



ÅBO AKADEMI UNIVERSITY  
European Master's Programme in Human Rights and Democratization  
A.Y. 2021/2022

## **Food Security in the Arctic**

A legal and political analysis

Author: Tyler Bloom  
Supervisor: Viljam Engström

### **Acknowledgements**

Foremost, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my thesis supervisor, Viljam Engström, for his ongoing support throughout the thesis process. His availability, knowledge, and support were consistent throughout this process, for which I am extremely grateful.

I would also like to thank my fellow EMA colleagues, including the EMA Deputy Director at Åbo Akademi, Catarina Krause, as well as the staff at the Global Campus of Human Rights headquarters in Venice. Further, I would like to express appreciation to my fellow EMA students, particularly Ana Doneva, who also attended Åbo Akademi, and was a source of constant support, friendship, and guidance to me throughout the thesis process.

Last but not least, I would like to thank my family: specifically my parents, step-parents, and grandparents, who provided spiritual and emotional support throughout the entirety of this Master's Degree.

### **Abstract**

The Arctic region is home to hundreds of thousands of indigenous peoples, spanning eight countries. Indigenous peoples living in this region have long struggled to achieve food security due to the harsh terrain and climate. In recent years, food insecurity has been exacerbated in the region due to factors such as a changing climate, an increase in economic activities, and socio-economic challenges such as poverty. This increased prevalence of food insecurity presents obstacles to States to fulfill their obligations under international law. Particularly, food security is intimately associated with rights specific to Indigenous peoples, such as the right to self-determination and the right to practice culture, as well as the broader international human rights framework, including the right to life. As such, States have the obligation to develop policies to alleviate food insecurity. To combat food insecurity and remain in compliance with international law, a variety of methods have been developed by many actors. At the international level, the Arctic Council has served as a forum to facilitate cooperation between State actors, indigenous organizations, and other observers. Nationally, states have worked to implement measures to negate the adverse impacts of climate change and economic activities on food insecurity. Finally, regional organizations, such as local governments and indigenous communities have worked to develop programmes which target the root causes of food insecurity, including poverty. These measures, work in conjunction with each other to alleviate food insecurity in the region. However, while measures show promise to be effective in combatting food insecurity, there are still gaps, including ensuring food security for more vulnerable populations as well as the specific protections of rights of Indigenous peoples which are necessary to be food secure.

## **Table of Contents**

### **Chapter 1: Introduction**

- 1.1: Introduction
- 1.2: Structure and Overview
- 1.2: Research Questions
- 1.3: Methodology

### **Chapter 2: Food Security: Challenges & Trends**

- 2.1: Definitions
- 2.2: Food Security Challenges by Region
  - 2.2.1: Regional Scope
  - 2.2.2: European High Arctic
  - 2.2.3: Northern Canada
  - 2.2.4: Alaska
  - 2.2.5: Analysis of pan-Arctic trends
- 2.3: Demographics Disproportionately Impacted by Food Insecurity

### **Chapter 3: Interlink between the Right to Food, food security, and other Rights**

- 3.1: Conceptualizing the Right to Food in the Arctic Context
- 3.2: Food Security and Universal Fundamental Rights
- 3.3: Food Security and Indigenous-specific Rights
  - 3.3.1: Self-Determination and Food Security
  - 3.3.2: Free, Prior, and Informed Consent and Food Security
  - 3.3.3: Culture and Food Security
  - 3.3.4: Food Production and Food Security
- 3.4: Food Security and the European Human Rights Framework

### **Chapter 4: The Future of Food Security in a Changing Arctic Environment**

- 4.1: International Collaboration to Alleviate Food Insecurity
  - 4.1.1: The Arctic Council as Essential to International Collaboration
    - 4.1.1.1: The Arctic Council and Finnish-Norwegian Collaboration Case Study
    - 4.1.1.2: The Arctic Council and the Arctic Food Innovation Cluster
    - 4.1.1.3: The Arctic Council and the Conservation of Biodiversity
    - 4.1.1.4: The Arctic Council and the UN Sustainable Development Goals
  - 4.1.2: The European Union and the Arctic Region
- 4.2: State Responses to Alleviate Food Insecurity
  - 4.2.1: Canadian Responses
  - 4.2.2: European High Arctic Responses
  - 4.2.3: American Responses
- 4.3: Non-State Responses to Alleviate Food Insecurity
  - 4.3.1: The Pikialasorsuaq Region Case Study

**4.3.2:** Local Responses

**4.3.3:** Other Innovative Responses

**4.4:** Analysis of Response Trends

**Chapter 5: Discussion of Findings**

**5.1:** Interrelation between challenges, responses, and obligations

**5.2:** Gaps in Protection

**Chapter 6: Conclusion**

## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

### **1.1 Introduction**

The Arctic, which spans eight countries, is home to nearly four million inhabitants, with approximately 400,000 Indigenous peoples living in the region. Due to the Arctic climate, including extreme cold and the unpredictability of weather conditions, those living in this region face unique challenges. These challenges include responding to a changing climate that has threatened the ability of those who live in the region to secure adequate food, the elevated cost of goods as a result of the remoteness of many communities, and a lack of proper housing and infrastructure, among other challenges. In this thesis, I will focus on an essential challenge facing indigenous communities in the region: food insecurity. In the Arctic, achieving food security has long been a challenge due to a multitude of factors, which include a changing climate, an increase in economic activities, and socioeconomic issues. Food security also has inherent links to international law, including Indigenous-specific rights as well as the broader international human rights framework. In pursuit of alleviating food insecurity, international actors, national governments, and regional partners continue to work in concert in order to develop strategic policies aimed at reducing the elevated rate of food insecurity in the Arctic region.

### **1.2 Structure and Overview**

The second chapter of this thesis will examine how food security challenges have evolved in these communities, and identify common pan-Arctic trends in food insecurity. These challenges include a rapidly changing climate, which has impacted biodiversity and food availability; an increase in economic activities such as natural resource exploration and an increase in Arctic tourism; and an elevated cost of living and cost of food, as well as a rise in poverty in the region. These issues continue to challenge food security in the Arctic. Finally, food insecurity impacts different groups disproportionately. I will note that this overview is not meant to be an exhaustive list of all challenges as they relate to food insecurity in the region, but to provide an understanding of the wide-ranging nature of the challenges. I will conclude this chapter by identifying which demographics are impacted most by food insecurity and discussing factors that have increased this likelihood.

The third chapter of the thesis will question the interlink between the right to food, as well as the interlink between this right, food security, and other rights in the context of the Arctic. I will begin by discussing the right to food, which is articulated in the Universal Declaration of

Human Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and conceptualizing it in the Arctic context, specifically linking it to the idea of food security and food sovereignty. Following this, I will discuss the interlink between the right to food, food security, and other rights. These rights include the right to life and the right to practice your culture, both of which are guaranteed in international conventions and treaties. Further, I will discuss the special rights indicated for Indigenous populations outlined in both the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, such as the right to self-determination and the right to free, informed and prior consent. I will also discuss the rights outlined in the International Labour Organization's Convention on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples. This discussion on the rights associated with the right to food is essential to understanding how States may respond to food insecurity in this region. I will conclude this section with a discussion on the European regional human rights framework, and protections, or lack thereof of Indigenous peoples in the region. Finally, while States do typically have a wide margin of appreciation on how they will implement their international obligations, this thesis will explore measures that may be taken to best ensure the right to food and food security in the region.

The fourth chapter of this thesis will discuss the future of food security in the region. Specifically, it will cover the measures and tools available that States and communities may apply to alleviate food insecurity. These measures include increasing international collaboration, such as through the Arctic Council. This international collaboration is essential due to the geographic nature of the region, with Indigenous communities living in multiple Arctic states. Further, the challenges facing these communities are typically similar across the Arctic, and by increasing collaboration and research with international partners, there is an increased likelihood that solutions will be found. Finally, actions that occur in one Arctic State may negatively impact the territory of another State. National governments have also taken approaches to alleviate food insecurity in the Arctic, such as by implementing measures to reduce the cost of food, such as by creating subsidies associated with store-bought food and equipment to access traditional subsistence methods. Further, States have also demonstrated their interest in protecting the region from environmental degradation as a result of a changing climate as well as economic activities. These policies include the creation of Marine Protected Areas as well as strong plans to decrease their carbon emissions. Finally, local responses have the potential to be particularly beneficial to alleviate food insecurity in the region. For example, the communities living within the region im-

pacted by these challenges, are often the ones best suited to respond to them. This includes approaches aimed at targeting the root causes of food insecurity, such as policies to reduce poverty, increase education, etc. To effectively alleviate food insecurity in the region, all strategies should be included, as it is a complex issue with many factors.

The fifth chapter of this thesis will be a discussion of my findings, combining the analysis of the previous chapters. This will include an overview of existing food security challenges and international, national, and local responses to food insecurity, which will be examined through a lens of State obligations under international human rights law. Further, I will discuss current gaps in the protection of these communities.

### 1.3 **Research Questions**

This thesis addresses the following questions, which will allow for a comprehensive understanding of food security challenges in the Arctic region, an understanding of the rights associated with food security, and how States may respond to these challenges in the future.

- 1) What are the ongoing challenges to food security in Arctic indigenous communities?
- 2) What is the interlink between the right to food, food security, and other rights in the Arctic context?
- 3) What are the responses to food insecurity and are they consistent with international obligations?

### 1.4 **Methodology**

This thesis will take an interdisciplinary approach, through legal and political analysis, to understanding food security challenges facing indigenous communities in the Arctic region. To begin, I will conduct a literature review of the pan-Arctic food security challenges, as identified in existing journals, reports by NGOs and Indigenous organizations, as well as by national governments. Following this, a legal descriptive approach will be applied to the various rights associated with food security, including the right to food, other fundamental rights, and other special rights indicated for Indigenous peoples. Finally, I will examine the responses to food insecurity, including looking at programs developed by international organizations, State actors, and non-State actors. Given time constraints and limited resources, this thesis will not involve any primary research. Rather, I will build on existing research by providing an analysis of the issue of food security and how fundamental and Indigenous-specific rights relate to it.



## **Chapter 2: Food Security: Challenges & Trends**

The goal of this chapter is to identify current food security challenges in the Arctic States which have Indigenous communities, as well as to identify policies developed by the State to combat food insecurity. The scope of this overview will include indigenous populations living within the jurisdiction of multiple Arctic states, including Finland, Sweden, Norway, Russia, Canada, Denmark and the United States. By conducting a pan-Arctic scan of challenges to food security, it will allow me to analyze common trends, which will be essential to understanding how States may respond to food insecurity in these communities. Further, as different states have ratified different treaties, their obligations will diverge, so it will be important to understand the challenges of each state to fully understand whether they comply with their obligations

### **2.1 Definitions**

In 1996, the World Food Summit adopted the idea that food security is defined as all people, at all times, regardless of their physical or socio-economic status, having access to adequate and nutritious food that meets both their preferences and dietary requirements.<sup>1</sup> This includes not only having access to nutritious groceries but also having the ability to source their food locally. In 2009, at the World Food Summit on Food Security, food security was further developed with the creation of the four 'pillars', which were defined as availability, access, utilization, and stability.<sup>2</sup> Further, an expanded definition of food security in the Arctic does not only mean having access to adequate and nutritious food. Rather, it includes adherence to traditions, a connection to the land and culture, as well as a shared sense of community.<sup>3</sup> Conversely, food insecurity can be characterized as individuals or communities not having sufficient access to quality food, which may be caused by a multitude of reasons. In the context of the Arctic, food security is closely linked to the idea of food sovereignty, which is the "right of peoples to healthy ... food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their food and agriculture systems".<sup>4</sup> For Indigenous communities living in the Arctic, this includes prioritizing lo-

---

<sup>1</sup> World Food Summit (1996) *Report of the World Food Summit*

<sup>2</sup> Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (2009) *Declaration of the World Summit on Food Security*

<sup>3</sup> Polar Knowledge Canada (2022) *Climate Change Research and Monitoring*. POLAR Webinar Series

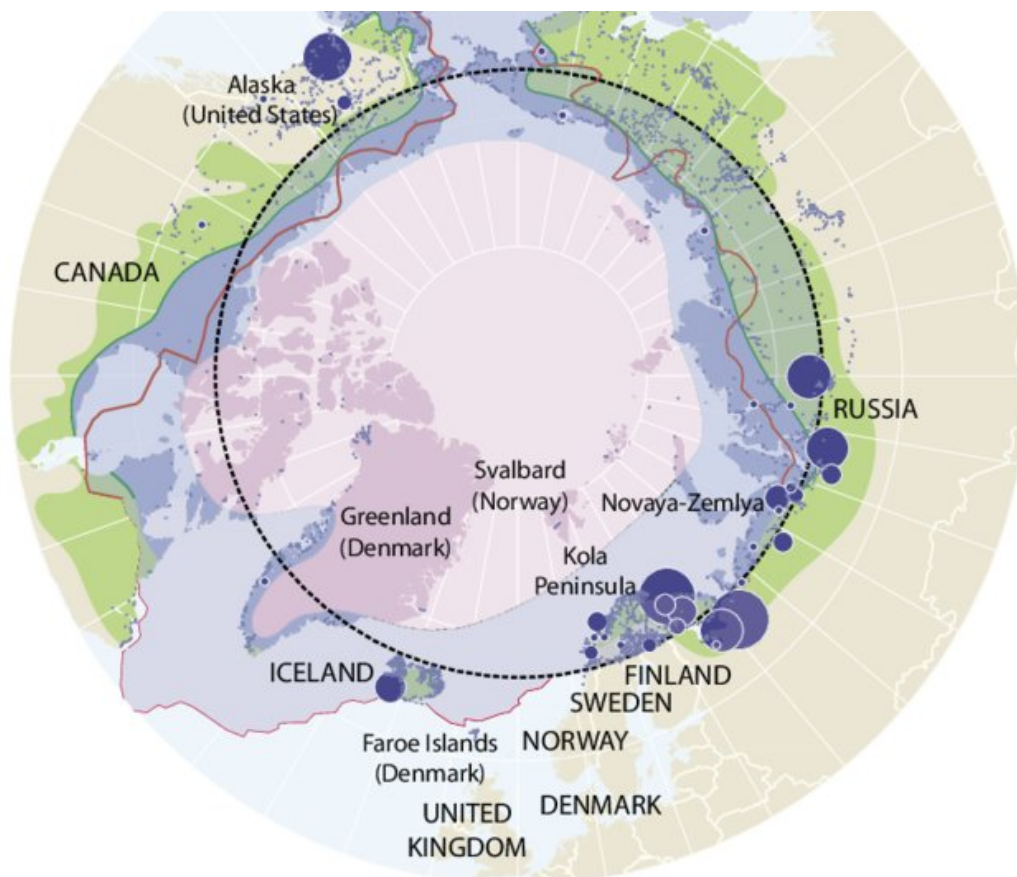
<sup>4</sup> Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (2007) *Declaration of Nyéléni*

cal means of sourcing food, such as using traditional means to hunt and fish. These terms are inextricably linked when discussing the right to food, as well as the specific rights afforded to Indigenous communities living in the Arctic. The application of these rights and the obligations states have to protect these rights will be discussed later.

## 2.2 Food Security Challenges

Achieving food security in the Arctic region has long been a challenge for a plethora of reasons. Due to the remoteness of many communities, as well as the harsh conditions in the region, achieving food security is a continuous battle. However, the issue of food insecurity in this region has been exacerbated in recent years as a result of a changing climate, an increase in economic development operations that have damaged the ecological system, a change in biodiversity and animal movement patterns, as well as socio-economic factors such as elevated rates of poverty in certain communities.

### 2.2.1 Regional Scope



Map of the Arctic Region

Hislop, Lawrence (2013) *View from the Top: Searching for responses to a rapidly changing Arctic*

Above is a comprehensive map of the Arctic region, which is the focus of this thesis. In particular, I will focus on three regions within the Arctic. Northern Canada, includes the northern territories as well as parts of northern provinces. Alaska, in the United States, is geographically located in the Arctic. Finally, the European High Arctic spans from Greenland to northern Scandinavia and Finland, as well as western Russia.

### 2.2.2 **Food Security in the European High Arctic**

This region is home to millions of people and contains vast amounts of natural resources, such as forests, minerals, and oil. For thousands of years, Indigenous peoples have been living in this region, relying on traditional methods of subsistence, such as fishing, hunting and farming to live. In the present day, a large portion of Indigenous peoples from the European High Arctic region no longer reside in the traditional territory. For those who remain in the region, there is a heavy dependence on traditional means of subsistence to ensure food security. However, in recent decades, communities have faced challenges in achieving food security using traditional means, as a result of an increase in economic activities and a changing climate in the region. These industrial activities have often been at the expense of the local ecosystems, and by extension, the local populations.

Those living in the European High Arctic have depended on reindeer husbandry as an essential activity for their livelihood for centuries. To achieve this, large amounts of pastureland are required. As a result, protecting the conditions of the pastureland that are necessary to effectively practice reindeer husbandry is important. However, given that this activity occurs in nature, naturally, the changing climate is having an impact on the ability of reindeer herders to practice. According to the Arctic Council Arctic Climate Impact Assessment, the climate in the Arctic is changing rapidly and is having a lasting impact on the territory, notably in the form of shorter and less severe winters.<sup>5</sup> Further, according to reports from Indigenous knowledge holders and reindeer herders in the Arctic, the weather in the region has been increasingly erratic and unpredictable, which has challenged the ability of reindeer to access an adequate food supply, such as lichen.<sup>6</sup> Other challenges to the biodiversity in the region which may impact reindeer husbandry, is a lack of understanding of how mountain flora will respond to a warming climate, as well as

---

<sup>5</sup> The Arctic Council (2005) *The Arctic Council Climate Change Impact Assessment*

<sup>6</sup> International Centre for Reindeer Husbandry. *Challenges to Reindeer Husbandry*

the impact of this climate on insects which are common sources of food for reindeer.<sup>7</sup> It is easy to see how the changing climate will impact the ability of many communities that rely on reindeer husbandry to achieve food security as a result of the changing climate. In particular, food security will be impacted on a couple of levels. First, the reduction in available pastureland and increased difficulty in feeding reindeer may lead to less availability of reindeer. Second, the changing climate has led to uncertainty in how reindeer husbandry will adapt to the new challenges and may lead to instability in how much food is available to communities. Finally, while climate change has been identified as a major concern to food security in the region, it is not the only determinant impacting the ability of communities to source an adequate and nutritious food supply.

Next, fishing has been identified as vital for Sámi communities living in coastal regions and near rivers. However, not only has economic activities and the introduction of fishing quotas hampered the ability of these communities to fish, but also the changing climate.<sup>8</sup> Given the nature of the activity, natural factors such as the climate and ecological changes have an impact on these communities to fish. For example, the coastal settlements in Unjárga and Porsángu in Norway have faced serious changes in the ecosystems of the fjords over the past few decades, notably as a result of the introduction of an invasive species, the red king crab, as well as a depletion of the kelp forests, which were heavily depended on by cod populations, as well as other causes.<sup>9</sup> These communities relied heavily on these fishing industries, not only for food security but for their economies as well. Interestingly enough, while early on, these ecological changes hurt the communities, their resilience wound up leading to benefits for the communities, including through diversification in activities by beginning to catch the newly introduced red king crab, as well as continued government support.<sup>10</sup>

Economic activities in the European High Arctic have become more common as the melting sea ice has made the region more accessible. In this region, fishing, hunting, and other means

---

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Casi, Corinna (2020) *Sami identity and traditional livelihood practices: From non-Indigenous to Indigenous food frameworks*

<sup>9</sup> Grete Broderstad, Else & Eythórsson, Einar (2014) *Resilient Communities? Collapse and recovery of a social-ecological system in Arctic Norway*

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

of self-sustaining subsistence methods are relied upon to ensure food security. However, increased economic activity, including shipping, tourism, timber, and mining activities, has impacted the ability of those living in the region to source their food. Further, according to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the effects of climate change are much more prominent in the Northern region rather than in the rest of the globe.<sup>11</sup> This warming and increased economic activity have culminated in challenges to food security for populations living in the region. First, sustainable forestry is essential to the continuous availability and accessibility of food for Indigenous and local communities in the region. However, the timber industry has had a severely negative impact on the ability of communities to source their food. These forests are necessary for reindeer herding and are also a prominent source of other foods, such as berries, herbs, moose, etc.<sup>12</sup> Further, the destruction of these forests not only inhibits the ability of local communities to source their food but is also damaging their ability to practice their traditional and cultural practices. To ensure that the timber industry does not irreversibly impact the ability of these communities to source food, changes must be made. Changes must include consulting with indigenous communities to ensure that their needs are not being inhibited in these activities, as well as ensure that all activities are conducted through a lens of sustainability. An example of this would be for States to require that foresting companies must replant trees once they have been harvested, or that they are only permitted to harvest a certain percentage of a region.

Other industrial activities, such as tourism, pose threats to the ecosystem, as loud noises associated with these activities may lead to a change in behavioural patterns by wildlife, forcing hunters to either seek new areas to hunt or travel a larger distance to hunt, neither of which is ideal.<sup>13</sup> This negatively impacts food security, as it reduces the availability and access to food sources, as well as the stability of a steady supply of food due to the unpredictability of changing animal patterns. Further, this activity is particularly harmful to local communities and wildlife. Typically, tourists do not have respect for the nature of the population around them, and by their continued presence, they are damaging the ability of these communities to live. Further associat-

---

<sup>11</sup> Pachauri & Meyer (2014) *Synthesis Report - Contribution of working groups, I, II, III, to the fifth assessment report of the intergovernmental panel on climate change 2014*.

<sup>12</sup> Cormier, Shaun & Raheem, Dele (2018) *Food Security in the Barents Region*

<sup>13</sup> Green & Geise (2004) *Negative Effects of Wildlife Tourism on Wildlife*

ed with the tourism industry, includes a rise in waste by tourists, in areas where wildlife typically live, increasing the risk that they will become contaminated after consuming waste. This industry should be strictly regulated, with stringent requirements on companies to ensure that their presence in the region is minimal. These requirements could include limiting the number of tourists who will be permitted in the region, as well as implementing a tourist tax, with proceeds going towards environmental protection programs.

The next economic activity I will discuss, arguably has the most drastic impact on the local population and ecosystem: industrial activities. Industrial activities cause food insecurity in the region through a multitude of impacts. First, the pollution created by these industries is detrimental to the health of local fauna and flora. This contamination has a cascading effect on the local population, notably their ability to access healthy foods, as well as an elevated risk of negative health outcomes, as evidenced in Nickel, Russia, following continuous pollution caused by the Norilsk Nickel plant.<sup>14</sup> In the same vein, there is a significant relationship between food and water in the region. The quality of water in the region is directly impacted as a result of industrial activities. A natural consequence of this reduction in water quality is that both wildlife and local populations have less access to potable water. However, issues arise because the quality of water is not monitored regularly in the region<sup>15</sup>, thus leading to the potential consumption of contaminated water by wildlife and communities and an increase in negative health outcomes. This lack of adequate monitoring is not unique to Russia, rather, given the harsh nature of the region, data monitoring is an ongoing challenge that requires innovative solutions to overcome.

To conclude this discussion on the European High Arctic, it is evident that economic development and climate change have had a huge impact on the region. Human activities and economic development have typically been prioritized in the region over the well-being of its indigenous populations as well as the local ecosystems. Notably, these activities have directly impacted the availability of adequate food, which is an essential element when considering if a community is food secure. While there have been some policies developed to combat this impact, it is clear that current measures are insufficient. Going forward to ensure food security in

---

<sup>14</sup> Hansen, M (2016) *Heavy metals in food from the Norwegian ... and Russian border region ... Presentation at Seminar on food security in the Barents Region*

<sup>15</sup> Dudarev et. al (2013) *Food and water security issues in Russia II: water security in general population of Russian Arctic, Siberia and Far East, 2000-2011*

the region, it is essential that data collection on contaminants and food consumption patterns must be prioritized, to identify gaps as well as trends.<sup>16</sup> Further, this data must be used to inform policymakers to create decisions based on science. Finally, governments need to collaborate with Indigenous communities to identify needs and work towards effective solutions.

### 2.2.3 Food Security in Northern Canada

Food insecurity is prevalent amongst communities in Northern Canada, particularly in Inuit Nunangat, which is the traditional land of the Inuit in Canada. This region spans several territories and provinces in Northern Canada and has a population of over 40,000 Inuit. Similar to the Indigenous peoples living in the European High Arctic, Inuit rely heavily on traditional means of subsistence to survive, as well as on commercial means. Just like in the European Arctic, there is a strong prevalence of food insecurity facing these communities. According to a 2012 study released by Statistics Canada, approximately 50% of Inuit living within Inuit Nunangat experienced food insecurity within the previous year. This number compared to 14% of Inuit living outside of the region, typically in southern Canadian provinces.<sup>17</sup>

First, poverty levels in the Inuit Nunangat are extremely high when compared to the rest of Canada. In addition, due to the remoteness of the region and the increased costs to transport goods, the logistics associated with storing the food, as well as food spoilage, food prices are generally very high.<sup>18</sup> The combination of poverty and high food prices has made it exceedingly difficult for those living in the region to achieve a stable supply of adequate, nutritious foods, and promote a healthy lifestyle, which is one aspect of food security. Due to these elevated costs, purchasing fresh produce, meats, etc., which are necessary for a healthy lifestyle, is not possible for many families. Rather, households must rely on either skipping meals, reducing portion sizes, or opting to purchase cheaper food that is of low nutritious value but is high in caloric value. Further, it should be noted that in the region, certain groups are more likely to face food insecurity challenges, notably, women over 25 and young children.<sup>19</sup> When creating policies to combat

---

<sup>16</sup> Duhaime, G. & Bernard, N. (2002) *Sustainable food security in the Arctic: state of knowledge. Chapter 13.*

<sup>17</sup> Arriagada, Paula (2017) *Insights on Canadian Society: Food insecurity among Inuit living in Inuit Nunangat.* Statistics Canada

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

food insecurity in the region, decision-makers must take into account the factors behind why these groups struggle with food insecurity more than others.

Next, while there has been a significant shift toward consuming western-style foods, communities living in Inuit Nunangat still rely on traditional means of subsistence, such as hunting, fishing, etc. However, as a result of a rapidly changing climate, the ability of Inuit to source their food is deteriorating. According to a study prepared for Northern Affairs Canada in 2009, climate change “influences animal availability, the human ability to access wildlife, and the safety and quality of wildlife for consumption”.<sup>20</sup> For example, the increased likelihood of major weather events, combined with their unpredictability, has made it more difficult for the Inuit to go on hunting expeditions. Hunters may be cautious to travel longer distances or may hunt in different areas due to the elevated risks associated with these events. Further, as I mentioned, animal availability has been impacted due to the climate, as certain species may have migrated to different regions, or have had struggles adapting to the changes. Naturally, these factors have reduced the ability of residents to enjoy the nutrients from certain species, and have been forced to shift their subsistence activities, reduce their consumption of species, or even relocate to locations where there is more animal availability.<sup>21</sup> In this region specifically, caribou are highly important to the livelihood of Inuit communities, as they have been identified to be an essential source of protein. Communities have relied on hunting caribou to achieve economic and food security and to practice their traditional means of subsistence.<sup>22</sup> However, in recent decades, the caribou population in Inuit Nunangat has declined due to a multitude of reasons. Notably, research has suggested that the local caribou populations have been declining as a result of climate change<sup>23</sup>. This phenomenon has led to an increased reliance by Inuit communities on other species and store-bought food to achieve food security. Further, it has also reduced the ability of Inuit youth to learn and practice harvesting skills, disrupted food sharing networks, and reduced

---

<sup>20</sup> Northern Affairs Canada. (2009) *Assessing the Impacts of Climate Change on Food Security in the Canadian Arctic*

<sup>21</sup> Guyot et al. (2006) *Local observations of climate change and impacts on traditional food security in two northern Aboriginal communities*

<sup>22</sup> D. Ford, James et al. (2019) *Food insecurity in Nunavut: Are we going from bad to worse?*

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.



economic opportunities for communities, all of which adversely impact the ability of these communities to achieve food security.<sup>24</sup>

There is an elevated health risk for Northern residents due to climate change impacts on wildlife. In particular, there is an increased risk of exposure to environmental contaminants in wildlife, including mercury, lead, etc. This poses several risks. First, this exposure to these contaminants may cause animals to die prematurely, which negatively impacts the availability of animals. Further, upon consuming contaminated animals, humans become at risk of suffering the consequences of contamination. This risk is elevated for those who have underdeveloped or compromised immune systems, such as children or elders.<sup>25</sup> Given the demographics of these communities, the health risks associated with contamination can have severe consequences.

Given the severity of threats posed by climate change to food security in the Canadian Arctic, action must be taken. These actions must be taken at an international, national, regional, and local level, with all groups working collaboratively. Most importantly, any policies created must include input from Indigenous communities, and emphasize traditional knowledge. In particular, community-based assessments on the impacts that climate change has on food security must be prioritized, alongside an increased capacity to create quality and standardized data. This data includes qualitative, quantitative, and historical data, which must be analyzed using an interdisciplinary approach that considers the complexities associated with food security and climate change in the region.<sup>26</sup>

#### 2.2.4 **Food Security in Alaska**

The final region in which I will provide an overview is Alaska, which is home to approximately 16,000 Inuit. Similar to the rest of the Arctic, Inuit in Alaska are facing food insecurity challenges as a result of the changing climate. In particular, the melting permafrost has challenged their ability to store frozen food yearly, thus inhibiting their ability to maintain a stable and adequate food supply. For example, certain communities rely on traditional underground ice cellars to store their harvested beluga and bowhead throughout the year. Previously, these cellars

---

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Van Oostam J. Et al. (2005) *Human health implications of environmental contaminants in Arctic Canada: a review*

<sup>26</sup> Northern Affairs Canada. (2009) *Assessing the Impacts of Climate Change on Food Security in the Canadian Arctic*

remained frozen throughout the year, however, in recent years, they have thawed, rendering much of the meat unsafe for consumption.<sup>27</sup> Further, the Inupiaq Tribe, in northwestern Alaska, continues to have a heavy reliance on harvested fish, game, and plants. However, the changing climate has challenged the ability of this community to practice their traditional means of subsistence. As a result, policymakers in Alaska have suggested that these communities leave the rural communities, however, the elders declined due to the inherent connection to the territory, as well as the health benefits associated with their lifestyles.<sup>28</sup> Notably, research suggested that food insecurity rates in rural and urban Inupiaq elders were similar, suggesting that despite moving to urban areas and reducing the reliance on traditional food sources, these people do not fare better than in rural communities.<sup>29</sup> As such, it may be beneficial for these communities to remain on their traditional lands, and to create solutions to the challenges, such as taking action to negate the climate-induced melting permafrost, as well as to reduce factors challenging the ability of communities to source traditional foods. Further, similar to in Nunavut, due to increased difficulties associated with traditional subsistence methods, there has been a consistent shift from traditional subsistence foods to food shipped from the South, which has led to increased rates of obesity and other health-related issues.<sup>30</sup> To reverse this trend, policies must be created to improve the ability of Inuit living in Alaska to enjoy traditional foods and their associated health benefits.

#### 2.2.5 **Trends**

This pan-Arctic scan and analysis of food security challenges as well as policy solutions to combat food security in the Arctic has allowed me to identify certain trends. Food security in the Arctic has been threatened by an increase in industrial activities, including mining, oil exploration, tourism, etc., which has negatively impacted the environment and biodiversity in the region. Further, climate change has reduced the availability of species, changed migration patterns, and increased the risk of contamination of animals and humans. Other challenges, which relate

---

<sup>27</sup> Brubaker, Michael et al. (2011) *Climate change and health effects in Northwest Alaska*

<sup>28</sup> Smith, Janell (2007) *Food customs of rural and urban Inupiaq elders and their relationships to select nutrition parameters, food insecurity, health, and physical and mental functioning*

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Rosol, Renata et al. (2016) *Impacts of decline harvest of country food on nutrient intake among Inuit in Arctic Canada: impact of climate change and possible adaptation plan*

mainly to Northern Canada, are increased rates of poverty and the elevated cost of nutritious foods which are relied upon.

### 2.3 **Demographics Disproportionately Impacted by Food Insecurity**

In this chapter, I have identified several of the main food security challenges in the Arctic, as well as introduced some of the responses by State and non-State actors. Now, I will discuss which demographics are most impacted by food insecurity. Indigenous women in Canada are at an increased risk of food insecurity, with a 56% probability of living in a household that is food insecure.<sup>31</sup> It should be noted that there is a wide regional variance in the ability to access food, ranging between 40% and 70%, which can be accounted for due to food costs being higher in certain regions than in others due to their remoteness. This phenomenon of elevated food insecurity rates among women is due to several factors. Notably, economic factors influence the ability of women to access adequate food. Factors include the elevated cost of store-bought food combined with under-employment and inadequate salaries, as well as reduced access, due to the high cost associated with them, to subsistence methods such as fishing and hunting in the Arctic have been identified as significant challenges to the food security of Indigenous women.<sup>32</sup> Policies to combat food insecurity must therefore include special consideration for women, who may not be able to afford adequate food, through store-bought or traditional subsistence methods.

Another demographic concern that has been identified as having a higher risk of food insecurity in the Arctic is age. Among Inuit, middle-aged individuals have been identified as having the most access to functioning fishing, and hunting equipment, as well as access to store-bought food.<sup>33</sup> Conversely, one can extrapolate that those who are older and younger may experience elevated rates of food insecurity. This could be due to multiple factors, including that middle-aged individuals may be more likely to have jobs that provide higher salaries, or that the youth and elderly may not have jobs at all and have very little income to afford adequate food. These age groups are typically more vulnerable than middle-aged groups. Notably, children require nutritious diets in order to grow and enjoy their other rights, such as education. However, it

---

<sup>31</sup> Lambden et al. (2006) *Traditional and market food access in Arctic Canada is affected by economic factors*

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

has been widely reported that the size of children's meals has consistently been cut due to a lack of household funds.<sup>34</sup> Further, for the elder, who are typically more susceptible to illness and disease, adequate food is essential to ensuring positive health outcomes.

---

<sup>34</sup> Ruiz-Castell et al. (2015) *Household Crowding and Food Insecurity Among Inuit Families with School-Aged Children in the Canadian Arctic*

### **Chapter 3: Interlink between the Right to Food, food security, and Other Rights**

The goal of this chapter is to understand the interlink between the right to food, food security, and other rights in the context of the Arctic. I will begin this section with an analysis of the right to food and will conceptualize it in the Arctic context, and connect it to the ideas of food security and food sovereignty. Following this, I will discuss several rights which are innately linked with the right to food in this context, including rights specific to Indigenous peoples as well as universal rights. This will include an analysis of international treaties, declarations, and conventions, such as the United Nations Declaration on Rights of Indigenous Peoples, both UN International Covenants, as well as the European Convention on Human Rights. Understanding the rights associated with food insecurity in the region will facilitate providing recommendations to the States on how these rights may be protected.

#### **3.1 The Right to Food in the Arctic Context**

The Right to Food, which is articulated in both the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights, ensures that “everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food.”<sup>35</sup> This is further clarified in General Comment No. 12 by the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (UNCESCR), according to which, this right is realized when every human always has physical and economic access to adequate food or has the means to procure it, and that this fundamental right is essential for individuals to enjoy all other rights.<sup>36</sup> This understanding of the right to food overlaps substantially with the idea of food security defined at the World Food Summit, which was articulated in the previous chapter. While the overlap between both definitions is not exact, both definitions stress the need for there to be adequately accessible and nutritious food available to the entire population, regardless of socio-economic status. In the Arctic context, this means that the State should take measures to make the cost of nutritious food affordable or to ensure that those living in the region do not face significant barriers to sourcing their food. However, food security in this context does not rely solely on having access to nutritious and adequate food, which was originally created by the FAO. Rather, food security includes a multitude of factors, such as a connection to the land and culture, a sense

---

<sup>35</sup> The United Nations. (1948) *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights*

<sup>36</sup> UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1999) *General Comment No. 12: The Right to Adequate Food*

of community and sharing, and an adherence to traditions.<sup>37</sup> This expanded definition of food security, which arises from round table discussions with Inuit elders, connects with food sovereignty, which allows peoples the determination to source foods in manners which is acceptable to them and their cultures. In terms of legal obligations, this conception of food security can be connected to other rights, such as those specific to Indigenous peoples and other conventions and treaties. As I established in the previous chapter, food security, and by extension, the right to food, is being threatened in the Arctic region. I identified trends of current challenges to food security, including the impacts of climate change, an increase in industrial and economic activities, as well as socio-economic factors such as elevated poverty rates and a high cost of living. These challenges will be analyzed in the context of the rights associated with the right to food in the Arctic and Indigenous context.

### 3.2 **Food Security and Universal Fundamental Rights**

While the right to food is only explicitly articulated in the ICESCR and the UDHR, it is prevalent across the other guaranteed rights. Further, while there is no specific reference to protections of traditional subsistence methods in these documents, protections can be extrapolated due to their inherent connection with other rights. First, Article 6 of the ICCPR articulates that every human being has the inherent right to life.<sup>38</sup> Contained within this Article are specific protections, none of which include a right to food. However, these protections are expanded upon in a subsequent General Comment by the Human Rights Committee. Specifically, General Comment No. 36 (2018), articulates that the right to life shall not be interpreted narrowly, such as only protecting the rights specifically outlined within the Article. Further, the comment notes that the right to life should include a life with dignity.<sup>39</sup> This wider interpretation is important for individuals and society to enjoy the right to life, as there are essential requirements associated with living a life with dignity. According to the widely accepted definitions of food security, this includes an adequate supply of nutritious food.<sup>40</sup> In the context of indigenous peoples, the Human

---

<sup>37</sup> Polar Knowledge Canada (2022) *Climate Change Research and Monitoring*. POLAR Webinar Series

<sup>38</sup> United Nations (1966) *The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*

<sup>39</sup> The UN Human Rights Committee (2018) *General Comment No. 36 (2018) on Article 6 of the ICCPR, on the Right to Life*

<sup>40</sup> Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (2006) *Food Security: Policy Brief*

Rights Committee further expands in General Comment No. 36 on Article 6 of the ICCPR, that the State is required to take special measures to resolve any potential threat to the natural resources of Indigenous peoples, which can impact the right to life by risking their inherent right to dignity.<sup>41</sup> We can see in the Arctic context that this expanded right to life has broad implications for States. All eight Arctic States are party to the ICCPR and thus have the obligation to ensure that Indigenous peoples within their territory have an adequate supply of nutritious food. Methods in which the State may fulfil their obligation would be to create policies to limit the degradation of natural resources on Indigenous territories, such as climate change-mitigating policies, increased regulations on economic activities, etc. Of course, States do have wide discretion on how this obligation is fulfilled.

Culture remains an essential aspect of food security for Indigenous peoples in the Arctic region. The International Bill of Human Rights also articulates this connection to culture. Article 15(1) of the ICESCR as well as Article 27 of the UDHR link food as essential to culture, and articulate the right of communities and people to participate in cultural practices.<sup>42</sup> This right is further expressed by the UNCESCR in General Comment No. 21 on Article 15, where the Committee considers that culture when implementing Article 15(1), must include consideration for the cultural connection to food.<sup>43</sup> Further, the ICCPR guarantees the protection of minorities within a State, which includes allowing these minorities to freely practise their culture within their community as well as with other members of their group. Similar to the position by the UNCESCR, the Human Rights Committee in General Comment No. 23 regarding Article 27 (Rights of Minorities), conceptualized the idea of culture in this context. According to the HRC, cultural practice manifests itself in multiple forms, notably in how Indigenous peoples require the use of land resources to live their lives, such as participating in traditional subsistence measures such as hunting and fishing. The HRC furthers this protection, by requiring States to take positive measures to ensure that minorities are able to effectively participate in their culture and

---

<sup>41</sup> Hossain, Kamrul & Punam, Noor Jahan (2021) *Human Rights begin with breakfast: maintenance of and access to stable traditional food systems with a focus on the European High Arctic*.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (2009) *General Comment No. 21 on Article 15(1) of the ICESCR*

in decisions that may affect them.<sup>44</sup> We have seen in both of the International Covenants, that there is strong protection of the culture of Indigenous peoples to practice their cultures, which includes using land resources to engage in traditional subsistence activities such as hunting and fishing. Notably, both Covenants articulate the obligation of States to implement positive measures to protect the cultural practices of Indigenous peoples, meaning that they must actively work to prevent the degradation of the right of Indigenous peoples' to practice their culture. In the context of protecting the cultural aspect of using traditional activities, such as hunting and fishing, to secure food security, States should implement policies that protect the ability of these groups to practice these activities. Reflecting the main challenges of food security in the Arctic region, measures taken by the State could include proactively creating climate change mitigation policies to reduce the impact of climate change on traditional lands, or regulating economic activities to protect the land available to Indigenous communities to practice their culture on. While States do have a wide margin on how these obligations may be implemented, effectively protecting the rights of Indigenous peoples should include effective communication with all groups involved.

### 3.3 **Food Security and Indigenous-specific Rights**

As globalization and colonialism have historically permeated themselves, Indigenous peoples have, and continue to face substantial discrimination. Notably, certain States have systematically attempted to eliminate Indigenous populations and cultures through abhorrent measures, such as the creation of residential school systems and the destruction of traditional lands.<sup>45</sup> As a result of this discrimination, it was essential to create a set of rights specifically to protect the rights of Indigenous peoples and their way of living. Two key documents have been created in pursuit of these protections: The ILO Convention on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples (hereinafter, "the ILO 169 Convention") and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indige-

---

<sup>44</sup> UN Human Rights Committee (1994) *General Comment 23, Article 27 of the ICCPR*

<sup>45</sup> Young, Bryanne (2015) "*Killing the Indian in the Child*": *Death, Cruelty, and Subject-formation in the Canadian Indian Residential School System*



nous Peoples (hereinafter, “the Declaration”)<sup>46</sup>. These documents outline a list of rights specific to the protection of Indigenous peoples globally.

First, the Declaration was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2007. Since its adoption, it has become the most comprehensive international instrument aimed at protecting the rights of indigenous people. The Declaration has established a universal framework of minimum standards to protect indigenous peoples, as well as elaborates on existing human rights protections in the specific context of indigenous peoples.<sup>47</sup> I will note, that while the Declaration is not legally binding, states which have adopted it have made an aspirational commitment to upholding the rights outlined in the Declaration. While academics and lawyers have argued that the Declaration should be construed as customary international law, it should not be considered binding, because it may reduce the long-term legitimacy of the international legal order by forcing states to comply with obligations to which they did not consent to.<sup>48</sup> Specifically, certain states, upon signing the Declaration, stated that it should not be seen to express customary international law.<sup>49</sup>

Second, the ILO 169 Convention was implemented in 1989 by the International Labour Organization. While only two Arctic states, Norway and Denmark, have adopted this Convention, it is considered legally binding under international law. I will again reiterate that while States do have a wide margin of appreciation on how rights are implemented, this analysis is useful to see how States may implement their obligations in this context. While many of the rights articulated in the both Declaration and the ILO 169 Convention can be connected to the right to food in the Arctic context, I will focus on a few rights, including the right to self-determination, the right to culture, and the right to free, prior, and informed consent, are intimately linked to food security in the region.

---

<sup>46</sup> UN General Assembly, Resolution 61/295 (2007) *The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*;  
International Labour Organization (1989) *The Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention*

<sup>47</sup> UN General Assembly, Resolution 61/295 (2007) *The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*

<sup>48</sup> Esterling, Shea (2021) *Looking Forward Looking Back: Customary International Law, Human Rights and Indigenous Peoples*

<sup>49</sup> CBC News (2010) *Canada endorses indigenous rights declaration*

### 3.3.1 **Self-Determination and Food Security**

The first right which I will discuss is the Indigenous right to self-determination. According to Article 3 of the Declaration, “Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and strengthen their distinct political, legal, economic, social and cultural institutions, while retaining their right to participate fully, if they so choose, in the political, economic, social and cultural life of the State”.<sup>50</sup> This right is arguably one of the most important rights afforded in the Declaration, as it is the first instrument to recognize and elaborate on the right to self-determination for Indigenous peoples. However, this right has been contentious due to a diverging understanding of what self-determination entails. For Indigenous peoples, this right includes the right to control their destinies, including managing their traditional lands and natural resources, as well as having the autonomy to practise their own cultures and maintain their distinct identities.<sup>51</sup> Conversely, States have been hesitant to truly accept this right, out of apprehension that the recognition of self-determination will challenge not only the States’ sovereignty over natural resources but also the political unity and territorial integrity of the State.<sup>52</sup> The right to self-determination is essential to a discussion on combatting food insecurity and the right to food in the Arctic context for several reasons. First, this right is particularly relevant to several of the aspects identified as challenges to food security, notably the impacts of climate change, economic activities such as natural resource exploitation, as well as socio-economic issues such as poverty. In particular, the decision over *how* these issues are managed is important to respond to food insecurity. For example, economic activities in the Arctic region have negatively impacted the ability of Indigenous communities to source their food. Moving forward, indigenous peoples must have a meaningful voice in which projects are to be allowed in the region, and must be involved in the discussion on how these projects are managed, to ensure that these activities do not damage their livelihood or ability to source their food. Article 3 is also relevant when discussing responses to climate change and how to mitigate the impact of the changing climate. To reduce the impact that climate change has on food security in the Arctic, indigenous communities must have a voice. In particular, tra-

---

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Cambou, Dorothée (2019) *The UNDRIP and the legal significance of the right of indigenous peoples to self-determination: a human right approach with a multidimensional perspective*

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

ditional knowledge/science should be treated as equivalent to 'western' science in discussing solutions. This is necessary because the lived experience of Indigenous peoples can provide great insight into how climate change measures will impact the ability of communities to enjoy their livelihoods. Further, since Arctic communities are heavily impacted by these changes, they should be involved in decisions on how the challenges may be mitigated.

The concept of self-determination is also central to the ILO169 Convention. Throughout, recognition of indigenous peoples' need for control over their destinies, such as their own institutions, economic development, cultural and societal practices. In particular, this idea of control over economic development as well as cultural practices contributes an important role to food security in the region. First, the Arctic region has an abundance of exploitable natural resources. Article 15 of the ILO 169 Convention safeguards the right of Indigenous peoples to have their ancestral territory safeguarded by the State. This right includes the right to participate in the use, without undue State interference, as well as in the management and conservation of these natural resources.<sup>53</sup> This right further ensures that States are required to consult with impacted groups before undertaking or allowing any programmes which will exploit the natural resources on Indigenous ancestral grounds. This right has been effective in protecting the landscape and environment in States which have ratified the Convention, such as Norway. However, in Finland, where Indigenous peoples do not have the inherent right to their ancestral lands and effective control over the development of natural resources, challenges have emerged. For example, in recent years, automobile manufacturers have rushed to northern Scandinavia to mine essential raw materials to build car batteries. Naturally, this has had consequences on the ability of the Sámi living in the region to practice their traditional means of subsistence: reindeer husbandry. According to local Sámi reindeer herders, it is impossible for mining activities and reindeer husbandry to co-exist in the same region.<sup>54</sup> As I previously covered, reindeer husbandry is an essential aspect of food security for Indigenous communities. Not only does it provide adequate nourishment to communities, but it also provides other aspects of food security, such as a connection with their land, ancestors, and communities. Therefore, this right can be seen as essential to food security in the region. Without adequate protection of the natural resources, State and non-State

---

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Nilsen, Thomas (2020) *Hunting for metals to battery cars threaten Sámi reindeer herders' homeland*

actors will be able to exploit them without concern for the impact on the livelihood of Indigenous populations.

### 3.3.2 **Free, Prior, and Informed Consent and Food Security**

Economic activities are typically approved by the State with little input from Indigenous communities on the potential impacts activities may have on their livelihood, which is in contradiction to Article 32 of the Declaration, which articulates that “States shall consult and cooperate in good faith with the Indigenous peoples concerned ... in order to obtain their free and informed consent prior to the approval of any project affecting their lands or territories and other resources.”<sup>55</sup> Article 32 has been a major point of controversy in the adoption of the Declaration. In Canada, for example, while the government has adopted aspects of the Declaration in their national constitution, there has been limited movement on including free, prior, and informed consent.<sup>56</sup> Article 32 of the Declaration is essential to food security and the right to food in the Arctic region. In particular, Indigenous communities must be adequately informed of any projects that are proposed which occur or may impact their traditional land and livelihood, including their ability to source their food. This is because these activities may have a direct impact on the accessibility and availability of adequate food sources, as evidenced in many instances in the European High Arctic<sup>57</sup>. Further, for any projects that are approved, Indigenous communities should be compensated for the use of their traditional lands, which could alleviate food insecurity by providing funds to communities where there are elevated rates of poverty and high cost of food. Most importantly, however, communities should have the ability to decline any proposed project which is not aligned with the interests of the communities. as having the right to consent implies a right to withhold consent. However, national governments have been hesitant to include this aspect as part of free, prior, and informed consent. For example, upon its adoption of the Declaration, Sweden clarified that this right did not entail a collective right of communities to veto projects pursued by the State<sup>58</sup>, which essentially eliminates the ‘consent’ portion of the right.

---

<sup>55</sup> UN General Assembly, Resolution 61/295 (2007) *The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*

<sup>56</sup> Goyal, Sandra A. (2021) *A new era: Free prior and informed consent*

<sup>57</sup> Hansen, M (2016) *Heavy metals in food from the Norwegian ... and Russian border region ... Presentation at Seminar on food security in the Barents Region*

<sup>58</sup> UNGAOR ‘107th plenary meeting’ (2007) Verbal Recording, UN doc A/61/PV107, 24-25

This right to withhold consent is essential to the protection of food security in the region. Economic activities and resource exploitation have been identified as a significant detriment to ecosystems essential to food security. For food security to be ensured, communities must be adequately informed of risks, and have the ability to decline to pursue any such activities which may damage their ability to source food.

### 3.3.3 **Culture and Food Security**

The practice of indigenous culture and tradition is essential to food security in the Arctic. For centuries, communities have relied upon traditional means of subsistence, including hunting and gathering, for their livelihood. This way of life has been challenged by an increasingly globalized world, with an increase in economic activities and climate-related issues in the region. To combat the threat of the cultural erosion of indigenous populations, Article 11 of the Declaration articulates that, “Indigenous peoples have the right to practice ... their cultural traditions and customs, [including] the right to maintain, protect and develop the past, present and future manifestations of their cultures”.<sup>59</sup> In the context of food security, this right must include the right of indigenous peoples to practice, transmit, and protect their cultural connection to food, including traditional means of subsistence.<sup>60</sup> To achieve food security in the Arctic, indigenous communities maintain a deep connection with their cultural and traditional identity. Understanding the cultural dimension of food security is essential to creating effective food security policies and a sustainable and healthy diet for Arctic residents. First, culturally appropriate foods and the traditional means of securing them, including through hunting, agriculture, and fishing, remain an important aspect of the cultural identity of many indigenous peoples.<sup>61</sup> Methods of subsistence that have been passed through generations are essential to food security. Indigenous communities have been able to protect the knowledge of sustainable food sourcing for centuries, and it has become deeply ingrained in their culture. Further, continuing to use these means of subsistence present a connection with not only their ancestors but with their territory and ecosystems. This deep connection with their history and territory is rooted in food security in the region. For ex-

---

<sup>59</sup> UN General Assembly, Resolution 61/295 (2007) *The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*

<sup>60</sup> Polar Knowledge Canada (2022) *Climate Change Research and Monitoring*. POLAR Webinar Series

<sup>61</sup> Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (2008) *Joint Brief: The Right to Food and Indigenous Peoples*

ample, as we know, the harsh Arctic terrain has provided distinct challenges to those living in the region. Despite these challenges, indigenous peoples have been able to survive for centuries, by developing strategies over time to adapt to the territory. For instance, methods such as employing the use of permafrost as natural refrigerators to store excess food, which would be necessary to survive during the summer months, have been evident in Arctic communities.<sup>62</sup> However, this has been threatened due to climate change, which has lengthened the warming period in the region and thawed the permafrost to the point where it is no longer an effective method to store food. Further, climate change has accelerated the melting sea ice and has forced the displacement of several Indigenous communities. In Alaska, the Inupiaq community has been forced to relocate from their ancestral territory, as the melting ice has rendered it unsafe.<sup>63</sup> This displacement damages the ability of the community to practice their traditional means of subsistence, and their connection to the ancestral territory. These two examples serve as evidence of the importance of culture to food security which has been threatened by a changing climate. Under Article 11 of the Declaration, States shall provide redress through effective mechanisms when Indigenous peoples are not able to practice their culture or remain on their traditional territory.<sup>64</sup> For many communities who have already been severely impacted by climate-related challenges, meaningful redress, which is required under Article 11, is difficult, as the State cannot retroactively create policies to protect the ancestral territory. This occurs when it is no longer safe for communities to live in their ancestral territories as a result of catastrophic climate degradation. However, States are able to use the lived experience of these communities, specifically how they have been negatively impacted by climate change in order to create policies that are effective at preserving the culture and food security in the region.

Culture has also been identified by national courts as essential to food security and the protection of Indigenous rights. Canada, *R v. Sparrow* established that aboriginal rights, notably subsistence-related rights such as fishing rights, are guaranteed under the Canadian

---

<sup>62</sup> Yoshikawa et al. (2016) *Traditional Ice Cellars (Lednik, Bulus) in Yakutia: Characteristics, Temperature Monitoring, and Distribution*

<sup>63</sup> The Arctic Institute: Center for Circumpolar Security Studies (2017) *Self-Preservation: Amid Debate, an Alaskan Village Decides to Move Inland*

<sup>64</sup> UN General Assembly, Resolution 61/295 (2007) *The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*

Constitution.<sup>65</sup> This landmark decision was important because it recognized that the State may not define how aboriginal rights are practiced. Rather, Indigenous communities are given a wide margin on how they wish to exercise their inherent rights. The connection between this case and food security is evident, as indigenous communities have used traditional means of subsistence for generations, which have been adapted as the circumstances require, such as a changing climate. As a result, they are in a better position to understand how these subsistence practices should be managed, rather than government departments.

Also, the transmission of cultural information and education is essential to food security. I have already established the importance of culture and traditional means to food security, but it is important to understand the rights associated with the protection of culture and how cultural practices are transmitted through generations. Article 14 of the Declaration articulates that “Indigenous peoples have the right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing education in their own languages, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning”.<sup>66</sup> Education in a western context is typically insufficient to adequately educate Indigenous youth in a culturally appropriate manner. Such institutions are typically associated with the assimilation and erosion of Indigenous cultures. Rather, educational curricula developed by Indigenous organizations and governments are better suited to teach Indigenous youths. For example, an appropriate Indigenous education does not necessarily take place in a classroom. To appropriately transmit cultural and traditional practices, a more hands-on approach is required. In the context of food security, this includes going out on the land to practice methods of subsistence such as hunting and fishing. Without this specialized education to transmit culture effectively, it will become increasingly difficult for these communities to practice their traditional means of subsistence, thus exacerbating food insecurity. As such, indigenous communities should be provided with the ability to control the education of their youth, as well as for their education system to be treated as equal to more standardized education systems developed by the State.

Another aspect as to why culture is important to food security in Indigenous communities connects directly to the FAO's definition of food security, as well as the idea of food sovereignty,

---

<sup>65</sup> Supreme Court of Canada (1990) *R. v. Sparrow*

<sup>66</sup> UN General Assembly, Resolution 61/295 (2007) *The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*

which is that food must meet the dietary preferences and needs of those living in the region.<sup>67</sup> Indigenous communities have relied on their traditional methods of subsistence for generations, which have proven to meet their dietary needs and preferences. However, this has been challenged by a changing climate which has damaged the ability of Indigenous peoples to source their food, as well as an increased reliance on store-bought food, which has had negative health outcomes on Indigenous communities, such as elevated rates of obesity.<sup>68</sup> To better protect food security in the region, communities should be empowered to practice their cultural and traditional means of subsistence, which require the State to develop food policies in conjunction with Indigenous groups to ensure that they are culturally appropriate. Further, the State should also develop policies that protect the culture of Indigenous peoples as well as to protect against the identified challenges to food security, such as climate change-mitigating policies or further regulating economic industries in the region.

Finally, the ILO 169 Convention recognizes the importance of traditional subsistence activities and community-based industries to food security in the Arctic. Accordingly, Article 23 of the ILO 169 Convention articulates that these activities “shall be recognized as important factors in the maintenance of their culture and their economic-self-reliance and development.”<sup>69</sup> This right is consistent with other Indigenous-specific rights protecting culture, such as in the previously discussed Declaration. However, Article 23 expands on this right, by guaranteeing that States have the obligation to provide assistance, whenever requested by the people concerned, to ensure that these traditional activities are protected and strengthened, while taking into consideration the traditional knowledge and cultural tendencies of the peoples.<sup>70</sup> This right is particularly important when discussing how States should respond to food insecurity. The State may not simply implement policies aimed at alleviating food insecurity, such as by offering assistance to relocate Indigenous communities. Rather, policies should be developed in conjunction with the desires and needs of Indigenous peoples. This includes ensuring that traditional means of subsis-

---

<sup>67</sup> World Food Summit (1996) *Report of the World Food Summit*

<sup>68</sup> Arriagada, Paula (2017) *Insights on Canadian Society: Food insecurity among Inuit living in Inuit Nunangat*. Statistics Canada

<sup>69</sup> International Labour Organization (1989) *The Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention*

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*



tence, such as fishing and hunting, remain accessible and viable options for Indigenous communities.

### 3.3.4 **Food Production and Food Security**

The final Indigenous-specific right covered in the ILO 169 Convention that I will discuss is Article 19, which explicitly references food production. Article 19 articulates that national agrarian programmes shall provide adequate land to Indigenous peoples when they lack the area to provide the essentials of a normal existence, as well as provide the means to promote the further development of the lands which are already in the possession of Indigenous communities.<sup>71</sup> Article 19 is particularly interesting because it is the only right guaranteeing the protection of the means of food production in Indigenous communities in both the UN Declaration and the ILO 169 Convention. While food security in this context is considered to be much more than just access to adequate food, this Article guarantees government support to communities to ensure that Indigenous communities have adequate land and funds to develop the land in order to cultivate food for the communities.

### 3.4 **Food Security and the European Human Rights Framework**

Those living in the European High Arctic are entitled to the protections guaranteed by the European Convention on Human Rights. However, typically, Arctic indigenous communities have not been empowered to use this instrument to protect their rights, potentially due to a belief that the Strasbourg-based Court was not in a position to understand the unique context of these communities. These concerns may have been proven correct, as, in certain circumstances, communities have applied to the Court in order to protect their land and property rights, the Court found against the communities, which negatively impacts food security. The first two cases submitted to the European Commission on Human Rights involving Arctic Indigenous communities were *G and E v. Norway*, or the “Alta case” (1981).<sup>72</sup> These cases were significant because they concerned the conflict between economic development activities, such as the creation of hydropower projects, and the impact on the culture and livelihood of Sámi. In these cases, the Sámi community in Finmárku, Norway, argued that the construction of a dam in this location would result in a substantial portion of pastureland being lost, constituting a violation of Article 1 of

---

<sup>71</sup> International Labour Organization (1989) *The Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention*

<sup>72</sup> The European Commission of Human Rights (1983) *G and E v Norway*

Protocol 1 of the European Convention on Human Rights (hereinafter, “the ECHR”). However, in this instance, the cases were dismissed because it was deemed that the Applicants did not have inherent property rights to the territory directly impacted by the development of the dam, and therefore not entitled to recourse.<sup>73</sup> Naturally, this loss of pastureland did indeed have an impact on the Sámi peoples’ ability to practice their culture and protect their sources of food, through a loss of useable land to practice reindeer husbandry. We can see that the conservative approach towards what should be considered traditional land can impact the ability of communities to protect their culture and livelihood. However, this cautious approach may be considered necessary to not alienate member States who may see a more liberal approach as disingenuous and see decisions as less legitimate. Years later, the European Commission was asked to consider another landmark case involving the rights of Indigenous peoples is *O.B. and Others v Norway* (1990). In this case, the Commission was to consider whether one specific Sámi community (the Skolte Sámi) had exclusive rights to practice reindeer husbandry in relation to other Sámi communities in the region.<sup>74</sup> Originally, the Skolte community's claim to exclusive rights over the territory was denied by both the national government and the national court. Following this rejection, the Skolte community applied to the Commission claiming a violation of Article 1 of Protocol 1 of the ECHR, on the basis that since Norwegian law did not find the right to reindeer husbandry in the territory exclusive, neither should the Commission.<sup>75</sup> This case is particularly interesting and relevant when discussing food security, and the right to practice Indigenous culture. While the decision to uphold the national courts’ decision is not notable, the reasoning behind the Commission’s decision-making is important. With this decision, the Commission established that the national institutions are in a better position to decide how Indigenous peoples may practice their culture and use their traditional lands. The rationale behind this decision appears to be in contradiction with the application of other Indigenous-specific rights, such as where Indigenous populations have wide discretion on how they may practice their traditions and livelihood on the ancestral territory. Further, to reflect on a previously discussed case, *R v. Sparrow*, where the

---

<sup>73</sup> Lundmark, Jan Mikael (2017) *European Court of Human Rights for the Protection of Arctic Indigenous Peoples’ land rights*

<sup>74</sup> The European Commission of Human Rights (1990) *O.B. and Others v. Norway*

<sup>75</sup> Lundmark, Jan Mikael (2017) *European Court of Human Rights for the Protection of Arctic Indigenous Peoples’ land rights*

Supreme Court of Canada established that the national and provincial governments could not impose on how Indigenous culture and traditions were practiced on ancestral land<sup>76</sup>, which stands in stark contrast to how the Norwegian national court decided.

Through a discussion on these ECHR cases concerning the protection of Arctic Indigenous rights, we have seen that there is still much more progress that needs to be made to ensure that the rights are protected. The Commission has either been unwilling to take a more liberal approach to protect Indigenous traditional land rights or diverging from the status quo established by national governments and courts. These decisions have had a direct impact on food security for these communities. In both instances, the Court's decision against the communities has weakened the rights of Indigenous peoples to protect their traditional lands, which has been deemed essential to achieving an accessible and stable supply of food. As a result, it is evident to see why Indigenous communities living in the Arctic have been reluctant to continue to submit cases to the ECtHR.

#### **Chapter 4: The Future of Food Security in a Changing Arctic Environment**

This chapter aims to review measures on how States may respond to food security challenges in Arctic Indigenous communities. In the previous chapters, I have identified key trends causing food insecurity in the region, such as socioeconomic factors, economic activities, and climate change, as well as introduced a few measures implemented by States to combat food insecurity. The measures that I will review aim to target the causes of food insecurity through a multi-faceted approach. These approaches will be divided into three overarching themes: international collaboration, state action, and non-State approaches to food insecurity. These measures will be reviewed not only by their effectiveness in alleviating food insecurity but also through the lens of human rights obligations that States have towards their Indigenous populations, such as the right to practice culture or self-determination.

##### **4.1 International Collaboration to Alleviate Food Insecurity**

This paper has explored challenges associated with food security across the Arctic region. While there is regional variance in some of the challenges facing different communities, the trends in challenges remain consistent. Further, many communities, such as the Sámi living in Scandinavia, do not live within modern geographical borders, rather, these communities may tra-

---

<sup>76</sup> The Supreme Court of Canada (1990) *R v. Sparrow*

verse States such as Finland or Norway in their day-to-day lives, such as on hunting expeditions. Further, policies taken by one State in the region may adversely impact the ability of Indigenous peoples in another State to achieve food security. Finally, climate change and global warming is a global issue, which requires international coordination to solve. Because of these reasons, it is evident that there is a need for international collaboration to effectively manage the challenges to food security facing these communities.

#### 4.1.1 **The Arctic Council as Essential to International Cooperation**

To facilitate international collaboration in the region, the Arctic Council was established in 1996. This Council consists of all eight Arctic States, several Indigenous governments as Permanent Participants, as well as observers such as non-Arctic States, NGOs, IGOs, etc. Further, within the Council, the activities are typically conducted in six working groups, as well as one expert group that is responsible for a wide spectrum of topics, such as climate change, sustainable development, and mental health. These groups are responsible for planning initiatives on topics of importance in collaboration with National and Indigenous governments. The main goal of the Arctic Council is to establish the Arctic as a “region of peace, stability and constructive cooperation, that is a vibrant, prosperous, sustainable and secure home for all its inhabitants, including Indigenous Peoples, and where their rights and wellbeing are respected.”<sup>77</sup> With respect to food security, several aspects stand out in the Arctic Council mission plan. First, the idea of sustainability is a priority for the Arctic Council and is essential to the longevity and well-being of communities living in the Arctic. All policies developed by States should have sustainability at the forefront, to ensure that the health of the Arctic ecosystem and biodiversity remains for generations. Second, the emphasis on respecting the wellbeing and rights of Indigenous peoples is important<sup>78</sup>. This demonstrates that the Council understands the importance of protecting the rights and well-being of the Indigenous peoples living within the Arctic region and that these communities must be consulted when deciding policy in the region. This is further evidenced by the inclusion of the six Indigenous governments as permanent participants within the Council. It should be noted, that the Arctic Council exists as a forum to foster international collaboration,

---

<sup>77</sup> The Arctic Council. *What does the Arctic Council do?*

<sup>78</sup> The Arctic Council (2021) *Arctic Council Strategic Plan: 2021-2030*

and that it is the responsibility of States or other international bodies to develop and fund initiatives, which may be agreed upon in this forum.

#### 4.1.1.1: **The Arctic Council and Finnish-Norwegian Collaboration Case Study**

The Working Group on the Protection of Arctic Marine Environment (hereinafter, “PAME”), has articulated that to understand and manage the social and environmental changes in the region, which impact the health of Arctic residents and animals, it is essential that States examine the ecosystem as a whole. This conceptual framework, known as *One Health*, includes protecting a healthy environment, healthy animals, and healthy humans.<sup>79</sup> Food security remains an important aspect of this framework and can be seen as an essential indicator of the health of the ecosystem, as Indigenous peoples typically rely on the natural resources available within the region to achieve food security, through hunting, fishing, or agriculture. This Arctic Council Working Group focuses on how the oceans and Arctic communities are impacted by changing oceans, including a loss of sea ice, which has reduced the availability and accessibility of biodiversity, ocean warming, and acidification.<sup>80</sup> These changes have an impact on the well-being of communities, specifically on their ability to achieve food security, such as a loss of safe food storage preservation.<sup>81</sup> To respond to these changes, both State and Indigenous governments are working together to protect the ability of communities to source their own food. For example, the Njauddâm river, which is located in Finland but empties out into the Várjjat Fjord in Norway, has been identified as essential to achieving food security for communities in the region<sup>82</sup>. However, the ability of this river to provide adequate Atlantic salmon to communities that relied on it has been challenged by climate change. As a result, the Finnish-Norwegian Transboundary River Commission developed a project to alleviate this issue in collaboration with the Skolte Sámi in Finland.<sup>83</sup> This ongoing project has aimed to combine the traditional knowledge of the Skolte community with ‘western’ science to identify these challenges and restore areas of habitat,

---

<sup>79</sup> The Arctic Council. (2021) *Indigenous Food Security in the Arctic: Implications of a Changing Ocean*.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Brubaker, Michael et al. (2011) *Climate change and health effects in Northwest Alaska*

<sup>82</sup> The Arctic Council. (2021) *Indigenous Food Security in the Arctic: Implications of a Changing Ocean*.

<sup>83</sup> Brattland & Mustonen (2018) *How Traditional Knowledge Comes to Matter in Atlantic Salmon Governance in Norway and Finland*.

through measures such as self-imposed harvest limitations of Atlantic salmon. Further, this project has seen some success in restoring the availability of Atlantic salmon and including traditional knowledge in the development of international policy. This example of international collaboration to alleviate food insecurity in the region highlights several important elements when developing policies in the region. First, the Indigenous community most impacted, the Sámi Skolte, was consulted throughout the process. This inclusion has been identified as necessary when creating effective policies to combat challenges in the Arctic region. Further, it may coincide with fulfilling certain States' obligations towards their Indigenous communities, including the right to free, informed, and prior consent. Another highlight is the co-production of knowledge: the inclusion of traditional knowledge in the decision-making process has the potential to lend more legitimacy to the project and provide tangible benefits to identifying challenges and developing solutions. Finally, the cooperation between Finland and Norway has been essential in working toward a solution. Given the nature of the issue, cooperation between the States has been necessary in order to create an effective change. This project has been identified as a great example of how international cooperation and the inclusion of Indigenous communities and traditional knowledge in the decision-making process, are essential to combating challenges within the Arctic region.

#### 4.1.1.2 **The Arctic Council and the Arctic Food Innovation Cluster**

The Arctic Council's Sustainable Development Working Group (hereinafter, "SDWG") aims to advance sustainable development through proposing policies and opportunities to protect the environment, culture and health of Arctic Indigenous communities. A major initiative spearheaded by the SDWG is the Arctic Foods Innovation Cluster (hereinafter, "AFIC"), which aims to take a cluster-based approach to food innovation, by bringing relevant parties together in the Arctic foods value chain.<sup>84</sup> Notably, this approach will include a diverse range of partners, including traditional, artisanal, and industry-scale food production. The idea behind this approach is to connect the different traditional approaches to food production with the goal of developing innovative approaches capable of harnessing the Arctic region as a food-producing region. While the work of the SDWG is ongoing, several pilot projects have been implemented throughout different arctic regions. For example, in the Northwest Territories, Canada, a pilot project has been

---

<sup>84</sup> The Arctic Council (2019) *Arctic Food Innovation Cluster (AFIC)*

created which aims to establish a hydroponic market garden, with the goal of developing an agri-business model that focuses on local food production and business development.<sup>85</sup> If this model succeeds, it could potentially be scaled to other remote communities, leading to increased self-sustainability and food security for other remote communities.

In the European High Arctic, other States are participating in this project as well. In Russia, studies are underway in multiple fields, including agroforestry and aquaculture to discover how innovative techniques may be used to sustainably manufacture and source food products in the Arctic region. These new studies aim to combine practices to create diverse, profitable, and environmentally sustainable land-use systems.<sup>86</sup> Another pilot project in Finland aims to tackle food insecurity through innovative solutions to climate change adaptation, which articulates the importance of Arctic collaboration and sharing experiences as essential for adaptation.<sup>87</sup> This project is led by the Arctic Network for Climate Adaptation and Food Security, which is Finland's National strategy for food security and climate adaptation.

Ultimately, these pilot projects may be beneficial to alleviating food insecurity in the region, through a coordinated and strategic approach, and innovative ideas. If these pilot projects are successful, further projects will be developed as part of the final framework to establish and launch an Arctic Food Innovative Cluster.

#### 4.1.1.3 **The Arctic Council and the Conservation of Biodiversity**

The loss of biodiversity and damage to the ecosystem in the Arctic region has reduced the availability and accessibility of an adequate supply of food for communities. To combat this, the Arctic Council Working Group on Conservation of Flora and Fauna (hereinafter, "CAFF"), was created. CAFF is mandated to address the conservation of biodiversity in the Arctic and to share its findings with the appropriate stakeholders in order to promote practices that will lead to the sustainability of the living resources in the Arctic.<sup>88</sup> To achieve its mandate, the CAFF has led multiple projects that provide conservation and scientific recommendations on how States may

---

<sup>85</sup> The Arctic Council (2020) *Innovating the Food Industry on the Top of the World*

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>88</sup> The Arctic Council. *Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna*

implement plans to conserve ecosystems and biodiversity.<sup>89</sup> Further, these plans are developed through intense international cooperation between scientists and Arctic states. Some of these strategies include increasing community-based monitoring strategies, which will increase data monitoring capabilities in remote communities. Through increased availability of data, projects will be more targeted to solve challenges. Other projects include the Arctic Migratory Birds Initiative, which aims to secure the long-term sustainability of the declining Arctic breeding migratory bird populations, as well as the Arctic Invasive Alien Species project, to reduce the negative impacts of these species on the biodiversity.<sup>90</sup> These strategies were created out of an understanding that protecting diversity requires a multi-pronged approach. These strategies, if successful, will increase the likelihood that biodiversity in the Arctic region will thrive for generations to come. This will increase the access, availability, and stability of food sources for communities living in the Arctic.

#### 4.1.1.4 **The Arctic Council and Marine Protected Areas**

The Convention on Biological Diversity as well as goals adopted by the UN Conference on Sustainable Development, both advocate that 10% of the world's oceans be protected. While the Arctic Ocean is the smallest of the world's oceans, its health has implications for the local and global population. One policy that has been developed to protect the health of the Arctic Ocean, and to help States become in compliance with the Convention on Biological Diversity, is the creation of Marine Protected Areas (hereinafter, "MPAs"), which are "a clearly defined geographical space recognized, dedicated, and managed, through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long-term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values."<sup>91</sup> These areas are organized by the Marine Protected Area Agency Partnership, which is an informal and non-binding venue for senior government officials to collaborate and discuss common areas of importance.<sup>92</sup> The Arctic Council has taken notice of the effectiveness of these MPAs and has combined the work of the previously discussed working groups, PAME and CAFF to develop international strategies for creating protected areas. Naturally, given the cross-

---

<sup>89</sup> The Arctic Council. *CAFF Strategies*

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>91</sup> International Union for Conservation of Nature. *Marine Protected Areas*

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*



jurisdictional nature of the Arctic region, the creation of these areas requires international collaboration and agreement. Because of this, several Arctic states actively participate in this forum, and have developed MPAs to help protect this region.

In 2019, Canada created its largest MPA covering the *Tuvaijuittuq* region, which aims to conserve and protect the natural biodiversity and productivity of the sea ice ecosystem in the Arctic. Specifically, this MPA prohibits continued human activities in the region, with several exceptions, including the exercise of Inuit rights regarding wildlife harvesting, marine research with conservation objectives, emergency activities, and certain negotiated activities carried out by foreign entities.<sup>93</sup> This MPA is governed by a variety of groups, including the national government, regional government, and other Inuit partners. The implementation of this MPA recognizes several fundamental connections with food security in the region. First, it recognizes that Inuit have inherent rights to practice wildlife harvesting and that practicing these activities is essential to their culture and food security. Second, it understands that human activities must be limited in the Arctic to protect its biodiversity. Further, its governance structure recognizes that the stakeholders best positioned to understand the importance of the region and how to protect it, are those who live within it. Finally, it recognizes that some activities are required to be undertaken, including international and emergency activities, which have been negotiated through agreements between States.

European High Arctic States have also developed MPAs. Norway, for example, has created the Svalbard Marine Protected Areas, which are a series of three MPAs covering the territory of the archipelago, which covers the majority of the Norwegian portion of the Barents Sea.<sup>94</sup> The objectives of these Protected Areas are similar to the objectives of the previously discussed Canadian MPA, which are to safeguard the ecosystem and biodiversity of the Arctic region. Protections include specific policies to protect migratory birds, the diversity of plants, and the general health of other species.<sup>95</sup> Actions include reducing activities in fishing and tourism.

A final MPA which I will discuss was created by the United States, which is the Fishery Management Plan for the Fish Resources of the Arctic Management Area (hereinafter, "Arctic

---

<sup>93</sup> The Government of Canada. *Tuvaijuittuq Marine Protected Area (MPA)*

<sup>94</sup> The Arctic Council (2021) *Marine Protected Areas in a Changing Arctic*

<sup>95</sup> Norwegian Directorate for Nature Management. *Protected Areas in Svalbard*

FMP). The Arctic FMP specifically regulates commercial fisheries in the Alaskan region, which have become more available as a result of the shortened ice seasons, caused by the warming oceans and changing climate. These activities, if left unregulated, may have negative outcomes on the ecosystem and natural resources in the area, including fish and non-fish species, which are relied upon for the subsistence of Arctic communities.<sup>96</sup>

The creation of these MPAs represents States commitment to protecting the biodiversity of the region. While the areas are managed by States and agreements created at the international level are non-binding, these States have made a commitment to protect the biodiversity and ecosystem of the region through coordinated and similar protections, with the well-being of Northern communities being included in all policies.

#### 4.1.1.4 **The Arctic Council and the UN Sustainable Development Goals**

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were adopted in 2015 with the goals of eliminating global inequality and protecting the planet. The goals are wide-ranging, targeting a number of interrelated areas. In 2017, the Arctic Council realized that the UN SDGs were similar to the sustainable development agenda of the SDWG, and commissioned a study to understand the linkages between several of the SDGs in order to understand how they interacted. In particular, the SDWG identified three goals that are inherently interconnected to each other regarding food security: SDG 2- ending hunger and achieving food security for all; SDG 6 - ensuring the availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all; and SDG 7- ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable energy for all.<sup>97</sup> In 2020, the SDWG launched a project to study the nexus between these three goals. Specifically, it aims to understand the synergies versus tradeoffs of the goals.<sup>98</sup> While the study is ongoing, it is evident where challenges may arise between each of these goals, specifically as it relates to increasing access to affordable and reliable energy versus adequate access to food and clean water. For example, natural resource exploitation in the region has the potential to create adverse impacts on the climate and biodiversity, which directly impacts the livelihood of local communities. This study will take a novel approach to study the nexus between these three goals, which aims to explicitly include the liveli-

---

<sup>96</sup> North Pacific Fishery Management Council. *Arctic Fishery Management*

<sup>97</sup> The Arctic Council (2020) *Finding the Nexus between Water, Energy and Food in the Arctic*

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

hoods of Arctic residents as an essential aspect. Further, it recognizes that Indigenous peoples rely heavily on water, energy, and food systems to meet their needs, yet they are constantly disproportionately adversely impacted by inequalities.<sup>99</sup> This project specifically aims to improve the data and eliminate knowledge gaps in these three realms. As discussed in Chapter 2, a lack of adequate data and monitoring in the region has an adverse impact on creating effective policies to combat challenges in the Arctic. Therefore, by increasing the data and understanding of the nexus between these realms and how communities are impacted by them States will be better capable to develop solutions to protect them.

#### 4.1.2 **The European Union and the Arctic Region**

While individual States within Europe have developed their own Arctic policies or climate change mitigation strategies, the European Union has also recognized the importance of the Arctic region, and in 2021, they put forth a strategy for stronger engagement in the region, for a peaceful, sustainable and prosperous Arctic. Specifically, the EU has identified key targets through which it will strengthen its engagement in the Arctic. Two targets stand out as necessary in combatting food insecurity in the region. First, the EU has committed to take strong action to reduce the ecological, economic, and social impact of environmental degradation and climate change in the arctic, specifically by reducing natural resource exploitation in the Arctic. Second, the EU promotes a comprehensive, inclusive and sustainable development of the region, aimed at securing the well-being of current Arctic residents as well as of future generations, with the emphasis on protecting the unique needs of Indigenous peoples in the region.<sup>100</sup> In pursuit of these targets, the EU has contributed a significant amount of funding to various initiatives for Indigenous peoples as well as to Arctic research.<sup>101</sup> As I already established, a clean climate and healthy ecosystems are essential to food security in the region, as they are necessary to provide communities with an adequate supply of country food. What's notable about the EU's approach to the Arctic, is that while only three member states within the EU are Arctic states, they recog-

---

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> The European Commission (2021) *A stronger EU engagement for a greener, peaceful and prosperous Arctic*

<sup>101</sup> The European Commission (2012) *EU's Arctic Policy: Questions and Answers*

nize the importance of the Arctic region, and how global actions may adversely impact the region.

## 4.2 **State Responses to Alleviate Food Insecurity**

States are ultimately responsible for the well-being of all of the people living within their jurisdiction. Because of this, it is their responsibility to ensure that Indigenous communities living within their borders do not face food security challenges. By neglecting this responsibility, States may be in violation of their international and national obligations. Therefore, States have taken action to alleviate food insecurity in these remote Arctic communities.

### 4.2.1 **Canadian Responses to Alleviate Food Insecurity**

Chapter 2 outlined some of the major food security challenges facing the Inuit living in Northern Canada. Specifically, socio-economic factors and a changing climate have impacted the ability of these communities to achieve food security.

A combination of high rates of poverty and elevated food prices has caused many households in Inuit Nunangat to be food insecure. To alleviate these challenges, the Canadian government has instituted several policies. First, the Canadian government has provided subsidies to Northern communities since the 1960s, to make the cost of food more affordable. In particular, Nutrition North Canada provides assistance to Northern communities through three main policies.<sup>102</sup> First, the program provides subsidies to assist in reducing the cost of perishable nutritious goods in the Northern regions (i.e. store-bought foods). It should be noted that these subsidies are enhanced to handle costs as they arise, such as in the COVID-19 pandemic. Second, the program offers a Harvesters Support Grant to eliminate barriers to accessing traditional hunting and harvesting methods by providing funding to Indigenous organizations to reduce costs associated with these activities, such as transportation, safety equipment, etc. Finally, the program funds culturally appropriate and community-based nutrition education classes in isolated communities, aimed at promoting knowledge of healthy eating and preparing both store-bought and traditional food.<sup>103</sup> These diverse policies aim to improve food security in these communities by increasing access to food and providing communities with the tools to achieve healthy and nutritious diets in a culturally appropriate manner. Further, it recognizes that communities rely upon not only

---

<sup>102</sup> Government of Canada. *How Nutrition North Canada Works*.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

one source of food, and offers solutions to assist the procurement of store-bought food and the practicing of traditional subsistence activities. Another initiative developed by the Canadian government is the Food Policy for Canada Initiative, which aims to alleviate food insecurity throughout Canada, including providing support for community-led projects, such as greenhouses and community freezers, in Northern communities. This initiative aims to advance reconciliation efforts with Indigenous peoples across Canada, with recognition of the importance of food to Indigenous well-being and culture.<sup>104</sup> Notably, by supporting community-led projects, this initiative supports the right to self-determination of Indigenous peoples, where communities make decisions on how they will source food. While these policies are helpful in supporting food security in the region, they do little to address the root causes of food insecurity.

Next, Canada has recognized that a clean climate is essential to the well-being of Northern communities, including their ability to be food secure. As such, the government has taken steps to mitigate climate change with a recognition of the unique nature of the Arctic region. I've discussed some policies developed by the State, such as the creation of MPAs in regions identified to be essential and at high risk. Further developed by the Canadian government, is the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate, which was developed in consultation with Indigenous peoples. Primarily, this Framework seeks to reduce carbon emissions, grow the economy, and promote resilience to a changing climate.<sup>105</sup> As established, the Arctic is particularly vulnerable to the consequences of climate change and global warming. By developing this Framework, the Canadian government is directly creating policies to alleviate one of the region's main causes of food insecurity: climate change. Further, because Indigenous peoples were consulted in the development of this Framework, it is hopeful that policies will be in-line with the needs and wants of the communities most impacted by climate change.

#### 4.2.2 **European High Arctic Responses to Alleviate Food Insecurity**

In the European High Arctic, States have recognized the potentially devastating effects of climate change on their populations, including their ability to remain food secure. As such, they have developed comprehensive strategies to combat climate change, specifically by developing policies aimed at substantially reducing their greenhouse emissions. For example, Finland has

---

<sup>104</sup> Government of Canada. *The Food Policy for Canada*

<sup>105</sup> Government of Canada (2016) *Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change*

instituted medium and long-term plans to adapt to climate change, including mitigating greenhouse gas emissions and increasing monitoring in the region.<sup>106</sup> Further, they have developed an action plan to adapt to climate change, including integrating adaptation in the activities of all sectors, increased research and training to increase capacity to respond to climate change, and implementing accessible climate change assessment methods.<sup>107</sup> Similar policies have been implemented in both Sweden and Norway, with long-term commitments to reduce their carbon emissions to reduce the damage of climate change on biodiversity and ecosystems. In the context of food security for those living in Scandinavia, these policies can benefit communities. By prioritizing the reduction of greenhouse emissions and increasing climate change adaptation strategies, these governments are demonstrating that is important for them to protect their territory. It is hoped that these strategies will reduce the impact that climate change is having on the Arctic region, which will increase the availability and accessibility of country food for the communities living there. Similarly, the implementation of these policies will help these States remain in compliance with their international commitments, such as the Paris Agreement.

Finally, States in the European High Arctic have also recognized the importance of regulating economic activities in the region, such as creating fishing quotas and developing marine protected areas.<sup>108</sup> While these regulations were developed through international collaboration, it is the responsibility of each of these States to implement them. These regulations are particularly important for alleviating food insecurity in the region and negating the adverse impacts associated with these activities.

#### 4.2.3 **American Responses to Alleviate Food Insecurity**

While there is no national food strategy targeting food insecurity in Alaska, the United States has implemented policies aimed at mitigating the impacts of climate change in the region. Similar to the approach taken by the States in the European High Arctic, the U.S. has implemented strategies to reduce its domestic emissions. Further associated with protecting the Arctic biodiversity and ecosystems, the U.S. Arctic policy aims to protect the Arctic environment and its

---

<sup>106</sup> Finland Ministry of the Environment. *Finland's national climate change policy*

<sup>107</sup> Finland Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (2014) *Finland's National Climate Change Adaptation Plan 2022*

<sup>108</sup> Norwegian Directorate for Nature Management. *Protected Areas in Svalbard*

living resources, promote environmentally sustainable economic development and resource management, as well as meaningful collaboration with its Indigenous population through the incorporation of Indigenous knowledge in the decision-making process.<sup>109</sup> This national approach to the Arctic has the potential to be beneficial in alleviating food insecurity in the region. The priorities outlined have been identified as key challenges to food insecurity, such as increased economic development, and by managing them in an environmentally and sustainably sound way, there is potential that food insecurity may be alleviated.

#### 4.3 **Non-State Responses to Alleviate Food Insecurity**

Typically, the people who are most impacted by a certain issue are best positioned to identify and develop solutions to alleviate it. In the Arctic, there are a number of approaches led by non-State actors, including Indigenous communities and organizations, regional governments, industry stakeholders, and others, to alleviate food insecurity in the region.

##### 4.3.1 **The Pikialasorsuaq Region Case Study**

The *Pikialasorsuaq*, the largest Arctic polynya, which is an area of open water surrounded by sea ice, has long been recognized by Indigenous communities in Greenland and Northern Canada as critical due to its status as the most biologically productive region in the Arctic. The polynya is relied upon by communities for its species diversity, as it is vital to many migratory species associated with food security, such as marine mammals and fish.<sup>110</sup> However, the abundance of diversity, and by extension, food security in the region, has been threatened as a result of climate change and an increase in economic activities in the region. Particularly, the availability and accessibility of species essential to food security are being threatened. Different approaches have been taken to protect the biodiversity in the region. Both Denmark and Canada, for example, have created MPAs as part of their efforts to conserve the health of the region, which was previously discussed. While these efforts may be effective, Indigenous organizations in both Canada and Greenland, in consultation with communities and non-governmental organizations in both States, have opted to develop their own plan. Thus, in 2016, the Pikialasorsuaq Commission was created by the Inuit Circumpolar Council organizations in both Canada and Greenland, with the support of major organizations such as the World Wildlife Fund, and smaller hunters and

---

<sup>109</sup> The White House (2021) *Biden-Harris Administration Brings Arctic Policy to the Forefront with Re-activated Steering Committee & New Slate of Research Commissioners*

<sup>110</sup> Pikialasorsuaq Commission. *Pikialasorsuaq: A Biological Hotspot*

trappers organizations, such as the Organization of Fishermen and Hunters in Greenland. The mandate of this Commission is to recommend a strategy that Inuit could take to safeguard and monitor the health of the Pikialasorsuaq, to ensure that it is protected for future generations, as well as to develop an Inuit-led governance strategy for the region.<sup>111</sup> What's particularly interesting about this initiative, is that communities in both States were consulted, where they were given the opportunity to voice how they saw the future of the polynya and recommendations on how it could be protected. Once the consultations were completed, a report was compiled, outlining three main recommendations which were presented to both the Danish and Canadian governments. First, a management regime, led by Inuit representatives from the Pikialasorsuaq region, should be established, with the responsibility of regulating activities and monitoring and conserving the resources in the region. Second, States should create a larger management zone comprised of the entire region, formed by Inuit and recognized by both governments, to protect the natural resources and biodiversity in the region. Finally, the Commission recommended the creation of a free travel zone for Inuit across the region, to reflect that modern borders inhibit these communities from their connection with the territory and other communities.<sup>112</sup> These recommendations relate directly to food security in the region. As identified in Chapter 2, the Inuit rely on the diverse biodiversity in the Arctic region to ensure their continued access to traditional food sources. Further, due to the migration patterns of certain animals, hunters must travel large distances in order to hunt, which may cross natural borders. Implementation of these recommendations has the potential to benefit Inuit communities in both States. In 2019, these recommendations were discussed at a conference with representatives of Canada and Denmark, and a path forward is currently being developed to advance a sustainable management plan to protect the region, as well as to increase mobility in the region.<sup>113</sup> If these governments were to implement these recommendations, it would mean further compliance with their international obligations outlined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, such as the right to self-determination and the right to practice their culture. Further, the creation of a protected

---

<sup>111</sup> Pikialasorsuaq Commission. *Pikialasorsuaq: About the Project*

<sup>112</sup> Pikialasorsuaq Commission. (2017) *People of the Ice Bridge: The Future of the Pikialasorsuaq*

<sup>113</sup> Pikialasorsuaq Commission (2019) *Pikialasorsuaq Leaders Statement*



zone will help these States reach their obligations under the Convention on Biological Diversity, which is that 10% of the oceans of the world are protected.

#### 4.3.2 **Local Responses**

Those living in regions impacted by food insecurity are often better positioned to understand their communities' challenges. In Canada, regional governments and other local organizations have developed localized policies aimed at alleviating food security by targeting the root causes of food insecurity, which stands in contrast to the measures taken by the national government.

The Nunavut Food Security Strategy and Action Plan 2014-2016 was developed by the Nunavut Food Security Coalition, which was originally comprised of representatives of the government of Nunavut as well as several Inuit organizations. This Strategy identified the main themes associated with food security, including how the availability of food is being threatened as a result of changing environmental conditions and inadequate grocery supplies, as well as the accessibility of food, such as changing access to hunting grounds, and elevated costs of food versus low salaries. This Strategy “proposes a collective vision and a common agenda so [that the efforts of the region as a whole] can be coordinated and sustained, leading to a greater impact.”<sup>114</sup> In this plan, six themes have been identified to be targeted by action, including promoting country food as foundational for the region, improving the accessibility and availability of store-bought foods, creating a strong safety net through relevant legislative measures, and using communities to improve food security for the most vulnerable populations.<sup>115</sup> This Strategy is particularly interesting because it targets the issue of food insecurity holistically. It seeks to not only aid communities in the short-term, but also provide support in the long-term to communities to ensure that they are food secure, such as through training programs. Further, it promotes community cohesion and relies on communities to work together to help each other, such as through food sharing, which is in line with Inuit culture.

Another important regional strategy to combat food insecurity is the Anti-Poverty Strategic Framework in the Northwest Territories. Similar to the Nunavut Strategy, this Framework aims at alleviating food insecurity by targeting its root causes, such as reducing levels of poverty

---

<sup>114</sup> *Nunavut Food Security Coalition (2014) Nunavut Food Security Strategy and Action Plan 2014-16*

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*

by creating sustainable communities, creating affordable housing programs, and increasing support for children and families.<sup>116</sup> This strategy could be particularly strong in alleviating food security, by increasing the availability of food for people, as higher salaries will allow them to purchase store-bought food and procure hunting and fishing equipment necessary for subsistence activities. Further, it could be beneficial in assisting the most vulnerable groups impacted by food insecurity, such as elders, women, and youth.

Finally, the recently released Inuit Nunangat Food Security Strategy, developed by Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, aims to utilize an Inuit vision for ending food security through the creation of a self-determined and sustainable food system, which is reflective of Inuit societal needs and values and ensures Inuit access to nutritious and culturally preferred foods.<sup>117</sup> This strategy was developed as a response to high rates of food insecurity and a lack of a national policy toward ending Inuit food insecurity. This Strategy outlines solutions to food insecurity which include reducing poverty and implementing cost of living measures, increasing self-determination over the regional food system, providing targeted support to the most vulnerable community members, support for harvesting and food sharing systems, as well as to address the deficits in the food system infrastructure.<sup>118</sup> These solutions are particularly ambitious and target a wide range of challenges associated with food insecurity. Like the other regional strategies, it seeks to target the root causes of food insecurity while also providing short-term support to those who need it.

#### 4.3.3 **Other Innovative Solutions**

Industry and other research foundations have endeavoured to find innovative solutions to handle the growing food insecurity in the Arctic region. In a pilot project, the Arctic Research Foundation (ARF) consulted with a small community in Northern Canada, Gjoa Haven, on what they needed most in their community. Fresh produce, was the overwhelming response, as much of the produce that was transported to the community was in various stages of rot once it arrived.<sup>119</sup> Since then, the ARF, in collaboration with several government departments, has de-

---

<sup>116</sup> Government of NWT. Building on the Strengths of Northerners - A Strategic Framework Toward the Elimination of Poverty in the NWT”

<sup>117</sup> Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (2021). Inuit Nunangat Food Security Strategy

<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

<sup>119</sup> Greenhouse Canada (2020) *A haven for northern growth*

veloped miniature grow pods that were suitable to function in the harsh Arctic region, including solutions to power the pod, control humidity, reduce the risk of plant disease or pests, and most importantly, self-sufficient for community members.<sup>120</sup> This project could be extremely helpful in alleviating food insecurity in remote communities. Access to fresh produce is essential to a healthy and nutritious diet, and many of the current plans to alleviate food insecurity in the region do not include a plan to increase access. Providing communities with the tools to grow their own fresh produce will decrease their reliance on shipped food and will provide more stability in terms of how much quality food is accessible.

#### 4.4: **Response Trends**

Through this discussion on responses to food insecurity, we notice several trends in approaches taken by actors, including international, state, and non-state groups. International actors have relied upon international collaboration, facilitated by the various Arctic Council Working Groups, as a means to take a multi-pronged approach to protect the Arctic region. Given the cross-jurisdictional nature of the Arctic, strategies must be coordinated and negotiated to ensure that there is adequate protection. Some approaches taken by the Arctic Council include supporting innovative strategies to harness the Arctic as a food-producing region, protecting the biodiversity and climate, and reducing gaps in knowledge and data. Further, with the EU's strong commitment to the Arctic, despite not having a large presence there, is international recognition of the importance of the region.

Next, in terms of the responses by state and non-state actors, we can see a notable dichotomy of approaches regarding food security. For example, the Canadian national program is more responsive, focusing on directly making food more accessible and available for Northerners, such as subsidizing store-bought food, whereas, the regional programs aim to target the root causes of food insecurity. This difference underlines the importance of taking a multifaceted and collaborative approach to targeting food insecurity. For example, the regional programs are likely better suited to target the root causes of food insecurity, as they are generally more familiar with the issues and needs of the population than the government. However, these regional groups do not have the same access to resources as the Canadian government and are not in a position to provide the same level of financial support.

---

<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

From this discussion on responses, it is evident that the three approaches to responding to challenges in the Arctic are required in order to create effective policies. International collaboration, national strategies, and regional programs are all essential to combatting food insecurity through a multitude of approaches. Further, collaboration and coordination between these programs can be particularly helpful in alleviating food insecurity in the region. I will conclude this section by emphasizing that this list of responses to food insecurity is not meant to be exhaustive, but to highlight different levels of action to combat food insecurity in the Arctic.

## **Chapter 5: Discussion of Findings**

### **5.1: Interrelation between challenges, responses, and obligations**

At the beginning of this thesis, I outlined three research questions that I identified as essential to the discussion on food security in the Arctic region. To recall, I asked the following questions, which are inherently interconnected to food security:

- 1) What are the ongoing challenges to food security in Arctic Indigenous communities?
- 2) What is the interlink between the right to food, food security, and other rights in the Arctic context?
- 3) What are the responses to food insecurity and are they consistent with international obligations?

From these, a final question may be posited that links the three original research questions: how are the food security challenges in the Arctic region related to the right to food and other human rights obligations, and can the current responses to food insecurity be considered to be consistent with international human rights law?

Those living in the Arctic have long faced challenges associated with achieving food security. Specifically, there have been significant challenges in three of the four dimensions of food security, which are availability, accessibility, and stability, as articulated by the FAO.<sup>121</sup> While there is a multitude of challenges impacting food security in the various regions, certain trends have emerged. Three major trends identified include socioeconomic factors, such as poverty and an elevated cost of store-bought food, a changing climate, and an increase in economic activities in the region. These challenges have impacted the ability of communities to practice their traditional means of subsistence, such as hunting and fishing, as well as prevented many from being access to adequate and nutritious store-bought food.

These challenges to food security relate directly to the obligations that States have, including universal fundamental rights as well as Indigenous-specific rights. Regarding fundamental rights, food security is essential to the fulfilment of several of these rights. Notably, the right to life and the right to practice culture is intrinsically linked to food security in this context. For example, the right to life has been interpreted by the Human Rights Committee to include a right to dignity, which is a wider interpretation of the right that includes more aspects required to live

---

<sup>121</sup> Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (2009) *Declaration of the World Summit on Food Security*

a life with dignity<sup>122</sup>. Further, in the context of Indigenous peoples, it was further clarified that the State is required to take special measures to resolve any potential threat to the natural resources of Indigenous peoples, which can impact the right to life by risking their inherent right to dignity<sup>123</sup>. This distinction is important because it relates directly to how States should respond to challenges that impact the natural resources relied upon by Indigenous peoples for food security. Specifically, this means climate change mitigation strategies and policies to reduce the negative impact of economic activities in the region. As we've seen with various international agreements and cooperation in the region, specifically through the Arctic Council, as well as national commitments to reduce their carbon emissions, States have made strong efforts to reduce the impacts of climate change. Similarly, they have introduced methods to respond to climate change, including funding pilot projects to innovate food production in the Arctic, such as the Arctic Foods Innovation Cluster. These strategies, which have been developed using scientific methods and widespread stakeholder engagement, have the potential to be very effective in combatting food insecurity in the region, by increasing the availability and accessibility of species that are depended upon as sources of food, as well as by increasing the food production capacity in the region.

While States' responses to climate change seem to be in line with international requirements, States have apparently been lacking in their responsibilities to protect against the adverse impact of the increase in economic activities in the region. This is demonstrated by the continued environmental degradation as a result of these economic activities. It is true that States have implemented policies to increase the regulation of these activities, such as through the creation of Marine Protected Areas, however, these actions are insufficient in remaining consistent with their obligations, specifically towards protecting Indigenous-specific rights. Two of the important tenets of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples are the right to self-determination and the right to free, prior, and informed consent<sup>124</sup>. I will begin by recalling that

---

<sup>122</sup> The UN Human Rights Committee (2018) *General Comment No. 36 (2018) on Article 6 of the ICCPR, on the Right to Life*

<sup>123</sup> Hossain, Kamrul & Punam, Noor Jahan (2021) Human Rights begin with breakfast: maintenance of and access to stable traditional food systems with a focus on the European High Arctic.

<sup>124</sup> The UN General Assembly, Resolution 61/295 (2007) *The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*

the rights articulated within the Declaration are not legally-binding, and should not reflect customary international law. That being said, States that have adopted the Declaration have made aspirational commitments to ensure these rights for their Indigenous populations. However, strategies taken at the international and national levels to regulate economic activity in the region do not seem to be consistent with these principles. First, is the right to free, prior, and informed consent, which requires that States consult meaningfully with Indigenous peoples when considering activities that will occur on their traditional territory. While States have been inclusive of Indigenous organizations in the discussion of policies, such as including several organizations as permanent participants in the Arctic Council, the principle of consent has not been included as part of many policies. Particularly, Indigenous communities should be able to decline any potential economic activities that may adversely impact their ability to enjoy their traditional territories. This relates directly to the principle of self-determination, where Indigenous populations have effective control and governance over activities that will impact their territory, as well as the principle of free, prior, and informed consent. States have work to do to meaningfully implement these principles in their policies to regulate economic activity in the region. There is some potential, however, to improve the regulation of economic activities in the region. For example, the project proposed by the Pikialasorsuaq Commission, presented by the Inuit Circumpolar Council in Greenland and Canada, if adopted by States, has the potential to increase the representation of these two principles which are currently neglected. Particularly, this project allows for the protection of the region from economic activities that are managed by Inuit communities<sup>125</sup>.

Next, culture has been identified to be essential to food security, in both the ICESCR and the Declaration. Environmental degradation caused by climate change and an increase in economic activity has inhibited the ability of Indigenous peoples to practice their culture through traditional means of subsistence, through a reduction in biodiversity as well as increasingly unstable weather. While States have implemented measures to mitigate these adverse impacts, some damage has been irreversible for communities. For example, in Alaska, the Inupiaq community has been forced to relocate from their ancestral territory, as the melting ice has rendered it un-

---

<sup>125</sup> Pikialasorsuaq Commission. (2017) *People of the Ice Bridge: The Future of the Pikialasorsuaq*

safe<sup>126</sup>. According to the Declaration, States shall provide redress through effective mechanisms when communities are unable to practice their culture or remain on their traditional territory<sup>127</sup>. However, in many cases, States cannot retroactively create policies to protect this territory. Therefore, while some damage is irreversible, States still have the responsibility to respond and create policies to effectively protect the ability of these communities to practice their culture.

The final trend challenging food security in the region is socio-economic challenges, associated with an elevated cost of food and high rates of poverty. This challenge has mainly impacted communities in Northern Canada. The actions that have been taken by the State to quell food insecurity caused by socio-economic factors have had mixed results. While Canada has implemented policies to subsidize the cost of food in the region, they have failed to target the root causes of food insecurity. To combat this, Canada must work with its regional partners, such as local governments and Indigenous peoples, to identify the root causes of food insecurity and work together to alleviate them. These regional partners are typically more knowledgeable of why certain challenges exist and maybe in the best position to create solutions to fix them. Only through this collaboration will it be possible to alleviate long-term food insecurity caused by socio-economic factors.

## 5.2 **Gaps in Protection**

Finally, there are a few glaring omissions in terms of protecting the rights of Indigenous peoples in the Arctic, which must be rectified in order to guarantee that all pan-Arctic communities have adequate access to food.

First, in terms of protecting the rights of Indigenous peoples, regional human rights frameworks may not be efficient in the Arctic context. While the EU has committed to protecting the Arctic region through economic means, in terms of their protection of the human rights of their Indigenous populations within the European Human Rights Framework, still is lacking. In order to effectively protect food security and the rights of Indigenous peoples living in the European High Arctic, the European Court of Human Rights must be more conscientious of the unique context of these peoples in order to better position themselves to protect the rights of

---

<sup>126</sup> The Arctic Institute: Center for Circumpolar Security Studies (2017) Self-Preservation: Amid Debate, an Alaskan Village Decides to Move Inland

<sup>127</sup> The UN General Assembly, Resolution 61/295 (2007) *The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*



these communities when their rights are infringed upon. This includes protecting the ancestral territory of communities, which is relied upon for subsistence activities such as reindeer husbandry, from environmental degradation as a result of industrial activities.

Next, an omission from many of these policies discussed is the consideration of the most vulnerable populations. As identified in Chapter 2, women, children, and elders are at an elevated risk of suffering from food insecurity. However, none of the policies specifically make reference to these groups, and any special protections they may require. Policies developed by State for indigenous peoples must take into consideration the special circumstances in which these groups find themselves. For example, children should be provided free meals, including breakfast and lunch, at school. This would relieve the burden of the family to feed their children and will ensure that all Indigenous youth have access to adequate and nutritious food. Another measure could be to build upon existing programs, such as to continue the lower prices of food and subsidize the cost of hunting and fishing-related equipment for these groups. By implementing policies with consideration for more vulnerable groups, States will better protect food security for their entire population, thus being in compliance with their obligations.

To conclude this discussion, States' responses to food insecurity have had varying levels of success. Further, while many responses are consistent with their international obligations, States still have work to do. In particular, States should increase their dialogue and collaboration with their Indigenous communities, and further, the principles of self-determination and free, informed, and prior consent must be included when deciding on any policies that may impact the region. Finally, policies must be developed with consideration of the populations most vulnerable to food insecurity.

## **Chapter 6: Conclusion**

In conclusion, the Arctic region is home to millions of people, who rely on the vast resources and biodiversity in the region to ensure their livelihood. Because of this, the region must be protected. However, challenges to the livelihood of Indigenous peoples living within the region have become increasingly exasperated in recent years, notably in their ability to achieve food security. In particular, three overarching trends have adversely impacted communities' ability to be food secure, through decreased access and availability of country and store-bought, as well as a lack of stability in diets. These trends include a changing climate that has impacted biodiversity and ecosystems, an increase in economic activity which has led to increased environmental degradation, and socio-economic factors which have negatively impacted many communities' ability to purchase store-bought food or supplies to practice traditional subsistence methods.

This increased prevalence of food insecurity in the region has put States at odds with their international obligations. Food security for Indigenous peoples has been intricately linked to several fundamental rights, including the right to life and the right to practice culture. Further, the rights articulated in Indigenous-specific documents include inherent connections to food security, including the right to self-determination, the right to free, prior, and informed consent, as well as the right to practice culture. Because of this, States must implement policies to rectify these challenges, which means policies targeting the causes of food insecurity.

Finally, States have taken a multi-faceted approach to tackle the core challenges negatively impacting food security in the Arctic region. International collaboration, through the Arctic Council, has led to policies that limit economic activity in the region as well as respond to the changing climate. This collaboration has also led to innovative responses specifically geared towards alleviating food insecurity. Further, at a national level, States have implemented strong climate policies, aimed at reducing their individual carbon emissions, with the goal of reducing the impact of climate change in the Arctic. While these activities are helpful, some of the best strategies which will help alleviate food insecurity and allow States to be in compliance with their international obligations, have been spearheaded by regional groups, including local governments and Indigenous organizations. These strategies should be considered seriously both by States and international bodies.

To conclude, achieving food security in the Arctic remains a challenge facing all Arctic States. While progress has been made in alleviating food insecurity in the region, there is quite a bit of work left.

### **Bibliography**

- Arriagada, Paula (2017) *Insights on Canadian Society: Food insecurity among Inuit living in Inuit Nunangat*. Statistics Canada
- Brattland & Mustonen. (2018) *How Traditional Knowledge Comes to Matter in Atlantic Salmon Governance in Norway and Finland*. Arctic Institute of North America. Vol. 71, No. 4, pp. 375-392.
- Brubaker, Michael et al. (2011) *Climate change and health effects in Northwest Alaska*. Global Health Action.
- CBC News (2010) *Canada endorses indigenous rights declaration*.  
<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/canada-endorses-indigenous-rights-declaration-1.964779> Accessed: April 5, 2022.
- Cambou, Dorothée (2019) *The UNDRIP and the legal significance of the right of indigenous peoples to self-determination: a human rights approach with a multidimensional perspective*. The International Journal of Human Rights, 23:1-2, 34-50
- Casi, Corinna (2020) *Sami identity and traditional livelihood practices: From non-Indigenous to Indigenous food frameworks*
- Cormier, Shaun & Raheem, Dele (2018) *Food Security in the Barents Region*
- D. Ford, James et al. (2019) *Food insecurity in Nunavut: Are we going from bad to worse?* Canadian Medical Association Journal, Vol. 191, Issue 20
- Dudarev et. al (2013) *Food and water security issues in Russia II: water security in general the population of the Russian Arctic, Siberia and Far East, 2000-2011*
- Duhaime, G. & Bernard, N. (2002) *Sustainable food security in the Arctic: state of knowledge*. Chapter 13.
- Esterling, Shea (2021) *Looking Forward Looking Back: Customary International Law, Human Rights and Indigenous Peoples*. International Journal on Minority and Group Rights 28 (2021) pp. 280-305
- Finland Ministry of the Environment. *Finland's national climate change policy*
- Finland Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (2014) *Finland's National Climate Change Adaptation Plan 2022*
- Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (2007) *Declaration of Nyéléni*
- Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (2009) *Declaration of the World Summit on Food Security*

- Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (2008) *Joint Brief: The Right to Food and Indigenous Peoples*
- Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (2006) *Food Security: Policy Brief*
- Gogal, Sandra A. (2021) *A new era: Free prior and informed consent*
- Government of Canada. *How Nutrition North Canada Works.*
- Government of Canada. *The Food Policy for Canada*
- Government of Canada. *Tuvaijuittuq Marine Protected Area (MPA)*
- Government of Canada (2016) *Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change*
- Government of NWT. *Building on the Strengths of Northerners - A Strategic Framework Toward the Elimination of Poverty in the NWT"*
- Green & Geise (2004) *Negative Effects of Wildlife Tourism on Wildlife*
- Greenhouse Canada (2020) *A haven for northern growth*
- Grete Broderstad, Else & Eythórsson, Einar (2014) *Resilient Communities? Collapse and recovery of a social-ecological system in Arctic Norway*
- Guyot et al. (2006) *Local observations of climate change and impacts on traditional food security in two northern Aboriginal communities*
- Hansen, M. (2016) *Heavy metals in food from the Norwegian, Finnish and Russian border region. Norwegian Institute for Air Research, Tromsø, Norway. Presentation at the Seminar on food security in the Barents Region. Rovaniemi, Finland.*
- Hossain, Kamrul & Punam, Noor Jahan (2021) *Human Rights begin with breakfast: maintenance of and access to stable traditional food systems with a focus on the European High Arctic. Food Security in the High North: Contemporary Challenges Across the Circumpolar Region.*
- Hove et al. (1994) *Radiocaesium Transfer to Grazing Sheep in Nordic Environments*
- International Centre for Reindeer Husbandry. *Challenges to Reindeer Husbandry*  
Accessed: April 15, 2022
- International Labour Organization (1989) *The Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention*
- Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (2021). *Inuit Nunangat Food Security Strategy*

International Union for Conservation of Nature. *Marine Protected Areas*. Accessed April 16, 2022

Lambden et al. (2006) *Traditional and market food access in Arctic Canada is affected by economic factors*

Lundmark, Jan Mikael (2017) *European Court of Human Rights for the Protection of Arctic Indigenous Peoples' land rights*

Nilsen, Thomas (2020) *Hunting for metals to battery cars threaten Sàmi reindeer herders' homeland*

North Pacific Fishery Management Council. *Arctic Fishery Management*

Northern Affairs Canada. (2009) *Assessing the Impacts of Climate Change on Food Security in the Canadian Arctic*.

Norwegian Directorate for Nature Management. *Protected Areas in Svalbard*

Nunavut Food Security Coalition. (2014). *Nunavut Food Security Strategy and Action Plan 2014-16*

Pachauri & Meyer (2014) *Synthesis Report - Contribution of working groups, I, II, III, to the fifth assessment report of the intergovernmental panel on climate change 2014*.

Pikialasorsuaq Commission. *Pikialasorsuaq: A Biological Hotspot*. Accessed: April 16, 2022

Pikialasorsuaq Commission. *Pikialasorsuaq: About the Project*. Accessed: April 16, 2022

Pikialasorsuaq Commission. (2017) *People of the Ice Bridge: The Future of the Pikialasorsuaq*

Pikialasorsuaq Commission (2019) *Pikialasorsuaq Leaders Statement*

Polar Knowledge Canada (2022) *Climate Change Research and Monitoring*. POLAR Webinar Series

Rosol, Renata et al. (2016) *Impacts of decline harvest of country food on nutrient intake among Inuit in Arctic Canada: impact of climate change and possible adaptation plan*

Ruiz-Castell et al. (2015) *Household Crowding and Food Insecurity Among Inuit Families with School-Aged Children in the Canadian Arctic*

Smith, Janell (2007) *Food customs of rural and urban Inupiaq elders and their relationships to select nutrition parameters, food insecurity, health, and physical and mental functioning*

- Snihs, J.O. (1996) *Contamination and Radiation Exposure. Evaluation and measures in the Nordic countries after the Chernobyl accident.*
- Supreme Court of Canada (1990) *R. v. Sparrow*
- The European Commission (2012) *EU's Arctic Policy: Questions and Answers*
- The European Commission (2021) *A stronger EU engagement for a greener, peaceful and prosperous Arctic*
- The European Court of Human Rights (1983) *G and E v Norway*
- The United Nations (1948) *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights*
- The UN General Assembly, Resolution 61/295 (2007) *The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*
- UNGAOR '107th plenary meeting' (2007) *Verbal Recording, UN doc A/61/PV107, 24-25*
- The UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1999) *General Comment No. 12: The Right to Adequate Food*
- The UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (2009) *General Comment No. 21 on Article 15(1) ICESCR*
- The UN Human Rights Committee (2018) *General Comment No. 36 (2018) on Article 6 of the ICCPR, on the Right to Life*
- The UN Human Rights Committee (1994) *General Comment 23, Article 27*
- The United Nations (1966) *The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*
- The United Nations (1966) *The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*
- The Arctic Institute: Center for Circumpolar Security Studies (2017) *Self-Preservation: Amid Debate, An Alaskan Village Decides to Move Inland*
- The Arctic Council (2005) *The Arctic Climate Impact Assessment*
- The Arctic Council. *What does the Arctic Council do?* Accessed: April 4, 2022. <https://arctic-council.org/about/>
- The Arctic Council (2021). *Indigenous Food Security in the Arctic: Implications of a Changing Ocean*
- The Arctic Council (2019) *Arctic Food Innovation Cluster (AFIC)*

The Arctic Council (2020) *Innovating the Food Industry on the Top of the World*

The Arctic Council. *Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna*

The Arctic Council (2021) *Marine Protected Areas in a Changing Arctic*

The Arctic Council (2020) *Finding the Nexus between Water, Energy and Food in the Arctic*

The Arctic Council (2021) *Arctic Council Strategic Plan: 2021-2030*

The White House (2021) *Biden-Harris Administration Brings Arctic Policy to the Forefront with Reactivated Steering Committee & New Slate of Research Commissioners*

Van Oostam J. Et al. (2005) *Human health implications of environmental contaminants in Arctic Canada: a review*

World Food Summit (1996) *Report of the World Food Summit*

Young, Bryanne (2015) "Killing the Indian in the Child": Death, Cruelty, and Subject-formation in the Canadian Indian Residential School system. *An Interdisciplinary Critical Journal*. Vol. 48, No.4, a special proceedings issue: A MATTER OF LIFE/DEATH III pp. 63-76. University of Manitoba

Yoshikawa et al. (2016) *Traditional ice cellars (lednik, bulus) in Yakutia: characteristics, temperature monitoring, and distribution*