

Fulbright Arctic Initiative Technical Report: Arctic Security and Cooperation

Community Engagement in Arctic Security Policy

Co-creating policy with stake- and rights-holders

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INTRODUCTION

At the national scale, Arctic security is generally understood in terms of military security. The focus on military security often draws attention away from other essential and pressing aspects of Arctic security, including food, environmental, energy, gender-based, health, economic, and cultural security. Each form of security, while categorized separately, is inextricably linked through all levels of government. Indeed, recent national Arctic strategies acknowledge other forms of security but actionable recommendations on how to concretely engage Arctic communities are still required. Communities within the Arctic acknowledge military security issues but are understandably more concerned with the other interconnected aspects of security.

Arctic communities are rarely included and engaged in developing conventional security policies that directly impact their lives, communities, culture, and human security. This includes long-term strategic decisions on national defense policy, cooperation with other states' military forces and the development of critical infrastructure to underpin policy decisions (e.g. ports, airports, roads, telecommunications, housing, energy sources, food supplies, medical needs and search and rescue). Creating such Arctic security policies without the involvement of affected communities has largely resulted in implementation problems and increased tension and conflict between communities and all levels of government.

The active participation of Arctic communities, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, in developing and implementing Arctic security policy results in stronger, more comprehensive policy. It does so by strengthening shared ownership of those policies and by reducing opportunity and transaction costs that arise from communication failures between government and communities.

RESEARCH FOCUS

The main objective of this research was to identify how security policy can be successfully co-created collaboratively with Arctic communities. The main research questions were:

- How do different Arctic communities view and think about security?

- What collaborative methods result in successful policy making?
- Do these methods vary between communities?

METHODOLOGY

To these ends the project team used a mixed-methods qualitative approach to capture multiple community perspectives. Workshops in the form of town hall meetings were designed to facilitate multi-level discussion between national and regional government leaders, local leaders, and citizens regarding a contemporary security topic that is particular to that locale or region. Interviews, conducted on an ad hoc basis, captured security perspectives at the individual level to validate current research and provide amplifying data for workshop insights. Data collection proceeded during the workshops in town hall meetings and/or moderated panels. For data synthesis the project team aggregated historical information with the qualitative workshop data and ad hoc interviews to frame the research conclusions and associated policy recommendations.

CASES

Over the course of 18 months, the Fulbright Arctic Initiative III Security and Cooperation working group facilitated eight town hall-style meetings across the Arctic (*Fig. 1*) to identify key factors for security-centric community engagement. Each meeting centered upon one of three distinct security-centric topics: military security concerns, climate security and permafrost changes, and local security policy-making.

- [Iceland, Keflavik: Societal and military security concerns \(bases\)](#)
- [Canada, Inuvik, Northwest Territories: Military security concerns](#)
- [Canada, Aklavik, Northwest Territories: Climate security and permafrost changes](#)
- [Kingdom of Denmark, Nuuk, Greenland: Security policy making and engagement](#)
- [Norway, Longyearbyen, Svalbard: Local security concerns \(tension Norway-Russia\)](#)
- [Russia, Dirin, Sakha Republic: Climate security and permafrost changes](#)
- [United States of America, Anchorage, Alaska: Local security policy engagement](#)
- [Norway, Tromsø, Troms & Finnmark: Military security concerns \(increased presence\)](#)

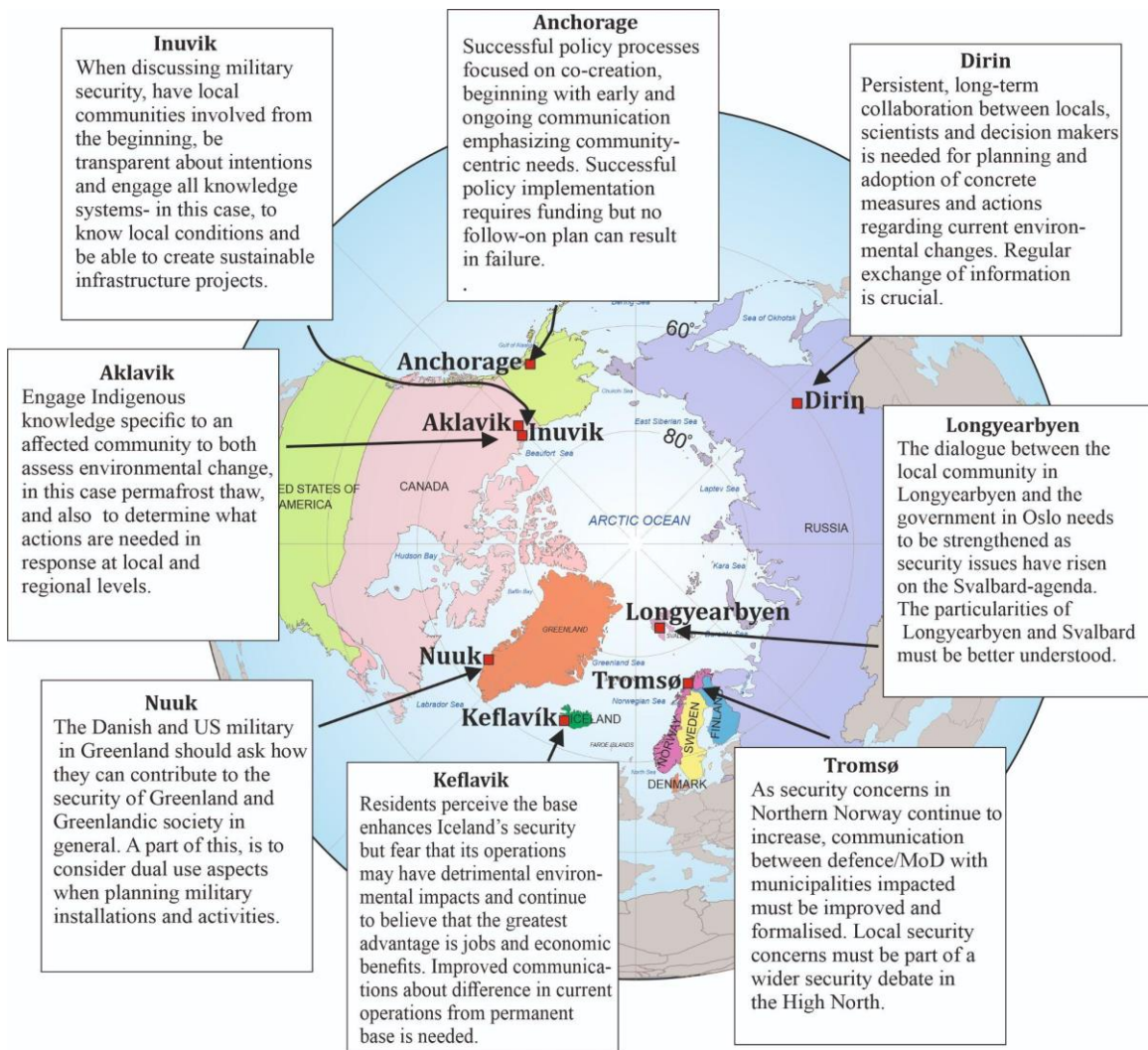


Fig. 1 - Map of the eight case workshops in six Arctic states

Iceland

Keflavík (Reykjanesbær)

Hljómahöll, June 7, 2022

Bringing back the base? Local perceptions of security around the Keflavik airport

A town hall event engaging interested members of the local population in a discussion of national and societal security related topics. People were recruited through participation in a survey conducted on related topics in the spring of 2022. The aim of the event was to assess the local population's sense of engagement in policy-making with regard to security, as well as to gauge their interest and awareness of regional and geopolitical developments in security. The town hall

was prepared by Dr. Silja Bára Ómarsdóttir, professor at the Faculty of Political Science at the University of Iceland, with the support of the University's Institute of International Affairs.

General Methodology

Participants were recruited from among the approximately 600 respondents of a survey on security conducted by Prof. Ómarsdóttir in collaboration with the Social Science Research Institute (SSRI) at the University of Iceland. The group was first briefed by three introductions, from a local MP, the head of the Icelandic Coast Guard's operations at the Keflavik Airport, and the executive director of the Regional Development Agency of the Reykjanes peninsula. Participants were then divided into two groups, each hosted two facilitators, and asked to elaborate on questions from the survey.

Participants

Survey respondents were recruited by the SSRI from a sample drawn from registered phone numbers in the area surrounding the Keflavik international airport, where a NATO military base is operated. 1804 individuals were contacted and invited to respond by phone or through a web link. 608 individuals responded to the survey, or 34% of the sample. 315 were male, 293 female, 71 were aged 18-29, 150 aged 30-44, 162 were aged 45-59, and 225 were over 60 years old. The bulk of the respondents reside in Reykjanesbær (412), but they also lived in Grindavík (86), Suðurnesjabær (79), and Vogar (31). The participants were then asked if they would be willing to participate in a focus group discussion in early June. Around 100 people gave their contact information, but despite repeated encouragements to attend, only 15 people attended the town hall meeting where the focus group discussions were held. The discussions were recorded after gaining verbal approval from all participants, transcribed, and analyzed by Dr. Ómarsdóttir.

Discussion

An overwhelming majority of survey respondents agreed that an operating military base at the Keflavik Airport would enhance Iceland's security (64% somewhat or strongly agreed) and they also felt that permanent presence of military forces would enhance Iceland's security (67% somewhat or strongly agreed). This attitude was clearly reflected in the town hall discussions, where people made comments such as "without a base, just anybody can show up - and who might that be? We know what we have [with NATO allied militaries], but what could we get?". Others indicated concerns that "without a base, a small contingent, 100 people, could take over Iceland". There were nonetheless strong indications that a permanent military presence of the type and scale that was in place in Iceland until 2006 would not be necessary. Some suggested it was "old-fashioned" or "out-of-date" to have a formal base; they wondered whether a multi-national NATO base might be operated differently than a US only base, such as the one that they knew in the past.

Despite the strong belief that military presence or an operational base would enhance Iceland's security, town hall participants also indicated that there were some drawbacks, in particular with

regard to noise, pollution, and societal impact. A small majority of survey respondents indicated that they felt permanent military presence would negatively affect the area's environmental security. The town hall participants mostly referred to past experiences, reflecting on areas that remain polluted and had not been cleaned up after the departure of the US military. Many also referred to the high rate of specific cancers in the area, something that has not yet been fully investigated - however, less than a third of the survey respondents believed that military operations negatively affected their health (30% somewhat or strongly agreed). They did, for the most part, believe that higher environmental standards would be upheld today, that measures are now in place to ensure that these patterns would not be repeated.

The strongest perceived benefit of the military remains the positive economic impact it is perceived to have on the area, with an overwhelming majority agreeing that permanent military presence would enhance the area's economic security (79% somewhat or strongly agree). This was consistently affirmed by the town hall participants, who again drew mostly on past experiences, where adulthood was marked by two options (at least for men); "working at the base or working at sea". This is particularly interesting, as economic data suggests that the area was actually depressed economically while the US military base was in full operations, but after tourism boomed in the last decade, economic growth has surpassed other regions of the country. It was not only employment creation, however, that was mentioned, but also funding of infrastructure projects such as the geothermal power in the region that was considered a positive outcome of having had the military present.

Despite these generally positive attitudes, only half of the survey respondents were in favor of the US bringing back the base (50% somewhat or strongly agreed). Most of the town hall respondents appeared to feel the same way, they indicated that a "base in a box" would be better, and seemed to like the "heel-to-toe" presence. But having a presence was clearly favored, in particular as the survey and town hall were conducted after Russia's invasion of Ukraine - as one participant said "the war in Ukraine shows that international laws are not respected," suggesting that a small country like Iceland needed more protection than the rule of law can provide.



The event at Hljómahöll. Photo: Susie Crate

Policy Considerations

The region around the Keflavik airport has unique characteristics with regard to its economy, demographic composition, educational background and more. The area is highly integrated with the capital region when it comes to employment, but residents don't feel capital region policies extend to them. The survey results and town hall discussion indicate that more communication/dissemination of information is needed if people are to understand the role of the military presence in the region. In particular, the different impact the current model has on the local economy than the permanent base had until 2006 appears to create misunderstandings and potentially problematic expectations. Furthermore, residents' concerns about the negative environmental legacy of the US military base need to be addressed thoroughly and seriously.

Kingdom of Denmark

Greenland

University of Greenland (Ilisimatusarfik), Nuuk, August 26, 2022

The aim of the workshop was to discuss *how to better engage local communities in national decision-making processes on security*. The workshop was part of a larger workshop on Greenland-Iceland Research Cooperation that took place on 25-26 August 2022.

The workshop was prepared and led by Professor Silja Bára Ómarsdóttir and Chief Counsellor Peter W.L. Linde from the Fulbright Arctic Initiative and Assistant Professor Rasmus Leander Nielsen the Centre for Foreign & Security Policy, Nasiffik at Ilisimatusarfik (the University of Greenland).

The main purpose of the workshop was to test and validate some of the draft policy recommendations prepared by the FAI scholars.

If funding allows it, Nasiffik at Ilisimatusarfik intends to carry out a larger workshop in the fall of 2023 with broader participation from the Greenlandic society.

General Methodology

The workshop was divided into two sessions. The first session focused on overall security concerns and the second session focused on developing ideas for engagement of local communities in national decision-making processes on security. Both sessions were opened with introductory remarks from the organizers. Afterwards, informal roundtable discussions were carried out based on handed out questions. The roundtable discussions were followed up by plenary discussions.

English was chosen as the working language of the workshop. The optimal/preferred option would have been to carry out the workshop with simultaneous translation between Danish, Greenlandic and English. However, the limited budget did not make that possible.

In order to promote open and informal discussions Chatham House rules were applied.

Participants

Invitations for the workshop were targeted at key stakeholders in the Greenlandic society. Approximately 30 people participated in the workshop. The participants were a mix of members of the Greenlandic Parliament (Inatsisartut) and the Danish Parliament (Folketinget), students, academia, NGOs etc. In addition, there were several participants from the Icelandic research community due to the link to the workshop on Greenland-Iceland Research Cooperation.

Discussion

Session I – overall security concerns

Traditional security-related concerns is not an issue, which is high on the agenda in Greenlandic society. However, the new geopolitical situation after Russia's invasion of Ukraine has drawn some attention to the military presence in Greenland.

Some voices welcome the overall protection of Greenland coming from the Danish and especially the US military plus NATO. However, at the same time there is reluctance to increase the actual military presence in Greenland and the Arctic, because many people in Greenland do not want to contribute to increasing tension in the region and thereby becoming a target of military conflict.

Others suggest converting the military presence in Greenland into tasks carried out by the police and a local coast guard – with inspiration from Iceland. According to them, the Danish Military should no longer be present in Greenland, but the US Military and NATO should still be responsible for the overall protection of Greenland, including aerial surveillance.

There are also some concerns regarding the environmental impact of the military presence in Greenland – especially regarding toxic waste from abandoned military stations that hasn't been properly taken care of. This must be cleaned up and in the future, the environmental impact on the environment must be minimized.

Session II – local engagement in national decision-making processes on security

There is a general need to raise the level of awareness on security in Greenland. As a starting point, this requires more information to the Greenlandic civil society. It is difficult to involve the public in the decision making if there isn't a common knowledge base and vocabulary to build on.

The Danish Military is present in Greenland by virtue of the Joint Arctic Command (JACO). JACO is using Facebook to inform the public about their activities. This initiative is seen as a step in the right direction, but much more can be done. There is a need to create more sources of information, and it is also important that other stakeholders get involved – like researchers.

There is also a need to raise awareness about security issues at political level in Greenland. It is important that the political decision makers have the same level of information that the formal decision makers have in Denmark. The Greenlandic decision makers must also define a vision or a way forward in order to take ownership when it comes to security issues – otherwise Denmark will continue to have the upper hand. The Danish decision makers must also avoid a deficit-based approach when engaging with Greenlandic counterparts.

Language and language barriers play a very large role in Greenland. Both in a literal sense, but also when it comes to using terms and references. It is important that information is provided in both Danish and Greenlandic, and it is equally important that it is possible to engage in Greenlandic when reaching out to the political decision makers.

Traditionally, the formal decision makers in Denmark and the Danish Military have focused their own interests in Greenland and in the Arctic. The time has come to turn this upside down and ask

how the Danish and US military in Greenland can contribute to the security of Greenland and Greenlandic society in general. It is important to consider dual use aspects when planning military installations and activities.

JACO should put more focus on engaging with Greenlandic civil society and thereby creating ownership within the population. Using local contractors is a way of increasing ownership.

The Police in Greenland is mentioned as an institution, which is very integrated into Greenlandic society. The work carried out by the police is seen as very relevant and necessary for the society to function. Furthermore, the police has managed to hire many Greenlandic-speaking officers and has also created a police academy in Greenland with the same educational requirements as in Denmark.

In 2024 JACO will open a 5-month training course in preparedness and response targeted at young Greenlanders. This training course could contribute to raising the educational level in Greenland and in the long term, it could also help to integrate the military better into the Greenlandic society.

Policy Considerations

The workshop provided some very valuable ideas on how to better engage local communities in national decision-making processes on security – both regarding Greenland and perhaps also across the Arctic.

The main policy recommendations that can be passed on from the workshop are the following:

- Increase the level of information from decision makers to the local communities and local decision makers.
- Be aware of language barriers. Local stakeholders should be able to receive and communicate messages in their own language.
- Increase focus on the needs and interest of the local communities – e.g. take dual use capacities into consideration.
- Increase ownership within the population – e.g. by using local contractors and by training and employing the local youth in the military service.



The event at Ilisimatusarfik, Nuuk. Photo: Peter Wilhelm Lund Linde

Canada

Inuvik, Northwest Territories

Nihtat Gwich'in Council, September 20, 2022

Arctic Sovereignty and Security: A Role for Inuvik?

This town hall was organized during the Fulbright Arctic Initiative's visit to Canada's Northwest Territories, in cooperation with the Nihtat Gwich'in Council. While a few questions were raised at the outset, the one that set the overall tone of the discussion was: Given the Russian aggression in Ukraine, how has that changed our life here?

Considering the increased military (in)security due to global events, the Canadian government has signaled its intention to extend the airstrip at the Inuvik airport so the area can accommodate greater military presence. This, in turn, has generated local discussion about the implications of such an expanded military presence. To understand local viewpoints, we organized a Community Town Hall with four speakers including Clarence Wood, Mayor of Inuvik, Todd Orvitz, CAO of the Inuvialuit Regional Council, and two of the Fulbright scholars to lend viewpoints from their countries, Silja Bára Ómarsdóttir of Iceland and Andreas Østhagen of Norway. Invitations went

out to the community at large to attend via Facebook, which is the main communication mode that people look to for local events.

General Methodology

The moderator, Tom Weegar, introduced the audience to the four speakers and explained that he would allow them each five minutes to respond to each of three questions, after which he would open the discussion up to the audience.

Participants

The event targeted both local residents and officials. It aimed to understand how the various interests, stake- and rights-holders were interpreting and responding to the news of increased military presence.

Discussion

The responses to the three questions from the two panelists from Inuvik, the mayor and CAO:

1. Given the Russian aggression in Ukraine, how has that changed our life here?

Mayor Wood spoke about how the cost of living has risen and access to resources has gotten difficult since the war began, how weak Canada's military defense is and reflected on how it was before when they had a base, "we saw an increase in work and population, it brought more money into the community and gave us more visibility. There will be no loss for us having the military here-and it gives people a sense of security."

Todd Orvitz, CAO IRC, brought a different perspective and emphasized how the federal government's attention to the international crisis is making it more difficult for him and his corporation to secure resources and support. Additionally, he emphasized the importance of hiring local workers versus bringing foreign people in, when and if there are large contracts for whatever infrastructure needs to be built for the military. In addition to the importance economically, local people know how the land is slumping and thawing and can contribute knowledge to make the projects sustainable. Overall he brought home the importance of local communities' involvement, "I would have loved to have been on the front end of that process and to have local knowledge engaged . . . "

2. What are the benefits and challenges of having a military presence in your community?

The moderator asked Todd Orvitz to respond first and he emphasized the importance of *how* and *with whom* outside authorities engage. The engagement also must include benefits to the local communities in terms of children, elders, employment, youth and critical social issues like suicide. The mayor emphasized the benefits of greater employment, bigger tax base which will bring improvements to the town, new sponsors for teams. He also talked about the military as a career choice and what it teaches you in terms of discipline. He briefly mentioned the challenge of more

crime, commenting that they can deal with that—then followed on with the benefits of military spouses potentially filling many local jobs in teaching and nursing.

Following the speakers' responses there was a fairly lively audience discussion that centered around the importance of whatever outside entity, be it the federal government bringing increased military presence or an international mining company, being educated about local culture and priorities and having some sort of base requirement to engage on the local level from the beginning. As one community member said: "I think it would be good to have a base that was engaged with the community here, getting in from the beginning is the key."

3. What is the difference between what happens in the Canadian Arctic versus other countries?

To this the Mayor responded saying it is not possible to compare (as others said before him) and then emphasized how their infrastructure is falling apart because of permafrost thaw, they are spending over 2 million a year to upgrade their water and they sit on one of the largest natural gas fields in the world.

Todd commented that his people have been here and will always be, as military bases and industrial projects come and go.

Policy Considerations

In sum, considering the local perspective in this town hall, we see some divergent views between Mayor Wood and the CAO of IRC, Todd Orvitz. In general, the mayor is emboldened by the idea of increased military presence as he believes it will bring employment, improved infrastructure, professional opportunities and increased overall security for his town. Mr Orvitz sees the situation quite differently. He wants, first and foremost, to have a seat at the table from the very beginning of negotiations for this work. Additionally, he emphasized the importance of hiring local workers who are not only skilled for such work but also have local knowledge. He also expressed angst at how they had a great need for resources to address their social ills but only got the attention from the federal government for possible resources when it had to do with big issues like military presence.

This townhall demonstrated the following policy considerations:

- have local communities involved from the beginning of a project
- be transparent about goal and intentions
- engage all knowledge systems- in this case, to know local conditions and be able to create sustainable infrastructure projects



The Townhall at Inuvik. Photo: Susanna Gartler

Canada

Aklavik, Northwest Territories

Aklavik Indian Band Office, September 21, 2022

Climate Change, Permafrost and Challenges for Arctic Communities

What kind of changes are you seeing here in Aklavik and surrounds?

In contrast to the focused interest in having a town hall centered on the federal government’s intent to extend the airstrip in Inuvik and the implications of increased military presence, in Aklavik, when asked, the local representatives chose the topic of permafrost thaw. This in and of itself shows how community priorities can vary over a relatively short amount of distance even within the same cultural makeup of communities. It also bolsters how conditions can greatly vary over a relatively short amount of distance. In fact, Aklavik is located on the silt of the MacKenzie Delta—its blessing and its curse, as we see today with the thawing of the permafrost, the main force holding the silt together. Not only is permafrost thaw resulting in less stable ground overall, it also affects local’s hunting and fishing, one of their main sources of food security.

General Methodology

For this event, we decided to share another culture's experience with permafrost thaw. Susan Crate and Lena Popova, both Fulbright scholars, began sharing a PPT showing images of how permafrost thaw is affecting Sakha communities in NE Siberia, Russia. Crate showed images from her own and her main collaborator's, Alexander Fedorov, field research. Popova share her own experience, as an Indigenous Sakha scholar, living with permafrost and demonstrating one of Sakha's adaptations: the ice cellar. The PPT ended with the question: What kind of changes are you seeing here in Aklavik and surrounds?

Participants

The targeted participants were members of the Aklavik community and their leaders. As with the Inuvik town hall, we shared the information with the community leaders who put the word out to the population via Facebook. There were approximately 10-15 community members present, largely male.

Discussion

Participants were forthcoming with their experiences. One man spoke at length about his experiences hunting caribou, detailing how the area he has always gone is not like quicksand due to permafrost thaw. He explained that he and his father always went on a particular day of the year and the herds would be there—but recently that is no longer true. The numbers are down drastically—he cited a study that showed how in the 80's and 90's there was consistently 1300 animals that came through and their last count in 2018 was 150. Similarly, they used to have 26 grizzly bears according to their management plan but now don't see them. They dug two collars out of a den that collapsed. Beavers can no longer build dens as the river is filling with sediment from the erosion. Additionally, they used to have four stocks of Arctic char that provided for the community but those populations have also declined. Overall they are experiencing a rapid decline of their hunting and fishing resources. This is not even mentioning the impacts that the permafrost thaw is having on their infrastructure. As the mayor said, 'Underneath us is silt and the permafrost holds it all together.' And they expressed frustration that they cannot use their observations as scientific evidence because Indigenous knowledge is not considered science. Several mentioned a pan-Arctic project that was a waste of time for them and also commented on how scientists come from the south and do the same research and it never results in anything. They want community-driven research—they know what the issues are. In fact they were also frustrated about not getting any resources to help with other pressing issues including diabetes, dementia, high suicide rates and the inter-generational trauma of the boarding schools and the fears of colonialism that continue to linger. As one participant said, "The elders are our scientists. Need to use the community knowledge. Good that you come for info, but at the end of the day our leaders should coordinate and make sure you come and look at what we need."

Policy Considerations

In sum, this town hall brought to light at least two key policy considerations: 1) the importance of recognizing and properly considering Indigenous knowledge in the process of making assessments of actions needed in local and regional contexts. Communities who have been in one place for generations and have depended on the land for their food and fiber have an expertise that cannot be matched by academic science. Their knowledge must be taken seriously and fully accommodated in any assessment of policy priorities. 2) the value of prioritizing a community's research needs over what is thought to be important to study by an academic far to the south. As was stated several times in the town hall, so much time, resources and feelings were wasted on projects that had no meaning to the community themselves. Conversely, were research projects founded on what the community themselves want work to be done on and done in collaboration with the community with their youth receiving training in the process, resources, time and feelings would be nothing but well spent.



Event in Aklavik. Photo: Cecilia Kocinski-Mulder

Norway

Longyearbyen, Svalbard

Karlsberger Pub, October 10, 2022

Geopolitical influences on a special Arctic community

This was a town hall-style event at a local pub, engaging interested members of the local population as well as visiting early-career academics in a discussion of how the changes in geopolitics in the Arctic influence Svalbard, and Longyearbyen specifically. People were recruited through local information campaigns through social media, posters, and co-organising with local partners. The event was held in English. The aim of the event was to assess the local population's sense of engagement in policy-making with regard to security, gauge their interest and awareness of regional and geopolitical developments in security, as well as engage in a lively discussion amongst key experts on the topic. The town hall was prepared by Dr. Andreas Østhagen, senior researcher at the Fridtjof Nansen Institute and Associate Professor at Nord University.

General Methodology

The purpose of the meeting ('pubinar') was to have an informal discussion with both local participants and visiting researchers about how the community of Longyearbyen has been influenced by the increased geopolitical tension in the European parts of the Arctic. Four experts on Svalbard and geopolitics that have lived and worked with issues related to Longyearbyen were invited to sit in a panel and present their opinions. Thereafter the panel took questions from the audience, while the audience was also encouraged to voice their opinions and concerns on the topic. The whole session lasted for approximately 90 minutes, before we broke off into smaller informal groups to continue the discussions. In total, approximately 60-70 people filled the Karlsberger pub. No formal recording or written report came out of the meeting.

Participants

The participants in this 'pubinar' were recruited from the local community. Longyearbyen is a town with approximately 2,400 inhabitants, consisting of around 50 nationalities. The Karlsberger Pub is a popular meeting place on any day, so we assumed we would attract some of the general population in any case. In addition, we used other arenas (such as a Svalbard Science network, a more formal conference the same day, and the University Centre in Svalbard) to spread the word about the 'pubinar'. We also made use of email, facebook and other social media. In total, out of the 60-70 participants, around half were locals (albeit a vague term to use in Longyearbyen).

Discussion

The main focus of the discussion was on what role Svalbard has, if any, in Arctic geopolitics and specifically increased tension between Norway and Russia. Svalbard is Norwegian, but the Svalbard Treaty from 1920 infers certain rights on nationals of countries that have signed the Treaty, and places other limitations on Norwegian policies regarding the archipelago. Although there are no military installations or military presence on Svalbard (as per article 9 of the Treaty), the group of islands are important also in a military security context for several reasons. These were discussed in the meeting, and various participants highlighted both fears of Svalbard being

used in a wider conflict escalation between Russia and NATO, and fears of Russian attempts at undermining Norwegian sovereignty and jurisdiction both on the islands, and in the waters surrounding Svalbard. At the same time, some of the locals as well as the panel discussants raised concerns over too much security focus and what was described as “overreach” by the Norwegian government in Oslo. It became apparent in the seminar that there exists forms of discontent amongst the local population concerning local participation in how Norway’s Svalbard policy is developed and discussed. Reference was made to changes in local election laws, environmental regulation, and the increased desire by Norwegian authorities (especially PST - Norwegian Police Security Service) to control and monitor activity on Svalbard. Moreover, another contentious issue that was highlighted is the difficulties in comparing Arctic communities. Representatives from other Arctic countries highlighted the issues in Canadian communities, but it was quickly made clear from local participants that they saw limited value in talking about “Arctic” problems. “Svalbard problems are Svalbard-specific”.

Policy Considerations

The main issue that this webinar, or town hall-style event, showcased was the discrepancy between a national policy decided primarily by the Norwegian government in Oslo, and local community interests in what is a very special Arctic community. Longyearbyen-State of Norway relations might be the most extreme example in an Arctic context of limited involvement of local interests in order to serve a larger national purpose. Norwegian Svalbard policy-making and development are often shrouded in mystery and ‘strategic’ importance. Still, even in this context, and with the increased security sensitivities after Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, this event and the voices raised was a clear show of how national policies will most likely be limited in their success, and/or face local opposition, if they do not adhere to transparency and involve local interests. Therefore, the dialogue between the local community in Longyearbyen and the government in Oslo needs to be strengthened as security issues have risen on the Svalbard-agenda. The particularities of Longyearbyen and Svalbard must be better understood.



The event at Carlsberger Pub. Photo: Andreas Østhagen

Russia

Dirin, Churapchinsky ulus, The Republic of Sakha (Yakutia)

Virtual Town Hall, November 3, 2022

Climate Change, Traditional husbandry, Challenges for Arctic Communities

Associated research question:

- Do you observe changes related to climate change in your region?
- What needs to be done?

Dirin is a classic representative village of Central Yakutia, located in the Lena-Amga interfluvium, in the area of continuous permafrost as the whole territory of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia). Permafrost thaw makes living conditions in such regions more vulnerable, because the thickness of the active layer above the permafrost is very thin (1.3-1-5 m). In addition, leached soil

very quickly destabilizes the active layer and relief is changed quickly. This causes significant damage to infrastructure, buildings, food security and traditional livelihoods. We discussed with locals to understand how these systems respond in the area in the context of multiple drivers of climate change and what future they envision. This will contribute to answer questions concerning environmental and social security in the Arctic.

General Methodology

Fulbright scholars Lena Popova and Susan Crate joined via Zoom. The event was held in the Sakha language. Popova is a native speaker and Crate is very fluent with over 30 years of experience of conducting research and living in the Republic. At the beginning participants were asked a number of open-ended questions regarding their observation of the environment during their daily life and traditional practices such as gathering, hunting and cattle and horse breeding in relation to climate change. Though specific questions were deployed, scholars attempted to keep the discussion process as flexible as possible to accommodate participants' interests and concerns.

Participants

The group of participants included demographically similar people who own households. There were six participants, two men, four women. Three of them were born in Dirin, and the rest have been living for more than 40 years. These are people who are socially active and interact with other local residents every day, being aware of the village's actualities.

Discussion

It should be noted that the landscape of Central Yakutia and the Vilyuy River basin is represented by the *alaas* system with the highest contents of ice deposits. This term will constantly be mentioned in the report. Alaas is an oval/circle-shaped depression up to several km. It is formed due to the repeated thawing and refreezing of underground ice. It has a lake in the lowland, slopes are covered with nutritious meadow vegetation and surrounded by a forest. Subsistence and security of locals is directly connected with this ecosystem and is an integral part of Sakha culture. Participants were enthusiastic to share their observations. They began the conversation by stating that temperatures had risen and it is noticeably warmer now: *"Today is November 3 and it is just -13°C. These days before it was almost -40°C"*. Visible changes in the landscape topography were mentioned many times. Participants said that hills of alaases and the village are lowering, ground is subsiding; faults, cracks and heaving bumps are appearing. They said that cracks in the ground could be observed in the fall (in alaases and people's yards) – small at first, they expand over time. Participants expressed their high concern about permafrost thaw. A man said that recently he dug a new ice cellar and he came across permafrost through 90 cm of soil, but usually it was 1,5 m. Ice cellar of Participant 2 got lower. Water infiltrates into the ice and house underground cellars. Ice of the surrounding hills in alaases is thawing and the hills are lowering, squares of alaases is widening, and lakes are expanding. They mentioned an increasing number of forest fires and that they contribute to permafrost thaw. The participants raised the issue of rising water levels in the alaas despite the absence of precipitation and very dry seasons.

Water comes from the forest, where *djiudjes* - small deep lakes are formed. The confluence of 2 such lakes and subsequently the draining of their waters into the alaas has recently begun to occur very often. Winter is coming late which delays slaughter time but people have to score, because there's nothing to feed (there is no grass due to dryness and a large number of grasshoppers, the area for haymaking is getting smaller due to the expansion of lakes). Last years people had to buy hay from the Amur region and Transbaikalia. It is low-quality and cattle do not eat it and there were many die-offs due to emaciation in spring. They said that many new species of insects and birds had appeared. Some birds began to stay for the winter instead of flying south. People started using large freezers, because it warms up too early and the meat spoils in ice cellars. They find new routes for gathering and hunting due to changes in landscape and water. They noted that it is no longer necessary to wear fur outerwear and they wear eterbes (deer or horse skin fur shoes) only for one month. Due to the earth movement, people have to raise houses every summer. Since they do have many routine issues that need to be addressed, they have not raised these issues yet. However, they are worried about the quick environment change and they feel insecure about the future of their children. The authorities communicate with local residents, but also not about the issues related to the environment, but rather routine problems. Participants said that they need to take the initiative into their own hands, because not everything comes "from above". They said that scientists are probably aware of the whole situation, but they do not raise questions widely. They should inform and communicate with locals face to face. The woman said that several years ago researchers came to study the changes, and they did not know about it. In one forum, the conclusion of this study was announced that Dirin people should move out. The locals were confused, as it was too loud a statement and they are not considering to leave, besides, ~40 families live in the village. They said that if scientists communicate with locals directly (not just on forums), explaining well how things are, then local residents, in turn, being aware of and observing the situation, could combine knowledge together, and that something would start.

Policy Considerations

This event indicated that collaborative relationships with regular exchange of information are an important part of not only forging long-term and power-balanced partnerships between scientists, local communities and decision makers, but more importantly, in finding effective ways to address the challenges posed by rapid climate and environmental changes.

Scientists, local communities, policy/decision makers should begin a determined collaboration and serious efforts to explore the alternative policies and adjustments while supporting and recognizing the value of traditional local knowledge as a foundation for adaptation issues. Because climate resilient development processes link scientific, Indigenous, local, practitioner and other forms of knowledge, and are more effective and sustainable because they are locally appropriate and lead to more legitimate, relevant and effective actions.

United States of America

Anchorage, Alaska

Virtual Roundtable, December 5, 2022

Community Security Partnerships in Alaska: Security in the Alaskan Arctic and Successful Policy Partnerships

How can communities and policy makers collaborate to develop effective security policy in the Alaskan Arctic?

This event assembled a range of speakers to discuss different forms of security in the Alaskan Arctic and successful policy partnerships between communities and government. The questions explored in the round table included:

- How are communities across the Alaskan Arctic influenced by the rapidly changing circumstances?
- What is the role of local and regional governments and stakeholders in these developments and subsequent policy-making?
- How can Alaska Native peoples participate more effectively in drafting policy related to the changing Arctic?
- How can local and regional interests be included and respected within the policy-making process?

General Methodology

This event was held as a closed, virtual roundtable due to the distributed nature of the participants across Alaska. While not focused on an exclusive community, the moderator elicited first-hand experiences from the panelists to draw multiple perspectives from various communities into the conversation. To promote candid and frank conversation, the roundtable was conducted under the Chatham House Rule.

Participants

The moderator and four panelists were distributed in communities throughout Alaska and represented a wide range of expertise from federal, military, borough, and academic domains. Some panelists were members of Alaska Native tribes and brought that perspective to the conversation.

Discussion

The two hour event covered a wide array of topics focused on community-centric security and collaboration. The discussion revealed several key points regarding Alaskan Arctic security:

1. Governance structures should be cooperative and trust-based. Different perspectives need to be considered when determining policy priorities. Specific community details are

required for larger security plans and strategies. Current high level Arctic strategies are built in isolated stovepipes resulting in no alignment and especially no Arctic community connections, considerations, or involvement.

2. Research roles should be equal and shared among community members and external scientists. This structure should be holistic instead of seasonal, incorporating Indigenous knowledge for collaborations. The emphasis should be on co-production of knowledge, which has been shown to be highly successful and widely accepted.
3. Communities require investment in the lower levels of Maslow's hierarchy. Community-centric policies should emphasize adequate access to basic needs. Policies and projects require working relationships between communities and higher level government. Indigenous knowledge is essential for developing community-based policies and projects. How can essential services be maintained within the remote Alaskan Arctic?
4. Within the grant-based funding structure, communities regularly compete against each other. How can communities prioritize needs collectively and distribute funding appropriately? Communities should carefully consider what they ask for and examine long-term community impacts. Projects should be affordable and sustainable but should not seek to turn Arctic Alaskan communities into those found in the lower 48 states. Large projects often have long term ramifications with unforeseen second and third order effects that may negatively impact the community and surrounding environment.
5. Policy without funding amounts to aspirations and dreams at best and burdens at worst. However, policy that includes a large influx of funding with no follow-on plan can result in failure as well.
6. Successful policy processes focused on co-creation, beginning with early and ongoing communication emphasizing community-centric needs.

Policy Considerations

Trust building is essential for collaboration and policy co-creation. Trust should be built upon a shared viewpoint or frame of reference to ensure all rights- and stake-holders are focused on common goals. The policy process does not end when a document is signed. Rather, it is the start of the implementation and follow-up stages of the policy process. Even the most well-intentioned and well-crafted policy will fail without the full implementation process.

Norway

Tromsø, Troms & Finnmark

Storgata Camping, February 1, 2023

US submarines and local interests: the pitfalls of limited communication

In connection with the annual Arctic Frontiers conference, a town hall-style event was organized in the evening of February 1, 2023, in Tromsø, the largest Norwegian Arctic city. The title was ‘*Arktisk geopolitikk, lokale konsekvenser*’ (Arctic geopolitics, local consequences) and the seminar was held in Norwegian in order to attract local participants and enable local participation. The seminar was a collaboration between the Fridtjof Nansen Institute, Fulbright Arctic Initiative, Troms and Finnmark County Government, and Tromsø Municipality, where the main purpose was to get various local perspectives on the increased military activity in the High North/European Arctic. The seminar was prepared by Dr. Andreas Østhagen, senior researcher at the Fridtjof Nansen Institute and Associate Professor at Nord University, in collaboration with individuals at Troms and Finnmark County and Tromsø Municipality. Originally, the seminar was scheduled for February 2, 2022, but due to covid restrictions we decided to postpone the seminar to September 1. However, the Norwegian Ministry of Defence canceled their participation last minute, so then we decided to push it to February 1, 2023.

General Methodology

This seminar was set up in a ‘typical’ format, with panel discussion and questions and debate. It started at 19:00 and lasted until 20:30. First, the President of Troms and Finnmark County Council gave opening remarks. Thereafter, two academics - Dr Østhagen and Prof. Hoogensen Gjørsv - had a short discussion about Arctic geopolitics and the role of local communities in policy development. Finally, five local politicians - Mayors from Tromsø, Luleå and Porsanger, alongside the County Council President and a representative from the Sami Parliament - discussed the local consequences of increased military activity in their respective localities, as well as concerns they had over inclusion and engagement.

Participants

For this evening seminar, we attracted participants through regular channels such as social media, websites of the host organizations, and newsletters and emails. Given that Tromsø’s population is around 60-70 000 (depending on how you define boundaries) and that the Arctic Frontiers Conference had around 900 participants, we were not worried about getting people to the seminar. Still, we chose to have the seminar in Norwegian, spread the word and invitations beyond just the conference participants, and have it at a local event space/pub somewhat away from the conference - all to attract ‘locals’ engaged in the topic. In sum, there were about 50 participants in the seminar, in addition to the people that contributed with presentations.

Discussion

The key issue in this event was how, and whether, local communities in the Barents Region (with an emphasis on Norway) are able to participate in debates and decision-making concerning security issues. Tromsø was used as the initial case: With increased military activity in the North Atlantic and Barents region in response to Russian military build-up and aggression in other parts of the world, NATO-country activity has increased in this part of the Arctic. This is a development that Norway has wanted ever since 2005, in response to concerns over Russia's military expansionism. Increased military activity - whether through exercises or permanent presence - directly impacts a range of local communities in this region. Tromsø, as an example, has experienced the arrival of US nuclear-powered submarines, as the Norwegian government has had to open a re-supply facility for submarines at Tønsnes harbor just outside of the city. This return of US submarines to North Norway led to questions from the local population about both the security effects for Tromsø (do submarines enhance or diminish local security?) and the possibility of an accident leading to radioactive pollution (what mechanisms are in place to deal with a possible incident?). In the seminar, however, a variety of viewpoints were presented. In addition to the Tromsø-centric debate, the Mayor of Porsanger (in Finnmark, North Norway) highlighted the positive aspects of military presence in terms of local jobs, economic output and development of infrastructure. The Mayor of Luleå outlined how the local level often is neglected in national security debates, also linked to the ongoing NATO-discussion in Sweden. The member of the Sami Parliament also critiqued the Norwegian Armed Forces for limited involvement of local interests and owners of land that is being used in the expansion of military activity. Thereafter, more of these types of concerns were voiced by the seminar participants. Questions were being asked about whether Tromsø actually has emergency preparedness plans in case of a local accident, or even a large-scale outbreak of conflict. Other participants questioned the military build-up in the Arctic in general. Others, again, argued that there indeed *are* both formal and informal mechanisms for local involvement in national policy development.

Policy Considerations

The key takeaway from this seminar relates to the case of submarines in Tromsø writ large, namely the political sensitivities and volatility when it comes to Arctic security issues with a local impact. It is apparent that communication between the national and the local level was not sufficient, in this instance. In turn, that led to a politicization of the issue, as the local community sought attention from both media and politicians. The Norwegian Ministry of Defence, in turn, had to spend considerable resources managing these issues and concerns that emerged in this case. In sum, as security concerns in Northern Norway, or the Barents region writ large, have increased, communication between the defense/MoD with municipalities impacted must be improved and formalized. Local security concerns must be part of a wider security debate in the High North.



The event at Storgata Camping. Photo: David Jensen, Arctic Frontiers

DISCUSSION

The key engagement themes identified during the eight community-focused events include:

1. Communities are eager to engage with and co-create Arctic security policy;

2. Communities are interested in a diverse range of security issues;
3. Knowledge embedded in Arctic communities, whether Indigenous or local, must be considered on par with scientific knowledge;
4. Community-based expertise and resources lead to more effective implementation outcomes;
5. Continuous communication and follow-up are essential for long-term policy significance.

The Arctic town hall discussions and resultant themes revealed six important actions on *HOW* to co-create policy with Arctic communities:

- A. **Who:** Identify relevant rights- and stakeholders both inside and outside the communities affected by policies and decisions in question. Think beyond formal requirements for consultations. Ensure broad participation of different genders, age groups, expertise etc. Include community point people who have the trust of formal decision makers and rights- and stakeholders, and possess an in-depth knowledge and understanding of local socio-cultural, economic, and political dimensions.
- B. **Issue:** Identify the core issues in question through community hearings. Do not assume you know what the issues are in advance. Be ready and willing to engage in extensive discussions and consensus decision-making processes.
- C. **Schedule/timing:** Ensure there are no scheduling conflicts with the community's seasonal activities (harvesting, hunting, fishing, etc.) or other community events. Do not assume your time schedule is theirs.
- D. **Communication:**
 - a. Align the level and type of communication and information to the intended audience, their interests, concerns and any pressing issues. Ensure interpretation to and from local languages where appropriate and/or necessary.
 - b. Leverage existing communication modes and networks, including community meetings, social media, broadcast, or print media.
- E. **Co-create:** Work collaboratively to draft policy and develop implementation and monitoring plans to reflect the security needs of all rights- and stakeholders.
 - a. Review the basics of policy drafting with participating community members.
 - b. Enable internal community deliberations on the selected policy topic.
 - c. Workshop community discussions and findings into a joint policy draft and ensure a community review process for the draft.
- F. **Follow-up:** Determine a follow-up schedule and process:
 - a. What will be shared by whom, when and where.
 - b. Which community members will be trained to participate and implement the policy.
 - c. How updates will be done and communicated.
 - d. How community feedback will be incorporated into ongoing policy-making.

Both formal decision makers and Arctic communities can benefit from the co-creation of an inclusive security policy process, especially in terms of decisions and implementation. Benefits of an inclusive process include:

- Builds long-term communication channels between decision makers and Arctic communities.
- Better aligns goals, priorities, interests, and benefits of all parties.

- More equitably shares opportunities (e.g. economic, social, environmental, educational) across the community.
- More equitably involves all relevant knowledge systems (Indigenous, local, and scientific).
- Strengthens corporate and public social responsibility.
- Increases community resilience and security.
- Enables more effective implementation of national security policies.

CONCLUSIONS

This project was aimed to investigate the fact that although most Arctic policies include the language of community engagement, they do not provide policymakers with the steps for *HOW* to do this. While each town hall-style event occurred in a unique locale across the Arctic and revealed unique perspectives, common security-oriented threads persisted through the region. Arctic communities consider security beyond the scope of military concerns. Communities generally view all forms of security as interconnected and no form should be considered in isolation. National and regional policies impacting Arctic communities require a collaborative approach and co-creation to be successful. Effective collaboration starts with the correct rights- and stakeholders, a clearly defined issue, an inclusive engagement schedule, community-centric communication modes, a process to co-create policy, and an implementation and follow-up plan.

In sum, our project team recommends that policy and decision makers include *ALL* relevant forms of security, such as food, environmental, energy, gender, health, economic, and cultural security, when developing security policy and that they do so through active and meaningful *ENGAGEMENT* with Arctic communities.