the world needs clean energy. So, as an indigenous people we do not only carry the burden of climate change, but we also carry the burden of mitigation or the world's reaction to climate change, and it's a pretty heavy burden".

The same paradox has been recognised in the 2017 Tråante Declaration, proclaimed at the Saami Conference, the highest body of the Saami Council, which is the body where delegates from the Sámi organisations of Finland, Norway, Sweden, and Russia meet to promote Saami rights and interests in the four countries.

> "The foregoing considerations apply correspondingly in relation to the "Green Nordic industry," including wind power, hydro power, wave power, etc., which competes with the Saami traditional land use. Saami livelihoods - including reindeer herding - are among the "greenest" there is. The Saami have always used and are still using their traditional areas in an ecologically responsible sustainable manner. The result of the lasting Saami use of Sápmi has left behind very few traces that visible today. That these Saami areas in a large extent is to be exploited by what the Nordic peoples define as *"green energy" is a paradox*" (Saami Council, 2017: section 26. Emphasis added).

Numerous are the examples of the paradox of green colonialism within the recent history of Norwegian green climate policies. For example, several wind power projects have been sought to be implemented in the reindeer herding territories of the Sámi people, to which they have a right based on their historical use of the land in the area (Normann, 2020). This entitlement, however, was not always believed to be true. Up to the 1970s, when social movements started calling for a change, the Norwegian government did not believe that the use and occupation of the land and resources by the indigenous communities would grant them formal rights to that land and the use of its resources (Fløistad, 2010). The event that gave the government a sort of wakeup call and radically changed Norway's policies towards the Sámi was the Alta dam controversy, the aftermath of which saw the government start looking into indigenous cultural and political rights as well as land and use of resources issues, which eventually led to the ratification of the Finnmark Act of 2005 (Lyčka, 2020). This

controversy saw indigenous peoples, alongside environmentalists, suing the Norwegian state for a major hydroelectric dam project across the Alta river, that would have flooded a Sámi community land area and that was going to have an impact on reindeer migration routes and wild salmon fishing, both essential activities for Sámi's security and sustenance. Although the indigenous people ended up losing the case, the repercussions of it on the government's attitude towards them radically bettered the position of the indigenous communities in Norway. Following the adoption of the Finnmark Act and its incorporation of ILO Convention 169, indigenous Sámi in Norway were given (at least on paper) certain collective land rights and the rights to consultation, negotiation, and participation in decision-making processes, including co-determination in the management of land and resources via the Sámi Parliament (Broderstad, 2014).

Going back to the wind power projects that are jeopardising Sámi's security and that can be considered as examples of instances of green colonialism, the recent case of the Øyfjellet windfarm comes to mind as a project strongly opposed by the Sámi's community in that the placement of the wind turbines was said to disrupt migration routes and because of this jeopardise Sámi's sustainable livelihood (Vars, 2021). This case, of September 2020, saw the reindeer herder community of Jillen-Njaarke in Nordland filing and losing a lawsuit against Eolus, the Swedish-German owners of the project, for the constructors of a windfarm that was in violation the Reindeer Husbandry Act of 2007. A similar case was that of the Davvi Wind Park, a plan for the construction of up to 267 wind turbines in one of the largest areas in Norway still undisturbed by industry and buildings, that hosts both a sacred mountain for the Sámi people and reindeer herding territory (Vars, 2021). Notwithstanding the numerous protests from the Sámi community supported by claims from the Sámi Parliament and environmental organisations, "when amending the decision-making processes for licences for new wind power projects in Norway, the Norwegian Parliament did not include any proposals for the enhanced participation of the Sámi Parliament or Sámi rights holders in these kind of processes" (Vars, 2021).

Keeping the Sámi away from the decision-making concerning their own lands, even when what is under discussion is a way to fight climate change, undermines their right to self-determination and perpetuates colonial attitudes that put under stress Sámi's security: "threats to reindeer herding are also threats to Sámi culture. And as such they undermine their livelihoods and human security" (Szpak, 2020: 227). In the words of an official of the Saami Council, interviewed by Greaves (2016b) for his PhD thesis in January 2015:

> "From a reindeer herding perspective, what matters is if it damages or not. It doesn't matter if it's green. It's all about how it impacts on your livelihoods, and the herd is really the only thing that matters when reindeer herders take a stand".

Overall, Sámi's security interests can be summarised into two different categories, closely interconnected. The first is the threat of the industrialisation of their traditional homeland by prospects of resources extraction and development, that puts in danger the traditional practices of reindeer herding upon which Sámi's livelihood is based. Second is the preservation of Sámi cultural practices and language, that as presented before have been heavily impacted by the policies of Norwegianisation of the 19th century, which have almost completely wiped them out. The element that connects these two categories is the natural environment, and it being threatened by climate change. "Sámi in Norway situate the natural environment, and its integral role in maintaining traditional cultural practices, at the heart of what security means in their Arctic homeland" (Greaves, 2016b: 236). Climate change, thus, is the greatest threat to Sámi's security, and it is linked to the "commodification of nature" in the form of the exploitation of *Sápmi* and the consequent endangerment of their livelihood and survival.

> "Without question, the Indigenous peoples' statements concur that climate change is a serious problem. They clearly articulate that we are in crisis. But the crisis they identify is one embedded in a completely

dysfunctional economic order. The threat is not some abstract, long term environmental change. The threat is in the *commodification of nature*, and the production and consumption patterns of industrialized states” (Smith, 2007: 208. Emphasis added).

The Sámi recognise that they have so far always been able to adapt to the variation of the climate and its impact on the environment, as well as to the change in their socio-economic world brought about by the history of colonialism. In the words of Gunn-Britt Retter (2008: 35), of the Unjárga-Nesseby Saami community of north-eastern Norway and Head of Arctic and Environmental Unit of the Saami Council since 2005:

> “For the Sámi people, perhaps the words “climate change” should not be so scary. Like other indigenous peoples, the Sámi have preserved their culture and adapted to great changes over time in the natural environment and also to human-made changes in our social and economic systems; the Sámi have coped and have continued to exist and subsist here over thousands of years, and through periods of rapid change”.

She continues by providing examples from her own home area to prove the adaptability of the Sámi in the face of continuous changes in climate conditions and their impacts on indigenous homelands:

> “Through these sites we can see how the area has changed over 10,000 years. When sea levels would recede or rise throughout history the people of Ceavccageađggi have adapted. At one time, there were conifer trees which grew there but when the climate changed and became colder, the people began to be more mobile and would relocate four times a year. One can find reminiscences (archaeological) of how people lived and adapted over time. There are bones from species of fish and animals that must have been living there during warmer periods. *The people have adapted to changing environmental conditions over time and have survived*” (Gunn-Britt Retter, 2008: 35. Emphasis added).

This is also expressed and officialised in the Murmansk Declaration of 2013 (Saami Council, 2013: section 15):

> "15. Saami livelihoods have developed and survived due to their traditional knowledge on how to cope with climatic variations. Governance frameworks must not constrain Saami peoples ability to use their own knowledge in order to cope and adapt to climate change. […]".

The reason behind their resilience is assigned to their traditional knowledge, which they call for to be listened to alongside scientific knowledge as basis for decision making, especially when decisions concern the environment and the management of natural resources.

> "16. In addressing climate and environmental changes, best available knowledge, both scientific and traditional, should be used as basis for decision making […].
> 17. The Sami Conference emphasizes the Importance of the use of Saami traditional knowledge as a foundation for community resilience and governance of climate change" (Saami Council, 2013: section 16; 17).

Sámi's traditional knowledge, according to Szpak (2020), is able to offer an alternative to the dominant Western approach still dominant in the field of environmental protection, and could potentially offer a significant contribution in developing new, more sustainable ways of mitigating and adapting to the changing climate.

If Sámi voices are ignored when making decisions that inherently concern their lands, and thus their security, there is the risk to fall into renewed forms of colonialism. This, on paper, is recognised in the official governmental documents concerning the Arctic. For example, in the 2021 Arctic Policy Report it is said that

> "It is important that indigenous and local communities are able to participate meaningfully in international climate change efforts, to

demonstrate what they have to contribute and highlight the importance of traditional knowledge and their own efforts to address climate change. The Sámediggi is consulted as part of the Norwegian preparations for the international climate negotiations, and is often represented on the Norwegian delegation. The Sámediggi played an active role in the establishment of the Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)" (Norwegian Government, 2021).

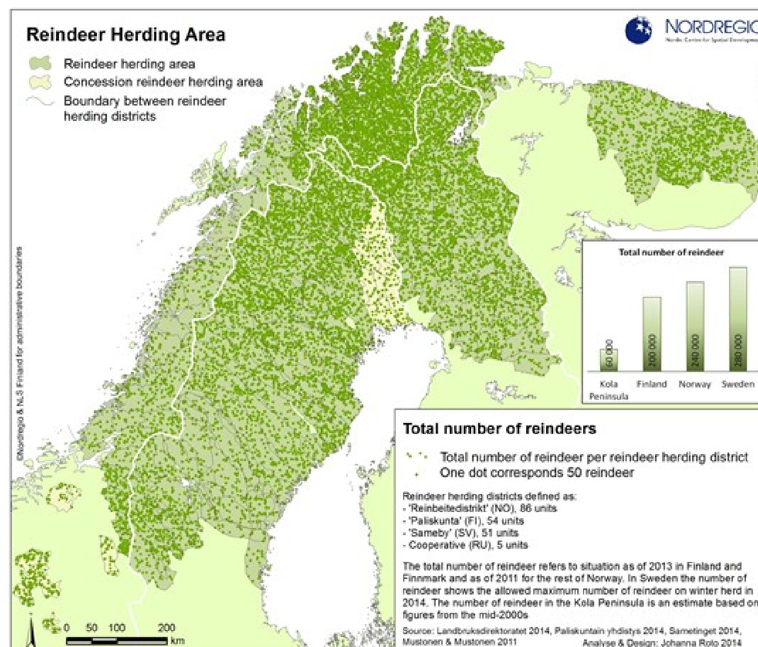

Figure 5. Saami Reindeer herding area. Roto, 2014.

As it was the case in Canada, the Sámi strive for their traditional knowledge to be consulted especially when "determining the sustainability of resource development initiatives" (Middleton, 2019), stressing out once again the importance that the environment has in their livelihood and the threat that climate change and resource development represents for their security.

Norway's ambiguity between empowerment and colonial residues

The evidence presented in this section shows that Norway, despite often considered as among the countries at the forefront of civil rights and environmental efforts, shares with the other Nordic countries an inherent ambiguity and instances of contradiction for what concerns its approach towards indigenous peoples. On the one hand, Norway, through the ratification and implementation of the Finnmark Act, the ILO 169 Convention, and the establishment of the Sámi Parliament's procedural rights, as well as the recognition of certain collective land rights to the Sámi communities, is in line with the global trend that is recognising traditional indigenous rights and making amend with the colonial past. On the other, Norway is increasing infrastructure construction projects and extraction of natural resources located on indigenous lands, made available from climate change, which compromises indigenous security, and it is seen by the Sámi as a perpetration of a renewed form of colonialism (Szpak, 2020). As it was the case for Canada, Norway's approach towards indigenous people could be seen as tokenism, just to appear to be involving the Sámi in decision making when really their concerns are kept on the side. In 2019, the UN Special Rapporteur on human rights and the environment himself, David Boyd, after an official visit to Norway, has recognised this dichotomy in the Norwegian approach to human rights and the environment. He stated in his final rapport that if Norway is, in some aspects, "at the forefront of the global transition to a fossil-fuel free economy", on the other "the Norwegian paradox is that its leadership in some aspects of addressing the global climate emergency is enabled by wealth generated by a large petroleum industry" and that in Norway "exploration for additional oil and gas continues […], despite clear evidence that human society cannot burn existing reserves of oil, gas and coal while meeting the targets established in the Paris Agreement". He also noted how, despite the positive developments that have been analysed previously on the recognition of indigenous rights, "there

remain serious concerns related to human rights and the environment. Reindeer husbandry is at the heart of Sámi culture and provides a livelihood for thousands of people. Healthy and productive environments are essential for both the herders and the reindeer". He recognises the importance of the Sámi as environmental human rights defenders, and the potential for Norway to be an example for other countries in "protecting the rights of Indigenous peoples, protecting the environment, and highlighting the connections between human rights, healthy ecosystems, and healthy people". But to do so, Norway has to really commit, not just on paper, to make sure that the Sámi have a say and can give their approval before any decision is made concerning their lands, their rights, and that has an impact on their security.

6. Greenland

Figure 6. Greenland. Mapsland, 2022.

Greenland, or *Kalaallit Nunaat* in Greenlandic, is the last case study that will be taken into consideration in this dissertation. It represents a very peculiar case, both within the Arctic context and worldwide, for what concerns indigenous peoples and their interests. Greenland is the world's largest island, and since 1953 it has been part of the Kingdom of Denmark alongside the Faroe Islands, in what has been defined as “the Realm”. It is located geographically in the North American continent, east of the Canadian Arctic Archipelago, but its colonial past ties it to Europe from a political and cultural point of view (Kuokkanen, 2017). The peculiarity of Greenland lies in its population makeup: of the around 57,000 inhabitants, almost 90% are indigenous Inuit, making the island a “geographically separate polity with a postcolonial relationship to the Danish state and an indigenous identity” (Kristensen & Rahbek-Clemmensen, 2018: 2). Not only is Greenland an

indigenous arctic territory, but it can also count on a "legally established roadmap towards independence" (Grydehøj, 2020: 217), and this characteristic distinguishes it from the other two case studies under analysis, Canada and Norway, as well as other Arctic territories:

> "As the most autonomous self-governing Arctic territory situated on the mezzanine between a past as a Danish colony and an envisioned future as an independent nation state, Greenland enjoys a special place within the regional governance system" (Jacobsen, 2019: 184).

In fact, after years of peaceful negotiation with its former coloniser, Greenland has achieved through the Self Government Act of 2009 the possibility to become independent whenever the Greenlandic people decide to do so. While the steps that led to achieving such possibility will be presented shortly, it is important at this stage to make a starting remark. The peculiar status that Greenland occupies creates a sort of paradox for *Kalaallit Nunaat*'s identity: on one hand, Greenland is part of the transnational Inuit community, sharing with them the indigenous Inuit identity, while on the other the self-government is striving to become an independent state following the traditional Westphalian model of sovereignty, while at the same time trying to break its ties with its colonial past (Jacobsen, 2019). This peculiarity puts Greenlandic identity in a position where it

> "Is caught between aboriginality and modernity, between a specific culture (and practices) and modern, Western concepts like democracy, welfare and market economy. Independence ties these seemingly contradictory notions together by creating a political horizon that has not been reached yet, but is always argued as reachable at some future point" (Kristensen & Rahbek-Clemmensen, 2018: 48).

Greenland's road from colony to independent state-to-be

Before the 1953 Danish Constitution, the island of Greenland was under the Kingdom of Denmark's colonial rule with the status of overseas colony. The

strategic importance of its location played a prominent role during the Great Powers warfare of the second World War, since its close proximity to the North American continent meant that the US could use its strategic location as a "stepping stone" between itself and its main European ally, the United Kingdom (Taagholt & Hansen, 2001: 14). During WWII, with Denmark occupied by Nazi Germany, the US took control of the island and built up its defence, through the establishment of numerous military bases on its territory. The importance of controlling Greenland, according to Ackrén & Jakobsen (2015: 405), was four-fold:

> "Greenland was considered important for four main reasons: first, it was vital to prevent access to North America by any potential hostile power; second, Greenland was a key transit point to Europe; thirdly, Greenland provided crucial meteorological information; and fourthly, Greenland's mineral wealth was of value for the aircraft industry in the USA and Canada".

At the time, little regard was given to the local populations, and many of the indigenous Inuit that inhabited the land where forcibly removed to allow for the establishment of military bases. An example is the Thule Air base, still functioning today. This was allowed thanks to a defence agreement signed in 1941 between the US and Greenland, with the aim of protecting the island (Ackrén & Jakobsen, 2015).

With the end of the war, Denmark took over the control of the island once again, and Greenland became a "non-self-governing territory", a status that lasted until its integration to the Kingdom of Denmark, alongside the Faroe Islands, with the Constitution of 1953. With this constitution, Greenlandic people gained the same rights as the rest of the Danish citizens (Kuokkanen, 2017). In these years Greenland remained important in the relations of the Danish Kingdom with the US, in particular within the sphere of NATO's operations (Ackrén & Jakobsen, 2015).

During the 1950s – 1970s, Greenland saw an increased number of Danes moving to the island, relocation policies being adopted against the local population, and Danish institutions and practices being implemented, which brought about forms of neo-colonialism, especially linked to the economic sphere (Kuokkanen, 2017). This, as will be presented briefly, still taints Greenland's relation with its former coloniser and is the main obstacle to obtaining full independence. A few examples of the neo-colonialist attitude showed by Denmark towards the local Inuit in Greenland were the closure of the mining town of Qullissat, in the 1960s, followed by the forced relocation of its 1,200 local inhabitants, the permission for offshore oil drilling in West Greenland without consulting the population, and the disputed matter of the European Economic Community (ECC) membership. In this case, despite 70% of Greenlanders being against joining what would become the present European Union, the island was forced to become a part of the EEC alongside Denmark, which voted in favour of joining (Kuokkanen, 2017).

After negotiations with the Kingdom of Denmark, and approval both from the Danish parliament and a referendum with 70.1% in favour of it, the Home Rule Act was approved in 1979. This agreement allowed for the "devolution" and "delegation" of authority to Greenland for what concerned certain areas (Kuokkanen, 2017: 182). Greenlander authorities, following this Act, could exercise autonomously their jurisdiction over domestic affairs, taxation, fisheries, planning, trade, church affairs, social welfare, labour market, education, cultural affairs, health, housing, supply of goods, transportation and environmental protection (Kuokkanen, 2017). What was excluded from Greenland's authority, and which remained within the exclusive control of the central Danish authority, were the matters concerning land and resources rights, and foreign, defence, and security policy.

> "(1) The central authorities of the Realm shall have jurisdiction in questions affecting the foreign relations of the Realm.

> (2) Measures under consideration by the home rule authorities which would be of substantial importance for the foreign relations of the Realm, including participation by the Realm in international cooperation, shall be discussed with the central authorities before any decision is taken" (Statsministeriet, 1978: section 11).

The Home Rule system, thus, rendered Kalaallit Nunaat a "special national community within the Kingdom of Denmark" (Grydehøj, 2020: 220). What this meant was that Denmark, even though it gave the island authority over certain areas, still did not recognise the status of Greenland as an actual nation under international law (Grydehøj, 2020).

This was bound to change with the new referendum of 2008, where 75.5% of Greenland's population voted in favour of a further expansion of the self-rule. This translated into the 2009 Self Government Act, which was important for four main reasons. Firstly, Kalaallit Nunaat's areas of jurisdiction were expanded to include land and resource rights. This is important because of the presence of significant mineral resources in the territory of Greenland, that are now made more easily accessible due to the melting of the ice sheets, and that are attracting foreign interests and competition for who will get their hands on them first. Secondly, while the jurisdiction over security and foreign affairs is still in the hands of Denmark, the Kingdom with the new Act has to consult and include Greenland when foreign affairs and security issues concern the island (Kuokkanen, 2017). This confirmed and strengthened a trend in Greenland's attitude towards foreign affair that saw the island gaining gradually more of a say in matters concerning its interests. In fact, since the Home Rule, Greenland started acting more and more like a state in the arena of international diplomacy. An example of this is the independent negotiation undertaken with Brussel to regain control of fisheries exports, at the base of Greenland's economy, that were lost after having to join the EEC with Denmark despite the population being against it (Jacobsen, 2019). The new Self Government Act now allows

Greenland to, "on behalf of the Realm, negotiate and conclude agreements under international law with foreign states and international organisations, including administrative agreements which exclusively concern Greenland and entirely relate to fields of responsibility taken over" (Statsministeriet, 2009: section 12). Such powers of para-diplomacy have allowed Greenland to establish relations with foreign countries, establishing almost-diplomatic representations in the US and Canada, but also in the European Union (Kjærgaard Rasmussen, 2019). Thus, overall, in the words of Kristensen & Rahbek-Clemmensen (2018: 5):

> "The act recognized the Greenlanders as a people and it gave Greenland formal right to pursue an independent foreign policy in policy areas which fell under Greenland's purview, as long as it did not contradict the overall foreign policy of the kingdom".

Thirdly, the 2009 Self-Government Act officially recognises Greenlandic people as people under international law, with the right to self-determination. This is of fundamental importance, since the majority of Kalaallit Nunaat's population are indigenous Inuit peoples: Greenland is the first Arctic country having *de facto* indigenous governance (Kuokkanen, 2017).

> "The interest of Greenland's case is precisely that it has a voice as a national community entirely living within the Arctic and that this voice is largely an indigenous one, unlike the far northern provinces of larger Arctic states which may have only a fraction of the national population and very little direct influence on perceptions and decisions of the central government" (Ackrén & Jakobsen, 2014: 410).

This is also why Greenland has been chosen as a case study in this dissertation, due to its peculiarity in terms of indigenous governance, and its potential in representing a model for indigenous rights and status worldwide.

Last but not least, the Self-Government Act allows Greenland the possibility for future independence, when and if it would be agreed upon and chosen by the Greenlanders themselves.

> "(1) Decision regarding Greenland's independence shall be taken by the people of Greenland. (2) If decision is taken pursuant to subsection (1), negotiations shall commence between the Government and Naalakkersuisut with a view to the introduction of independence for Greenland. […] (4) Independence for Greenland shall imply that Greenland assumes sovereignty over the Greenland territory" (Statsministeriet, 2009: section 21).

However, before independence becomes a reality for Greenland, the island will have to break its economic dependency from Denmark.

Economic security and the environmental security dilemma

Even though Greenland and its Inuit-majority population managed to achieve jurisdiction over many areas of internal affairs and resource management, alongside with a clear path towards the possibility of achieving independence, the economic ties to its former coloniser are still heavying on Greenland-Denmark relations and represent the greater obstacle in the achievement of full independence. In fact, Denmark is providing the island with an annual subsidy of 3.6 billion Danish Kroner (483606000.00 EUR), a block grant that represents around 25% of Greenlandic GDP (Grydehøj, 2020). This aspect of Greenland's self-government is so important that, when talking about security, the island has always tended to focus on economic security over more traditional security policy issues. Since the Cold War, in fact, according to Taagholt & Hansen (2001: 54), "the evolution of security policy in Greenland was subsequently affected to a greater degree by economic, environmental, and ethnic interests than by global concerns". One of the reasons for this could be traced back to the fact that the central Danish government retained the exclusive

competence over foreign affairs and security policy, giving Greenland a taste of it only with the Self Government Act of 2009, still without delegating to the island full authority over these issues (Rasmussen, 2019). The reduced importance given to defence could also be traced back, according to Vittus Qujaukitsoq, Minister of Finance, to the current lack of independence: "Greenland is just one of the world's last colonies, which has not yet become independent. So, what does it mean for the defense of a future Greenland? The short answer is: not so much" (Qujaukitsoq in Rasmussen, 2019: 10).

Hence, Greenland's main interest in closing the gap and achieving independence is that of becoming self-sufficient while expanding its economic base (Kuokkanen, 2017). And here is where the warming climate and its impact on the environment comes into play.

Greenland, in fact, is a territory very rich in rare minerals, oil and gas resources, among the largest in the world, which so far were inaccessible because covered by ice sheets. With climate change, these resources are now becoming more and more accessible, and they appeal not only to Greenland itself, that could use this new economic income to break from its dependence from Denmark, but also to foreign countries that want to get access to the resources' sites for their own economic interests. However, Kalaallit Nunaat finds itself in what could be seen as an environment security dilemma. In fact, on the one hand, Greenland could meet its need of renewed sources of revenue, to break the economic ties impeding full independence, but on the other it should do so "while meeting high environmental and social standards so that the Inuit hunting and fishing culture (which is dependent on healthy natural resources) is not jeopardized" (Kuokkanen, 2017: 188). Indeed, the risk of further contributing to those same practices that are aggravating the climate crisis is high, and this would mean not only a hasting in the pace and impact of climate change, but it would also threaten the traditional livelihoods, practices, and the close relationship of the

Greenlandic Inuit to nature (Ackrén & Jakobsen, 2014). This makes finding a solution to the dilemma harder, since

> "The threats facing Greenland are never just about the rules of Greenlandic politics, economic sustainability, or environmental uniqueness – they are about imagining and ultimately finding a road to independence that supports Greenland as a nation, defined by specific culture, language, and practices" (Jacobsen & Gad, 2018: 48).

An example of this dilemma has been the case of the uranium mine of Kuannersuit, near the town of Narsaq. This mine, projected to bring in $1.59 billion USD, was favoured for the potential of bringing in foreign investment and increase local employment, that would diversify Greenland's revenue and contribute in the long run to making it more economically independent (Kieval, 2018). Kuannersuit, also known as Kvanefjeld, hosts one of the world's largest deposits of rare-earth elements still undeveloped outside of the territory of China (Moraca, 2021awesome). However, the negative environmental impact of mining uranium is severe, and in addition to this there is the issue of interfering with traditional Inuit practices and endanger their rights to land, natural resources, and health. After years of debating, in November 2021 the Greenlandic Parliament approved a near-complete ban on uranium mining, arguing that mining in the area would kick up radioactive dust that would endanger the nearby town of Narsaq and farming and grazing areas, posing a great threat to the environment and to the health of the local inhabitants (McGwin, 2021).

There is one more aspect to consider, linked to Greenland's dreams for independence and the relation with environmental security. The renewed availability of resources in the island is very attractive for Greenland, as it has been presented, for the implications that more autonomous revenues have for its independence. However, this may complicate even further the environmental security dilemma, since supporters of independence may be less likely to pay

attention to the environmental implications of accessing the newly available resources and even further (and most severely) risking to haste climate change and endanger the traditional livelihoods and the health of indigenous Greenlanders (Ackrén & Jakobsen, 2014).

Indigenous governance or continuous colonial control?

Greenland is an interesting case study for its peculiar status of a *de facto* indigenous governance, which is "at one and the same time a sub-set of international/global politics, an arena of Danish power politics, and a laboratory for climate change, which is presented as an opportunity, eventually, for Greenlandic statehood" (Ackrén & Jakobsen, 2014: 405). The achievements of the indigenous population of the island are often seen as a model for indigenous rights and representation worldwide, especially since the possibility of achieving full independence from the Danish Kingdom in the future is very much a reality. However, if it is true that Greenland still depends on Denmark from an economic point of view, it is also true that Denmark itself depends on Greenland, in what has been defined by Jacobsen (2019: 171) as a "reverse dependency": "Greenland's geographic location and membership of the Danish Realm is the only thing legitimizing Denmark's Arctic state status" (ibid.). Denmark can count itself among the Arctic Eight precisely thanks to Greenland, and this allows the island to have a sort of "Arctic advantage" when negotiating with the Kingdom (ibid.).

It is also true that, despite being a *de facto* indigenous governance, Greenland's authority still remains only a delegated authority, and according to Kuokkanen (2017: 191, emphasis added) "it has been argued that self-government with delegated authority is not indigenous self-determination but merely self-administration *under colonial control*". According to several people that this author interviewed for her research, "indirect, subtle colonial control continues in the presence of a large number of Danish civil servants who come with mainstream, Western institutional and cultural practices and priorities" (ibid.).

While it is true that Greenlanders, who are mostly indigenous Inuit, have achieved independent authority over resources and internal affairs, with the possibility of having a say in the foreign, external affairs matters when they concern Greenland's interests, they also have not implemented any change to existing colonial structures and frameworks (Kuokkanen, 2017). In addition to this, as it was presented at the start of the discussion, they aspire to become an independent state according to the traditional, Westphalian, colonial-like concept of sovereignty. In the words of Grydehøj (2020: 230): "Kalaallit Nunaat hosts a highly developed system of Indigenous politics, embedded however in a Danish governmental and bureaucratic structure and held to Danish standards".

7. *“Mas amas diehtá maid oarri borrá”*[1]

In the analysis of the three case studies that have been presented above certain similar, shared characteristics emerge between the three countries and their approach to indigenous security interests. At the same time, some different elements allow for a comparison between them. In this last chapter, first the similarities will be analysed, for then moving on to the elements that distinguish the three realities of Canada, Norway, and Greenland in their relationship with indigenous Inuit and Sámi.

Shared characteristics

First of all, what the three case studies share with each other and with the rest of the Arctic countries is that military, more traditional security issues fall into the background, while other kinds of issues become the most problematic and are addressed as priorities in the countries’ Arctic strategies and policy choices. In particular,

> “Rather than military danger, most current challenges and threats for Arctic inhabitants and communities originate from the interactions between climate change, environmental degradation, rapid economic development, industrialisation, integration into global markets, erosion of cultural traditions, disputes over political autonomy, or conflicts over land use” (Hossain et al., 2017: 53).

In recent years more than ever, climate change has stood at the forefront of Arctic state’s security interests, due to its impact on all other spheres of security. For this reason, environmental security has achieved a position of importance in the strategies of the cases under analysis, while at the same time (at least on

[1] Translated from Sámi: “how can a stranger know what a squirrel eats”. According to Gaski (2010), it refers often to the “Scandinavian people who are always supposed to understand what is best for the Sami”.

paper) Norway and Canada have recognised the importance of consulting indigenous peoples and their experience in dealing with the consequences of climate change, due to their close and personal relation with the natural environment. The case of Greenland is a bit different, since security policy is still under Danish authority and the majority of Greenlandic population is indigenous. According to some (see Kuokkanen, 2017), this already means that the indigenous perspectives drive the Nuuk government's approach.

In the recent Danish *Foreign and Security Policy Strategy* (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2022: 23) they recognise the importance of maintaining sustainable development in the Arctic by working alongside Greenland:

> "Together with Greenland and the Faroe Islands, and with the USA as our most important security policy ally, the Government will work to ensure stability and peaceful, sustainable development in the Arctic and the North Atlantic to the benefit of everyone in the region".

In the *Norwegian Government's Arctic Policy* (Norwegian Government, 2021: 22) the importance of indigenous contributions is expressed quite clearly:

> "It is important that indigenous and local communities are able to participate meaningfully in international climate change efforts, to demonstrate what they have to contribute and highlight the importance of traditional knowledge and their own efforts to address climate change. The Sámediggi is consulted as part of the Norwegian preparations for the international climate negotiations, and is often represented on the Norwegian delegation".

And the same is true for the *Canada's Arctic and Northern Policy Framework* (Government of Canada, 2019a):

> "Territorial and provincial governments and Indigenous partners are regularly engaged in the development of Canada's international Arctic

> policy through a well-established mechanism, and are often members of the Canadian delegation to international meetings and negotiations. Canada strongly believes that the rules-based international order in the Arctic and the North has been beneficial to national and global interests by helping to foster peace, security and stability for the region".

Alongside this, the three states all share an increased interest in the Arctic region itself, and in their being among the Arctic states. As shown above, for example, Denmark has a great interest in maintaining some sort of control over Greenland, since the Kingdom's status as an Arctic state is due to the position of the island.

They also share the presence of indigenous peoples who strive to maintain their traditional, nature-based livelihoods and practices, which are at the centre of their own security perspectives. As mentioned previously, in all three cases presented (and in most of the Arctic countries more generally), the state borders do not coincide with the sociological borders of their indigenous populations (Greaves, 2020). This element complicates the relation between the national governments and the indigenous peoples because the policies directed towards protecting the security of their national territories often are the same element that put in jeopardise the security of the transnational indigenous peoples. In fact, both the Sámi and the Inuit transcend national borders and are present in the territories of different nations, as it can be observed in *figure 2* in the previous sections of this dissertation. This is but one of the structures inherited from the colonial period that still weights on the indigenous peoples, who themselves recognise how much it actually impacts them, and that this division is an obstacle to their self-determination:

> "(we Inuit) like the Sami we are divided into four different states, for the important thing to understand is that almost all indigenous peoples were *one people* before colonization started and those lines on the maps drawing the borders between the countries actually always divided

> indigenous peoples into different states. The peoples existed long before the States came along. And that is a simple fact that what most of us are trying to do nowadays is to reconnect, reunite with our own peoples, with our own families, cross-border and trying to better our what in UN terms is called self-determination" (Kuupik Kleist, former premier of Greenland talking at the Arctic Circle Conference, 2020).

These peoples are endangered by climate change, which they consider as the main threat to their security and survival.

> "The borders of the eight Arctic states are not able to confine the varied and continuously changing impacts of climate change that are affecting environmental, human as well as national security; the lands and rights of Indigenous peoples are intimately connected to resource use and development by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, crossing local, regional and national interests" (Gjørv, 2020: 70)

The threat that the changing climate poses on indigenous peoples of the Arctic is closely connected to the cultural pressures that these communities are facing, which are severely impacting their societal security (Hossain et al., 2017). Such cultural pressures have their origins in the shared colonial history that the Arctic countries and their indigenous communities have experienced, despite the differences among the colonial pasts of the various countries and how they have shaped the respective national building processes: "the conditions of relative insecurity experienced by Indigenous peoples are derivative of their experiences of colonization and political subordination to others" (Greaves, 2020: 373).

For example, in a speech at the Arctic Circle conference on "Arctic-Global Indigenous Dialogue on Indigenous Guardianship and Self-Governance", Kuupik Kleist, former Prime Minister of Greenland, pointed out that although Greenland Inuit are in some ways ahead of the Sámi in their political agency, they share with them the insecurities caused by colonialism:

> “To sum it up I think it's fair to say that our challenges and a huge problems that we are facing are those of *colonialism*. What we've been left with, even though we had 30 years of home rule, is high degree of abuse of every kind, very very low degree of education, poor infrastructure, a huge and urgent need for investments of all kinds and to build up our societal institutions. So, on paper, you could say we are some way ahead of the Sámi but in reality I think we are all facing the same issues” (Arctic Circle, 2020. Emphasis added.).

As has been presented in the analysis of the cases of Canada, Norway, and Greenland, despite the formal move from colonial relations towards a more inclusive framework for indigenous peoples, the residues of the colonial histories still weigh over the relationship of these three Arctic states with their indigenous inhabitants. This mainly translates into a marginalisation of indigenous peoples and their perspectives, while often pursuing security interests that are in opposition with indigenous needs and that threaten their survival:

> “While Arctic governments have principally pursued state-centric conceptions of security defined around territorial sovereignty and defense and maximizing the economic benefits of natural resource extraction, Indigenous peoples across the region identify their security as being threatened by the direct and indirect effects of climate change, natural resource extraction, and cultural assimilation” (Greaves, 2020: 364).

While it is true that, at varying degrees, in all the three case studies presented in this dissertation, indigenous peoples do exercise some forms of autonomy and political freedom, from the analysis has emerged that all three countries show lingering instances of colonial structures, policy frameworks, and dynamics, and that

> “Despite the progress that has been made by settler-colonial governments and legal authorities in terms of acknowledging and respecting Indigenous

rights and titles, the relationships between Indigenous peoples and national governments remain structured by the dominance of settler-colonial values, institutions, and interests" (Greaves, 2020: 367).

Last but not least, a shared aspect the three case studies under analysis have in common is the struggle between economic security versus environmental security and its impact on indigenous peoples. In fact, as presented before, these three countries have a greater availability of natural resources now, made more easily accessible by the consequences of climate change and its impact on the ice caps. This, however, raises the dilemma of whether or not it is worth accessing these resources, because of the environmental impact of natural resources extraction and their use and the risk of hastening climate change and aggravating the climate crisis. Moreover, the location of these resources is usually in indigenous territories, and accessing and using these resources would mean greater insecurities for the locals inhabitants who live off the land and are closely connected to nature, and whose security interests build around climate change as the main threat to their security and survival.

Differences and peculiar characteristics

Despite the common characteristics analysed above, there are several noteworthy elements that distinguish the cases of Canada, Norway, and Greenland. The main element that emerges from the analysis of these three countries is the level of autonomy that each of these states has invested upon their indigenous communities over time. Grydehøj (2020) paints a very useful picture to understand the difference between these countries: while all three are indigenous arctic territories, Sápmi does not have autonomy, even though in Norway the Sámi have the Sámi Parliament in which they can express their opinions and through which they are granted some procedural rights. In the Canadian case, Nunavut has achieved autonomy, but it did not obtain a path towards achieving independence. Greenland, on the other hand, is an indigenous arctic territory that not only has autonomy, but it can also count on a legally

established mechanism to eventually achieve independence. This puts Greenland in the position "of the most far-reaching self-determination arrangements of all Indigenous peoples worldwide" (Kuokkanen, 2017: 191). Greenland is also ahead for what concerns security issues and the right to have a say in those matters, thanks to the new Self-Government rule of 2009, under which Denmark has now an obligation to consult Kalaallit Nunaat when security matters are of its direct concern. On the other hand, the Nunavut authorities still lag behind in their new governance system, despite the achievements made over time to gain control over their lands. However, both Greenland and Canada's Inuit have an advantage over the Scandinavian Sámi in terms of the ownership over the lands they occupy and live off of: while both Inuit countries, in virtue of Land Claim Agreements and Self-Government provisions, have ownership of their territories and rights over their resources, this is not the case for the Sámi of Norway. This makes it even more complex for the Sámi to claim their rights to use of the land for maintaining traditional practices and to ensure their survival, which are both elements that are at the core of Norwegian Sámi's security interests, as it has been presented above.

Another fundamental difference between Greenland, on one hand, and Norway and Canada on the other, is their indigenous population's conception of sovereignty, which has an impact on how the three indigenous peoples pursue their security interests and on how they advocate for them with their respective national governments and the international indigenous fora. The difference among their conceptions of sovereignty is strictly interconnected to the difference in autonomy and potential independence that has been mentioned above. In fact, while Norway and Canada's indigenous communities share a similar, indigenous conception of sovereignty, Greenland's Inuit view sovereignty closer to the traditional, Westphalian conception of the state, one that is shared by the national governments of the Arctic states and traditionally based on a "either/or" definition based on territorial claims and control over one's borders (Jacobsen, 2020: 172). The reasons behind this could be traced

back to the tangible possibility, for Greenland, to become an independent state, and to its peculiar status as a geographically separated polity.

On the other hand,

> "From an Indigenous perspective of sovereignty, many of the assumptions of Westphalian and Western sovereignty act as a Eurocentric and dispossessive tool that has been used to colonize and subjugate Indigenous People. Indigenous sovereignty, in contrast, takes a broader and more relational understanding of social and cultural factors" (Gricius, 2021: 3).

Such a deep difference might be due to the Inuit in Greenland consisting in the majority of the population, versus Inuit and Sámi in Canada and Norway being minorities within their respective countries. This means, according to some government officials interviewed by Kuokkanen (2017: 184), that "in negotiating the self-government agreement, there was no discussion of Inuit values or governance; there was no public or political discourse on the topic before self-rule and has been none since", and again that "with Inuit constituting a large majority of Greenland's population, it was firmly believed that the self-rule government would have an Inuit character and that it would constitute de facto Indigenous governance". How sovereignty is conceived has an impact on the security of indigenous peoples because, if recognised, it will allow them agency over how to respond to those issues that they themselves identify as a threat to their security. For example,

> "Indigenous conceptions of sovereignty are social and cultural ways of understanding community – and thus sovereignty is often linked to an ability to carry out normal life activities. Therefore, shared sovereignty in the Arctic can reflect that, acknowledging that geopolitical competition and increased oil and gas extraction are threats to that sovereignty" (Gricius, 2021: 15).

Here, Gricius connects the indigenous concept of sovereignty to the indigenous ability to practice traditional livelihoods, that allows them to experience a sense of security. This security is instead jeopardised by geopolitical competition and resource extractions that pose a threat to indigenous sovereignty over their lands.

The issue of sovereignty distinguishes the three case studies quite deeply. In fact, while Norwegian and Canadian indigenous peoples question the legitimacy of their former colonisers' sovereignty, Greenlanders join in on their former coloniser's sovereignty by claiming their own state through the same paradigm. In other words, "on the one hand we have the construction of a transnational identity, used to achieve greater power over local governance, while on the other we have the construction of a bounded national identity, seeking a territorially based state sovereignty" (Gerhardt, 2018: 115).

These are just some of the differences that have emerged during the research on the three case studies. These differences are likely due to the unique histories of the relations between the central government and their indigenous populations and the changes in the dynamics over time. Such dynamics, as well, are bound to change in the near future, due to the greater importance given to indigenous voices both worldwide and at the national level, as well as the worsening of the climate crisis and the changing security dynamics of global security due to the recent events involving the Russian Federation.

8. Concluding remarks

This dissertation has focused on the Arctic region, the northernmost region of the world which comprises the territories of eight states, and which has gained renewed attention in recent times in international relations and security studies due to the impact of climate change on its environments and the availability of resources previously inaccessible. It has presented concepts of environmental

security within the context of this region, and how climate change has moved from a background issue to the forefront of the security interests of Arctic states. Before this, the region had been usually approached through more traditional security lenses, due to its military importance during the Cold War.

In this renewed attention, however, the indigenous populations and their own security interests have usually been ignored. This dissertation is meant to fill part of this gap in security studies by focusing on indigenous peoples, their relationship with the natural environment, and the importance of climate change and its impact on the Arctic for their security and survival. It does so by employing a post-colonial view of the relationship between Arctic states and their indigenous peoples, investigating whether colonial mechanisms have been overcome or they still inform the governments' approaches to their indigenous inhabitants.

In particular, this dissertation has focused on the cases of the Arctic countries of Canada, Norway, and Greenland/Denmark. For the case of Canada, the analysis has shown how the Canadian approach to the Arctic has changed with the different governments over the years. From the Harper's conservative government's "use it or lose it" approach to the Arctic which completely disregarded the indigenous inhabitants and their interests, the 2015 Liberal Government has assumed a different attitude towards the indigenous communities, based on consultation and co-development. Among the justifications for this change, according to the government itself, were the challenges posed by climate change and the recognition for developing solutions alongside with the indigenous peoples and their traditional knowledge. However, despite the proven shift in the Canadian rhetoric towards indigenous peoples, as it has been presented in the course of this dissertation, evidence shows that previous colonial attitudes are still present in the government's approach to its indigenous inhabitants.

Despite the difference in the Norwegian colonial experience and the fact that it mainly managed to dodge critical colonial analysis, Norway has been presented as another former colonial power that has suppressed indigenous peoples' voices through what have been defined as Norwegianisation policies. This dissertation has shown how in spite of the changes and improvements in the relationship between the Sámi and the Norwegian government, that has concretised in constitutional provisions recognising them, specific legislation, and the establishment of the Sámi Parliament, instances of old colonial habits still impact their relationship. These emerge, for example, in the green policies of the Norwegian governments, which are justified by the fight against climate change, but which are seen as colonial, "green" impositions by the local populations.

Finally, the case of Greenland has been presented as a peculiar case for its *de facto* indigenous governance which could represent a model of self-government and self-determination for indigenous peoples worldwide. However, as it has been presented in the chapter dedicated to Kalaallit Nunaat, the island is itself not immune from the ambiguity that characterises the previous two cases. In fact, despite being made up by nearly 90% indigenous peoples, the island still has Westphalian aspirations to become a proper state, based on Danish unchanged and colonial structures. This dream, however, is connected largely to the achievement of economic independence from the Kingdom of Denmark, which, as presented, has the risk of relegating environmental security considerations to the background, further endangering indigenous traditional practices and livelihoods.

After this brief overview of what the single chapters of this dissertation have presented, it is worth moving on to some final consideration on what has emerged from this research project.

During the research it has emerged that indigenous peoples of the Arctic not only are the ones who suffer the most for the consequences of climate change,

which *existentially* threaten their security, but that they are, paradoxically, also threatened by their national governments' steps which are aimed at fighting climate change. This is clearly exemplified by the case of the Norwegian Sámi, as it has been presented in previous chapters. In fact, as expressed by Sámi leaders, they often find themselves impacted by attempts of the Norwegian government to develop greener solutions, as for example wind power plants, in what they themselves define as "green colonialism".

This gets me back to the second important element that emerged from the research. The insecurities experienced by the indigenous peoples under investigation have their root causes in the experiences of colonisation of their past, and the residues of these colonial pasts that still linger and taint their relationship with the national governments of the territories they inhabit. In fact, through the analysis of the of Canada, Norway, and Greenland, it has emerged that in spite of the greater involvement that has been recognised to the indigenous peoples of these Arctic countries, and their achievements in terms of varying degrees and forms of political agency and autonomous governance, colonial attitudes and structures are still present and inform the relationship between the indigenous communities and the national governments of the territories they occupy. And the environmental security sector is one where such colonial residues clearly appear.

Here, the traditional indigenous knowledge would be the most relevant voice to be heard when discussing the impacts of climate change and the different ways to adapt to it, due to the deep connection between indigenous peoples and the lands they live off of and their resilience in surviving and adapting to the changing conditions they are experiencing. However, often these Arctic states only claim to include indigenous perspectives and their knowledge on paper. Despite this approach may be justified by the fact that the indigenous traditional knowledge is not based on scientific evidence and could jeopardise the support of the governmental policies among the majority population, in

practice it contributes to the exclusion of indigenous voices. An example of this, as it was presented previously, was the result of the Indigenous Climate Action's investigation on the Canadian federal climate plans, from which emerged that Canada failed to include indigenous peoples' perspectives during the decision-making processes of these plans.

Contributing to this is the debate between economic profit versus environmental security, since the change in the Earth's climate has made available previously inaccessible resources and opened up new routes for commercial activities. This new potential for economic gains is of great interest to the governments of Canada, Norway, and Greenland/Denmark, as well as to the other Arctic countries, while at the same time attracting the interests of non-Arctic countries that want to get their hands on one piece of the cake. However, this raises environmental security issues, since accessing new resources might greatly contribute to hastening climate change and making the situation worse. And in this, indigenous peoples are once again the most severely affected, since those resources are often present in their traditional territories or in the lands where they practice their traditional activities (such as reindeer herding and fishing), and accessing them would mean endangering their livelihoods and infringing their societal security.

What this dissertation has not done, for lack of space and mainly linguistic limitations, and which will be interesting for further research to tackle would be to further explore indigenous perspectives, expanding the comparison to different countries and indigenous realities. For example, it could be interesting to evaluate similarities and differences of the Inuit and the Sámi across all the circumpolar states they inhabit. In the case of the Sámi, for example, this would mean comparing the governmental approaches of the Scandinavian countries, Norway, Sweden, and Finland, with that of the Russian Federation. As mentioned at the start of the discussion, this is currently complicated by the ongoing war of Russia against Ukraine, and the potential

impact that the contemporary events unfolding in the history of the world will have on the Arctic region's internal and external dynamics and on the status of indigenous voices.

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