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Animals, climate, and self-determination in Greenland

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3 | Security Transfigurations across Sectors

Animals, Climate, and Self-Determination in Greenland

Ulrik Pram Gad, Lill Rastad Bjørst, and Marc Jacobsen

There is a certain register of self-representation in which actors and fora present themselves as Arctic by talking about a pristine natural environment inhabited by fragile but resourceful human communities (Martello 2004; Rowe 2021). Both ecosystems and communities are (ACIA 2005; AMAP 2017b) threatened by invasive pollution and climate change, but communities are simultaneously threatened by a lack of sustainable development sometimes explained by neglect from far-away metropolises (AMAP 2017a). The Arctic Council largely institutionalizes these narratives, promoting cooperation across borders and scales to achieve sustainable solutions and balances across environmental and societal fragilities. Dissent, whether external or coming from participants or observers in the Arctic Council working groups or wider community, is often formulated as critiques of the priorities or balances between environmental protection, regional economic development, and local needs. Traditional geopolitical rivalry coming back to the Arctic is mostly kept separate from this socioenvironmental register, but the problems promoted are increasingly discussed in security terms in this institutionalized regional discourse (Herrmann 2017; Sam-Aggrey and Lanteigne 2020).

Discussed as security problems, they are also frequently analyzed in security terms. Often a human security framework informs scholarly texts (Gjørnv 2021; Stammler, Hodgson, and Ivanova 2020) or a non-committal framing as ‘widened’ or ‘alternative’ security legitimizes the discussion (Jacobsen and Herrmann 2017; Gjørnv and Lanteigne 2020).

Even when guided by the Copenhagen School securitization theory (CSST), the full potential of its rigorous and rich analytical framework is seldom unlocked. Sometimes this theory is employed to illuminate distinct episodes or processes in isolation (Gad 2005, 2017b; Åtland 2008, 2009; Greaves 2016; Jensen 2013; Jacobsen 2015; Kristensen and Rahbek-Clemmensen 2019), producing case analyses valuable as such but dubious when used to characterize Arctic security per se. If and when ‘macro’ elements of the CSST framework are indeed applied, the basic thrust of the analysis is that the Arctic is at heart an environmental security configuration (Exner-Pirot 2013; Chater and Greaves 2014). These analyses, however, are often selected and applied in what this chapter will argue amounts to an unnecessarily static manner that points attention away from certain dynamics core to Arctic security. In this chapter, our argument is that while Arctic regionalization might have *taken off* from environmental concerns (Keskitalo 2007), what has *shaped* both the security dynamics playing out as a central part of Arctic region building is the way securitizations of ‘environmental’ referent objects have interacted with securitizations centered on identities. Hence, our beef is not with CSST as such but with how those parts of its analytical framework focused on aggregated phenomena has been put to use in the Arctic. Our argument is that we will better understand Arctic security by going ‘back to basics’ and starting security analysis from scratch, by *first* identifying individual securitizing moves and only *then* aggregating patterns of security dynamics. Moreover, such an analysis will better equip us to judge whether the identity/environment nexus found is distinctly Arctic or may be found elsewhere, even if possibly less dominating for the overall security dynamics of a region and, certainly, globally.

The chapter suggests that to pinpoint Arctic qualities, security applicants of CSST one needs to do two things: First, get the relation that the theory conceptualizes between ‘sectors’ and security dynamics right. Second, refocus from snapshots of static security configurations to dynamic security ‘trans-figurations’, that is, to follow how one configuration over time morphs into a related but distinct configuration as securitizing actors change how they talk about referent objects, threats, and means as reactions to opponents in the region or developments elsewhere. To make this methodological point, the chapter performs a detailed analysis zooming in on two distinct security configurations that take on special qualities in the Arctic, namely one on wildlife hunting and one on climate change. The point of the analysis, however,

comes from following how the two configurations are related over time, the latter configuration relating back to the earlier.

The analysis draws on Greenlandic case material. Greenlandic political discourse most clearly presents the dilemmas core to the environment/identity nexus in the Arctic: claiming the speaking position of an Indigenous people while insisting to use this platform to pursue development. Some notions of development do not resonate well with widespread prejudices about Indigenous identity and its relation to Nature. Some Greenlanders avail themselves of the speaking position and speaking time awarded by being inscribed as one among a series of iconic 'species' threatened by human disregard for the Arctic environment: Harp seal pups are presented as victims of the fur industry; whales are victims of exploitation; polar bears are victims of climate change; and 'the Inuit hunter' is featured as dependent on "a vulnerable environment, a dying livelihood, people being at risk of 'losing' their culture and a future that is melting away" (Bjørst 2012, 103). But in other instances, Greenlandic voices—sometimes even the same—have a much less easy fit with the narratives predominant in global environmentalist narratives (Bjørst 2012, 110). The chapter shows how applying the Copenhagen School right may provide a better understanding of the security dynamics coming out of this misfit, provided that the analysis is guided by the right combination of the analytical tools available in its framework. What is at stake, hence, is not just our scholarly understanding of the relation between identity and environmental security, but also the limits for Greenlandic agency or, in other words, the self-definition and right to self-determination of one of the Indigenous peoples participating in Arctic region building.

The analysis is documented by quotes involving securitizing moves, selected from debates and quarrels pitting Greenlandic officials against outside environmentalists.¹ There is a surprising consistency across parties and persons in the rhetoric of Greenlandic government and parliament on these matters,² so the analysis need not account for domestic politicking. There are a few local NGOs focusing on the environment in Greenland (inter alia, Avataq, Urani Naamik), but they have few registered members and rely in some measure on support from outside resources.³ Several international NGOs are engaged in discussions about the Arctic environment while having little presence in Greenland and close to no members locally. Even if some of these organizations would not agree to being lumped together since their concerns are of different scales (animal rights, species conservation, eco-

systems protection, climate), they are often experienced or represented as one of a kind from a Greenlandic or Arctic perspective.⁴ Key in the analysis below is how a number of the largest mainstream groups most active in Arctic affairs (Greenpeace, WWF) have indeed developed concerns across the scales.

The chapter proceeds like this: Before engaging the empirical analysis, separate sections set the Arctic and Greenlandic scene and discuss how to aggregate distinct instances of securitization into structures like sectors and figurations. One section then distills the core figurations party to a configuration of securitizations of animals and hunters, and another section repeats the procedure on a later configuration of securitizations of climate change and development. A final analytical section draws together the relation between the two configurations as a transfiguration driven by environmentalist and Indigenous peoples' representatives as securitizing agents, before the conclusion sums up the argument.

Greenland as a Case of Life and Death in the Arctic

Security is about life and death. Traditionally, military weapons potentially causing death on a mass scale to secure the survival of states has been the core focus for security studies. But decades ago, important parts of the subdiscipline refocused to observe how security dynamics also revolved around other referent objects: lives valued at other scales, other ways of life. Hence, other problems of life and death also in the Arctic lend themselves to security analysis. Environmental activists placing themselves between animals and hunters to prevent killing and in the way of heavy machinery to prevent extraction of resources produce extra dramatic images on the background of Arctic landscapes: Blood on ice. Minuscule bodies opposed to industrial structures in grandiose sceneries of pristine nature. When promoting their stories, Inuit have the benefit of equally captivating imagery, but their stories about what to protect and promote are more complicated. Large parts of current global imaginations about the Arctic rely on two very different but related narratives about the entanglement of humans and Nature:⁵ First, an image of the past in which “vulnerable” Indigenous communities were challenged by the “forbidding” Arctic environment as presented in travel writing and motion pictures (Bjørst 2008a; Fienup-Riordan 1995). And second, an image of the present in which

modern industrialized extraction, production, and consumption unsettle global climate, Arctic species, and ecosystems, as well as Indigenous cultures and local communities.

Mikhail Gorbachev has been credited widely with establishing this current agenda in the Arctic focused on the environment, Indigenous peoples, and sustainable development in a 1987 speech in Murmansk. Really, he instead cleared the ground by discussing in detail the role of the Arctic in the militarized superpower confrontation, mentioning climate phenomena only as metaphors for Cold War dynamics and addressing both the environment and Indigenous peoples only briefly as beneficiaries of possible cooperation once desecuritization had been achieved (Gorbachev 1987). Nevertheless, once the ground was cleared, intergovernmental institutions focused on this agenda, first the working groups under the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy and later the Arctic Council, whose founding Ottawa Declaration laid out its commitment to “the protection of the Arctic environment, including the health of Arctic ecosystems, maintenance or biodiversity in the Arctic region and conservation and sustainable use of natural resources” (Arctic Council 1996). In a footnote, the declaration noted that “The Arctic Council should not deal with matters related to military security” (Arctic Council 1996, note 1). The footnote made traditional military security the absent present in many Arctic fora, but simultaneously created space where human-environmental relations could be discussed in security language (cf. Exner-Pirot 2013).

While the initial priorities for the environmental working groups did not mention climate change, the issue took center stage for their work and led to the consolidation of the Arctic region in international affairs (Exner-Pirot 2013, 122). In scientific assessments and public attention, the Arctic has been featured as the proverbial canary in the global coal mine of climate change (ACIA 2005, 24). But simultaneously, the same processes made for a resource frontier (Nuttall 2017) opened up not least by the self-same climatic changes, soon ripe for utilization. Indigenous peoples’ experiences with surviving in the Arctic for centuries without undermining their own livelihood endow them a certain legitimacy in the discussions about the dilemmas of how to prioritize environmental and developmental concerns, often debated in terms of sustainability (Gad, Jacobsen, and Strandsbjerg 2020; cf. Petrov et al. 2017, 13; Thisted 2020). This legitimacy relies, however, in no small part on defining the Inuit as part of the local ecosystems, which tententially silences those Inuit voices advocating socioeconomic change

(Bravo 2009). In contrast to this image, as we shall see, Inuit organizations insist on the right of Indigenous peoples to determine their own ways forward rather than being defined by their past (Greaves 2016).

To a large degree, these general narratives on the Arctic condition Greenlanders' attempts to influence global affairs shaping their lives. In one important respect, though, Greenlandic narratives differ from that of other Indigenous peoples (Dahl 2012, 89–94). Greenlanders insist on taking their right to self-determination beyond minority rights against the Danish state. They insist on the right to have, one day, their own state. This ambition works as a touchstone making the dilemmas and collisions latent in those Arctic narratives impossible to ignore in relation to Greenland. Greenlandic political identity pivots around two related narratives:⁶ One narrative pitching a decline of Indigenous culture, referring to a core consisting of language, hunting, and nature, and another narrative describing an all-encompassing modernization process. Most projects promoted by Greenlandic organized interests and politicians support some combination of the two narratives, culminating in visions of enhanced self-determination. In contrast to the global narratives on the Arctic, sketched above, Greenlandic narratives often cast environmentalists as threats rather than allies in defense of Indigenous life in the Arctic. In relation to climate, a Greenlandic double strategy (Bjørst 2008b) does give some room for maneuvering in international politics, but it does not represent a clear picture of what Greenland seeks for the future. The following section argues that how applying the Copenhagen School may provide a better understanding of the security dynamics coming out of this misfit, provided the analysis is guided by the right combination of the analytical tools available in its framework.

Securitization Theory Applied Bottom-up: Cross-Sector Transfigurations

In principle, the basic thrust of securitization theory is to apply its analytical framework bottom-up: Go look for actors who make securitizing moves by telling stories about how some existential threat will obliterate a valued referent object unless we employ some specified means out of the ordinary, then look for how such speech acts are received, and particularly if the possible use of extraordinary means is accepted. Finally, you may start aggregating how the (un)successful speech acts

and narratives promoted by different actors play into each other (Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde 1998). In analytical practice, however, shortcuts present themselves. In particular, sedimented structures of security or societal differentiation may sometimes be taken for granted by analysts, diverting analytical attention from important empirical phenomena.

Over the past decade, following increased global attention to the Arctic, a whole cottage industry has taken to analyze dynamics in the region in terms of securitization theory (i.a., Åtland 2008, 2009; Albert 2015; Greaves and Pomerants 2017; Gad 2017b; Jacobsen and Herrmann 2017; Jensen 2013; Palosaari and Tynkkynen 2015; Watson 2013; Wæver 2017). As discussed in the introductory chapter, military desecuritization allowed Arctic regionalization to begin with environmental concerns (Åtland 2008; Jacobsen and Strandsbjerg 2017). But what has later shaped Arctic region building, and certainly what has made it distinct from other instances of environmentally based regionalization and possibly discrete from global security dynamics, is the way securitizations of ‘environmental’ referent objects have interacted with securitizations centered on identities. In CSST terms, the dynamics have not been confined to the environmental sector, but they have involved interaction between securitizing and desecuritizing moves in two sectors: the societal (which revolves around identities) and the environmental.

When discussing the environmental sector, CSST literature—on the one hand—observes the promotion of referent objects on a range of scales from individual animals (objects of cruelty) to planetary survival (object of anthropogenic climate change) (Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde 1998, 23, 71; Buzan and Wæver 2009). On the other hand, it seems that means worthy of the label extraordinary have a hard time finding acceptance with audiences traditionally deemed relevant for their possible execution. In other words, lots of alarmist talk and less action, at least on a scale that has the force to define patterns of security in more than niches: animal rights organizations might interpellate their core constituency to radical action, and that may cause serious concern with the objects of that action, but it will seldom take center stage for society at large.

Climate change, of course, is the most discussed contestant for a successful securitization with widespread repercussions (Wæver 2009; Kristensen and Mortensgaard, chap. 2, this vol.). Also in Greenland, climate change is characterized as a threat because it leads to the melt-

ing of various types of ice and the derived effects on the living conditions of animals and thus, the local hunters. As we shall see, however, climate change represents a paradox as its effects in the societal sector—in terms of identity threats—prove more diverse.

Crucial to understanding the specificity of the societal sector is how identities work as referent objects of security. Identities are, on the one hand, dependent for their existence on something else being different. On the other hand, difference is also threatening to identities *per definition*, since difference represent a repeated claim that the identity of any identity is contingent: ‘We’ can never be quite secure that ‘we’ will be able to remain who ‘we’ are. Or worse: ‘We’ might not be who we should be; someone—internal or external—might very well be pointed out as blocking our way to realizing our true identity (Wæver 1997; Gad 2010; Jacobsen and Lindbjerg, chap. 7, this vol.). The CSST canon notes that empirically, securitizing moves have best chance of success if they describe a threat directed toward a ‘middle range’ identity, more than an individual, less than global humanity, quintessentially the nation or one of its contestants as primary political identity (Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde 1998). In literature applying securitization theory, the most discussed threats to national identity are migration, influence from neighboring cultures, and risks of being eroded by or encompassed into a more comprehensive and dominant collective identity project (Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde 1998, 121). In the case of Greenland’s national identity, threats to Inuit hunting traditions (Gad 2005; Jacobsen 2014) are, as we shall see, often articulated as deriving from *qallunaat* (white) culture and countries. In global climate security narratives, entanglements between environment and security are obvious too: climate change is posed as a threat to the survival of numerous specific collectivities, but, conversely, also action to avert climate change is presented as a threat to ‘our way of life’ (Salih and Corry 2022). As we shall see, both narratives appear in Greenlandic discourse, but here they are joined by variations which seek to desecuritize in ways that end up denying agency to Greenlanders.

The progenitors of the Copenhagen School have mused on the ontological status of sectors without appearing to have arrived at a definitive conclusion: Wæver discusses sectors as a name for ‘second order observations’ (Wæver 1999) of distinct ‘dialects’ of security talk (Wæver 1997, 356) resulting in security dynamics with “particular physiognomies and privileged actors that differ” (Wæver 2017, 126), implying, perhaps, that sectors may analytically be identified *as* interacting secu-

ritizations or security dynamics clustering into discernible types. In contrast, Buzan (Albert and Buzan 2011) edges closer to awarding sectors a pre-existence; *first* society differentiates itself in sectors, *then* securitizations may be attempted in each through (relatively) different mechanics to (relatively) distinct effects.

The point of this exegetic exercise is just to make the point that typologizing an instance of securitization is not a goal in itself. Nor can one—having typologized an instance of securitization as, for instance, pertaining to the environmental sector—take for granted that ensuing (or preceding) dynamics stay within this sector. It definitively constitutes valuable information to ascertain that a given securitization can be typologized as pertaining to one or another sector, since this points our attention to important dynamics shared by securitizations in that sector. But important dynamics do not necessarily stay within sectoral confines, so if we limit our analysis to typologizing or to intrasectoral dynamics, we may miss what is most important (cf. Wæver 2017, 126). Given that sectors are names for relatively distinct dialects or dynamics of securitization—whether these dialects or dynamics are the result of pre-existing extra-security properties of a societal differentiation or not—they are heuristic devices for identifying distinct dynamics in the empirical analysis of securitization. We shall argue, however, that what is interesting in important security dynamics in the Arctic is that they revolve around a configuration of securitizations *between* the environmental and the societal sectors. Overemphasizing the sectors as such risks blinding the analyst to important dynamics across sectors and to important transfigurations taking place whether inside one or across several sectors.

This makes for a methodological point of more general relevance for securitization analysis: Do not take sedimented structures as given or at face value by arriving at the scene armed with preidentified regions or nicely boxed sectoral dynamics. Added value comes from conducting securitization analysis—yes, through a theoretically informed analytical lens—but decisively ‘bottom-up’ when it comes to empirical observation: beginning by identifying actual empirical securitizations, see how they relate, and build up accounts of their configuration. An equally important methodological point, however, is that when you have identified a configuration of securitizations, even a cross-sectoral configuration, you cannot take for granted that it endures in the same format. Securitization analysis must therefore involve actually doing the bottom-up analysis with an open mind once in a

while, not just reproducing established configurations once identified. Only thus can one account for changes in/of configurations, that is, for *transfigurations*.⁷

Hence, we propose to begin each analysis by observing how individual actors instigate a *security figuration* by having a securitizing move accepted by a relevant audience. The next step is to observe how two or more security figurations may articulate each other in a *security configuration*. Only after detailing a security configuration, you may analytically decide that it is sufficiently independent to qualify as a *security complex* on the terms of the theory (cf. the introductory chapter to this volume). And you may observe if the configuration, complex or not, has a particular affection for a 'regional' territory (making it a *regional security complex*), or that it does not. Likewise, only after detailing a security configuration may you determine whether it 'speaks the dialects' or exhibits the dynamics characteristic to one or more *sectors*. Finally, repeating the same procedure on a diachronically generated body of empirical material—or two chronologically distinct synchronic bodies of text—allows you to make claims about *transfiguration*; that is, change in or of a security configuration (cf. Andersen 1999, 31).⁸ Figure 3.1 shows (A) a basic security figuration shaped by the rhetorical figure of a securitizing move, (B) one archetypical security configuration, namely that of security dilemma pitting two parties in a mutually reinforcing security relation, and (C) the transfiguration of—in this case—such a destructive security dilemma into another, possibly more dynamic but less explosive configuration. To illustrate how fruitful this methodological reorientation can be, the following sections analyze two security configurations, each beginning with environmentalist concerns with Arctic animals and ecosystems met with countersecuritization on behalf of human communities living in the region.⁹

Hunters Killing Animals, Environmentalists Killing Hunting

Deciding where to begin a story of a dynamic unfolding is never innocent; it involves a measure of assigning blame, be it for deliberately throwing the first stone or inadvertently stepping on someone's toes. Even if threats to Inuit security and livelihood emanating from European shores certainly began earlier, the distinctiveness of the security transfiguration in focus for this chapter is best conveyed by beginning with the antisealing campaign taking off in the 1950s and culminating

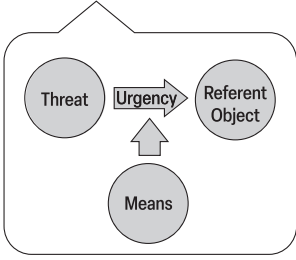


Fig. 3.1A. A security figuration shaped by the rhetorical figure of a securitizing move.

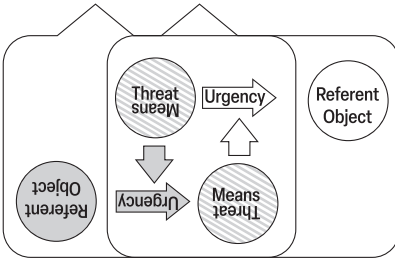


Fig. 3.1B. One type of security configuration: the classic security dilemma.

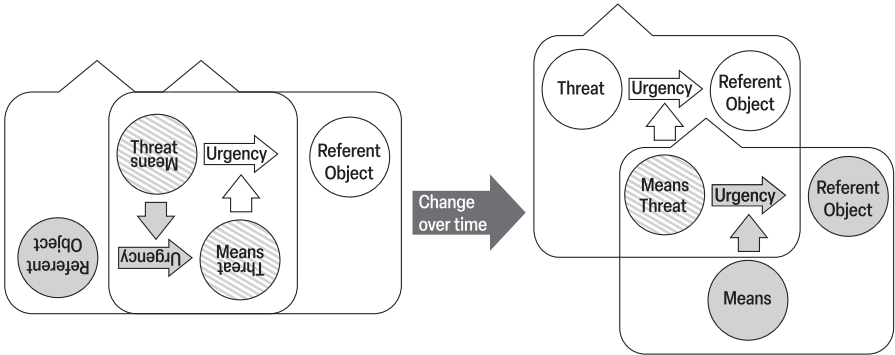


Fig. 3.1C. Transfiguration of a security configuration, in this case from a security dilemma to a different type of configuration, possibly more dynamic.

in the 1980s with Brigitte Bardot hugging a seal pup (Wenzel 1989) and the global market for seal fur basically collapsing (Graugaard 2020b).

Initial Securitization: Hunters Killing Animals

The basic securitizing move underlying these campaigns lives on in public imagination and has been institutionalized in different ways

around the world. For instance, the EU in a 2009 regulation reiterated that seals were “sentient beings that can experience pain, distress, fear and other forms of suffering” (EU 2009, §1) and that they were threatened by “cruel hunting methods” (EU 2009, §1). To avert the threat, animal rights activists have taken the extraordinary measure of intervening physically in the hunt, placing themselves between hunter and prey. Antiwhaling campaigns followed a parallel trajectory and argument, recasting whales as extraordinary and intelligent endangered mammals that needed to be saved (Epstein 2008).

The micro-spectacle of activists placing themselves in harm’s way to save individual animals were, of course, never meant as the solution. The micro-securitizing moves articulated both concerns and means on macro-scales. Restrictions implemented internationally on whaling were primarily based on conservation concerns, saving the species rather than the individual. And in relation to sealing, the extraordinary measure that made a difference has been the suspension of the global markets by public campaigns that succeeded in collapsing demands, and by major economies legally restricting the trade in marine mammal products (Wenzel 1989). Nevertheless, historically, the micro- and macro-securitizations of hunting of marine mammals were closely intertwined. Hence, what is in figure 3.2 illustrated as two distinct securitizations is perhaps best thought of as two ideal types that have in practice been played out in various combined and hybrid forms.

Countersecuritization: Activists Killing Hunting

While the campaigns to save large marine mammals were directed toward threats from commercial hunting performed by individuals and companies from industrialized countries in the East and West, both the resulting restrictions and the collapse of the markets were felt by Inuit in Greenland and elsewhere. Greenlandic parliamentarians of different political colors have engaged in countersecuritizations of antisealing and whaling campaigns when challenged by distinct foreign decisions confining the export of seal products and limiting the quota on large whales. Hunting seal and eating whale feature prominently in dominating narratives about Greenlandic national identity, and foreign restrictions on hunting and export have been given high priority in the annual debates about Greenland’s foreign policy (cf. Jacobsen 2014, 33–34). In that sense, seals and whales are fundamental for how Greenland engages with the outside world. As Greenland’s pre-

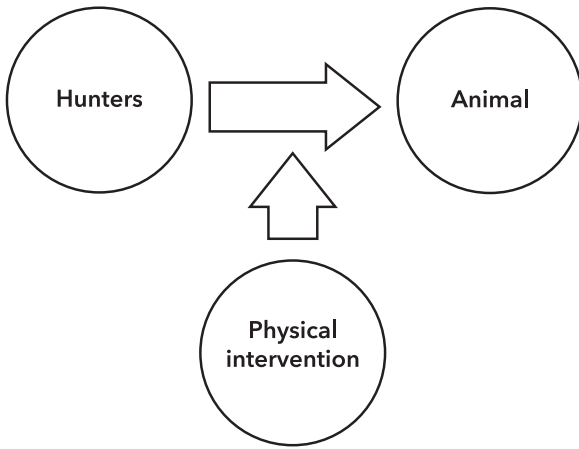


Fig. 3.2A. Animal rights securitization of hunting: Hunters pose an existential threat to individual animals. Extraordinary means: intervene physically between hunter and prey.

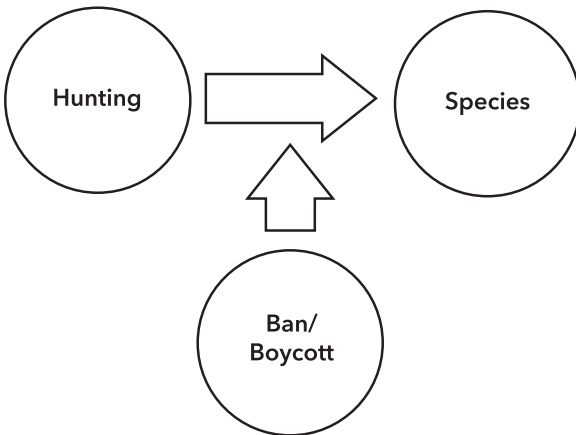


Fig. 3.2B. Environmentalist securitization of hunting: Hunting poses an existential threat to species. Extraordinary means: ban hunting or import or boycott products.

mier stated in 2014: “EU’s Inuit exception on sealskin import, WTO and IWC are crucial cases for the future of Greenland” (Andersen 2014). Hence, in an open letter to the EU Commission and the EU Parliament, the speaker of the Greenlandic parliament argued that “Banning our export of seal skin and denying us our great whale quotas . . . constitute a direct attempt to eliminate Arctic cultures, a thousand years of age . . . in a perfect parallel to the policy pursued by the Conquistadors in South America, 400 years ago” (Motzfeldt 2009; cf. Holm 2009).¹⁰ Figure 3.3 summarizes how this additional threat narrative—still awaiting the culmination in the form of an extraordinary means—complicates the original environmentalist narrative.

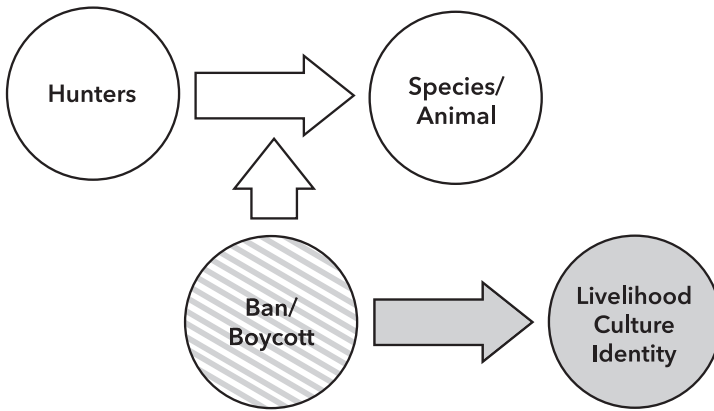


Fig. 3.3. Countersecuritization of hunting: Ban/boycott poses existential threat to Inuit livelihood, culture, identity.

Countersecuritization: In Search of Extraordinary Means

In relation to international regulation of whaling, an extraordinary means was readily available to Greenland. Faced with the IWC issuing a quota of zero humpback whales to Greenland, the government retorted that “hunting of large whales is a vital component of everyday life and culture in Greenland [and] an important part of the Greenland food security” (Government of Greenland 2012). It therefore decided to ignore the IWC decision and, consequently, unilaterally increased its own quota (Jeremiassen 2013). This securitization was rearticulated by the premier speaking in parliament in Nuuk, in what amounts to a textbook example of a ‘societal sector’ securitization of identity: “We will continue fighting for our cultural and historical hunting traditions. We will fight for Greenland[’s right to] catch whales. . . . We defend our way of life, way of thinking and our values, and we do this to defend our rights and identity” (Jeremiassen 2013).¹¹

In relation to sealing, however, responses to the initial securitization performed by animal rights activists have a hard time suggesting effective countermeasures that would both count as extraordinary and be effective. If you are facing the threat of a gun, the extraordinary means of pointing your own gun back appears obvious. If an activist intervenes in ways that threaten the success of your hunt, you might readily think of extraordinary ways of getting him or her to leave. But how do you get faraway consumers and foreign regulators to behave in less threatening

ways? In his letter to the EU, mentioned above, the speaker of the Greenlandic parliament first took aim at the moral standing of the aggressor: “You should be ashamed of yourself, Europe” (Motzfeldt 2009). Later, he issued a convoluted threat to the perceived geopolitical interests of the EU: “Is this the right time to campaign against our traditional way of life and food base, exactly when the Community wants to enter the Arctic as an equal and trustworthy partner” (Motzfeldt 2009).¹² As much as this is an example of security talk, it speaks to the notion that environmental policies can be experienced as postcolonial and a reproduction of old hegemonic structures (Grove 1995, 48). Therefore, it is important to question who environmental security is for? As our model would suggest, the seal ban was not installed for the securitization of Inuit livelihood, culture, and identity.

Desecuritizing the Countersecuritization: The Inuit Exception

Environmentalists as well as national and international regulators, however, largely accepted this countersecuritization. In reply, a special place has been carved out for Indigenous hunting. Recognizing that “whale products play an important role in the nutritional and cultural life of native peoples,” the IWC issues small quotas to distinct communities, mainly in the Arctic, for certain species where hunting is generally not permitted (IWC n.d.). Likewise, the EU as well as mainstream environmentalist organizations deem Inuit sealing morally and legally acceptable (Canadian Press 2014; Humane Society International 2017; IFAW 2017; cf. Graugaard 2020a, 110). While radical animal rights organizations such as Sea Shepherd and Anima continue to prioritize animal lives (Vinding 2009), organizations focused on macro-issues, like Greenpeace and WWF, make a show of actively supporting Greenland in relating to sealing (Seeberg 2013; Søndergaard 2015a). While implementing an otherwise total ban on the import of sealskin products, the EU recognized that “The hunt is an integral part of the culture and identity of the members of the Inuit society” (EU 2009, §14) and devised a so called ‘Inuit exception.’ The distinction of Indigenous hunting thus serves as a move to desecuritize, recasting both the threat to wildlife and to Inuit hunting: Animals might—as individuals or species—still count as valuable referent objects, but threats coming from Greenlandic hunters should no longer count as existential. Correspondingly, Inuit should no longer feel threatened in their livelihood, culture, or identity, since their practices are—as illustrated in figure 3.4—no lon-

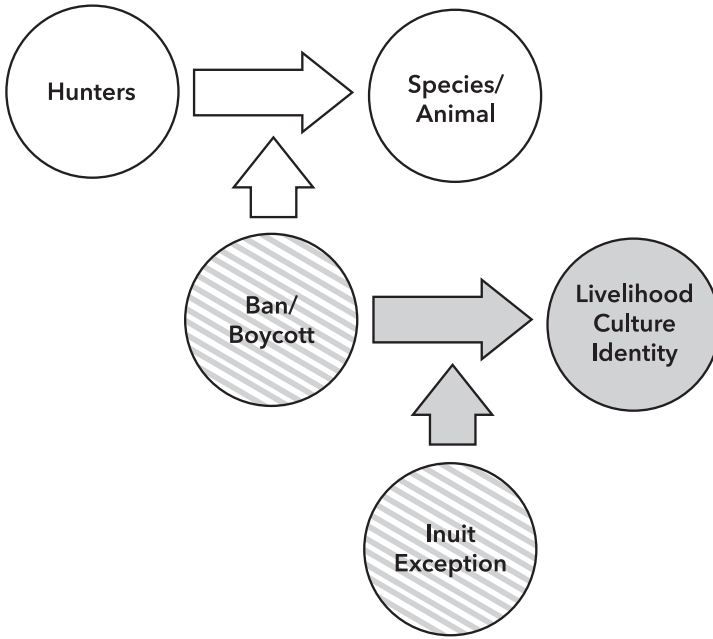


Fig. 3.4. Desecuritization of Inuit hunting. Extraordinary means: Inuit exception.

ger counted as threatening to the animals, and these practices have been exempted from the bans they deemed threatening to their livelihood, culture, and identity.

*Countersecuritizing the Means of Desecuritization:
Exceptionalism Prohibits Development*

The standard expectation, according to CSST, would be that once freed of securitization, an issue will be back to business as usual, back in the realm of ordinary political procedure and debate. Seen from a Greenlandic perspective, however, the move did not really have the desecuritizing effect, since the global markets for sealskin products, once closed down, did not reopen with a renewed demand for Inuit produce (Sommer 2012). Moreover, as a desecuritization, the ‘Inuit exception’ came with a catch in the form of another type of depolitization. On top of its lack of effect in terms of income generation, being desecuritized came at the price of being reconfinned to distinct practices and a specific rela-

tion to Nature. The embrace of mainstream environmentalist organizations, as well as EU's 'Inuit exception' desecuritizing Inuit hunting, relies on a description of practices as 'traditional' and 'sustainable.' The way these two adjectives are related in effect inscribes Greenlanders in a particular relation to Nature.¹³ The 2009 EU regulation delimits the exception to cover "seal products which result from hunts traditionally conducted by Inuit and other Indigenous communities and which contribute to their subsistence" (EU 2009).¹⁴ WWF explains how Indigenous tradition—in contrast to modern practices of both meat production and consumption—safeguards environmental concerns with both animal rights, sustainability of the species, and climate:

Greenlandic sealing is thoroughly sustainable. . . . [B]aby seals [were] for decades . . . slain with clubs in Canada. Not for their meat but only for their skin. That kind of hunting . . . does [not] happen in Greenland. . . . Greenlandic hunting is done based on knowledge of and respect for the animal, and from a climate and environmental perspective this is much more gentle to Nature than the type of production delivering most of the meat we eat from, e.g., cows, pigs or chicken. Moreover, Greenlandic seals live a good life in Nature. They move freely, are born, live and die in a World, which may be full of dangers, but which is their preferred environment. (Seeberg 2013)

In an attempt to fully utilize this desecuritization, the parliament and government of Greenland have turned to actively promoting Greenlandic seal products as sustainable (EM2012/14, 02, 08, 17-02, 08, 46; Kleist 2013, 3). In parallel, arguments relating Indigenous cultural tradition and sustainability—in contrast to industrialized practices—are commonplace in relation to whaling. As a Greenlandic minister for hunting explained to a Danish audience:

Greenlanders' lives are closely connected to marine and land animals. We have been dependent on them for thousands of years for survival in the Arctic[. . . . In contrast, Europeans] go to the supermarket to buy pre-packed meat of farmed animals, slaughtered by others. . . . Here in Greenland, we go into the Nature to catch our food, and we are therefore responsible for our own food supply. (Lyberth 2013)

Speaking to an IWC meeting, another minister for hunting relied on references to 4,000 years of sustainable Greenlandic whaling and its continued importance to Inuit traditions and diet that, she argued, could also lead to less CO₂ emissions, as it would limit Greenland's food dependency on European countries (Hansen 2010). In her speech, she also claimed that:

the term “sustainability” was not invented for fun nor by the UN or other international organizations. The term has existed as long as people have been dependent on natural resources. Perhaps the term has been defined differently from time to time and from one group to another. For example, the lack of oil in European countries in the 17th and 18th centuries caused many large whale populations to be significantly reduced. Today, for example, we find that European countries are those which are most eager to ‘save the whales’. This is gratifying. However, they must be aware not to have an exaggerated attitude towards the countries whose whales they were almost eradicating, especially when [our kind of] whaling is based on the principles of sustainability. (Hansen 2010)¹⁵

Hence desecuritizing hunting practices by basing them in a distinct identity as an ‘Indigenous people’ involves accepting being relegated to a limited spatiotemporal position: You need to perform hunting in a certain ‘traditional’ way,¹⁶ which involves you with Nature in specific ways not immediately open to modern societies.

Now the global movement of Indigenous peoples have—with Greenlanders in important roles—spent decades rejecting this identification of indigeneity with tradition, insisting on the right to self-definition and self-determination (Dahl 2012). To be Indigenous might involve coming out of a special relation to a specific landscape, but it includes also the right to determine the development of the community going forward. So desecuritizing hunting practices by inscribing them in a Eurocentric concept of indigeneity really just displaces the threat to another core element of Greenlandic identity: self-determination as a people. When pleading with the EU over sealskins, the speaker of the parliament of Greenland found that the ultimate threat from the regulation would be “to prevent Arctic Indigenous peoples from surviving *in their own manner* by eating seals and whales and birds” (Holm 2009, italics inserted). Likewise, when arguing the right to whaling to the

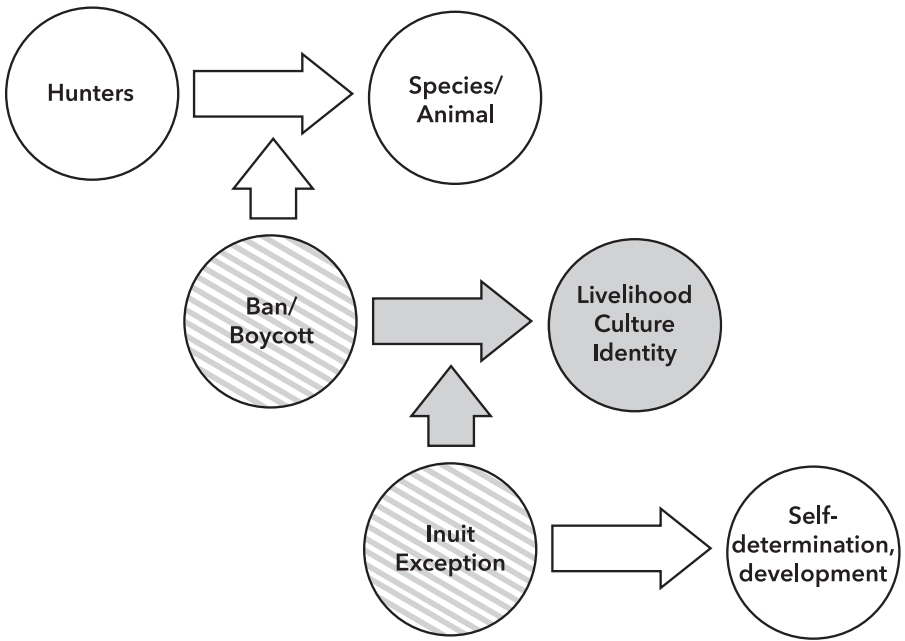


Fig. 3.5. Resecuritization of Inuit exception: Inscription in nature conditioning Inuit exception poses existential threat to Inuit self-determination, development, identity.

IWC, the minister not only pointed toward traditional practices bound to the past. She also articulated the right to self-determination when stressing that “in our aim to implement self-government in Greenland, we need to make full use of all the resources we can get, including all animals caught” (Hansen 2010).

So as a valued referent object in need of protection, the specific hunting practices are only a placeholder, not only for a cultural identity defined by the past but, more acutely, for a political identity to be realized in the future (cf. Jensen and Stepputat 2013, 219). Inuit do not want their local environment (animals) preserved in a way that prevents them from utilizing them as a resource. But neither do they want to have the modes of their utilization preserved in a way that prevents them from deciding their own future. Identity involves more than practices inherited from the past, it involves also the possibility of developing in the future and the right to decide in the present the future direction. As illustrated in figure 3.5, what began as a securitization in the environmental sector immediately set off a dynamic in the societal sec-

tor. When faced with threats from climate change, this more abstract referent object—the *future* identity—makes a desecuritizing truce with environmentalist organizations even more precarious.

Climate Change Threatening Culture, Climate Action Threatening Development

The threats from hunting to individual animal welfare and the survival of species have, arguably, faded from global attention, leaving behind Inuit with largely realized threats to livelihood and self-determination from a collapsing sealskin market.¹⁷ Radical animal rights activists—even if still targeting neighboring Faroe Islands for its *grindadráp*—have redirected their main attention to the agro-industrial complex. Meanwhile, environmentalist and conservationist concerns are increasingly focused on climate change. Whereas climate change challenges traditional ways of hunting, the melting of Arctic ice simultaneously promises to make available hitherto unexploited natural resources, renewable as well as nonrenewable. Minerals in general, but particularly until recently hydrocarbons, have appeared to embody a unique potential to boost Greenland's national economy and hence, according to the government of Greenland (Naalakkersuisut 2019), contribute to the development toward more self-determination. Therefore, securitizations of climate change, depending on how they are pitched, point out very different referent objects as valuable in a way that displaces the fault lines between the securitizing actors pitted against each other in the configuration focused on hunting (cf. Jacobsen 2015, 112).

Initial Securitization: Fossil Fuel Extraction and Emission Causing Climate Change

Of course, the core climate securitization is global in scope, pointing out the global climate as the valued referent object to be protected. Precisely its global nature, however, allow a series of derivative or supporting referent objects, ranging from the global via the regional to the local scale (cf. Kristensen and Mortensgaard, chap. 2, this vol.).¹⁸ Figure 3.6A includes but a few of these referent objects along with the preferred extraordinary means advocated by climate activists: banning further extraction of fossil fuels and capping emissions from their use.

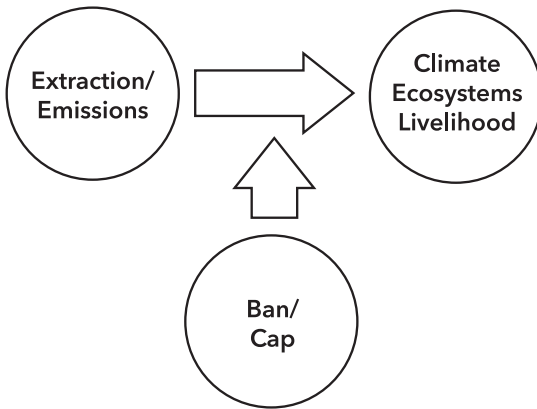


Fig. 3.6A. Securitization of climate change: Fossil extraction / CO₂ emissions pose existential threat to climate, ecosystem, livelihood. Extraordinary means: ban extraction and cap emissions.

As the atmosphere does not differentiate between the sources of greenhouse gases, distribution of the burdens involved in banning and capping (and other, more indirect means) has opened a whole new field of politics. But this field is—as we shall see—also ripe with policies apprehended as sufficiently threatening to warrant securitizing moves aiming to protect valued referent objects from these distributive politics.

Sometimes the referent object invoked to spur the panic necessary for climate security narratives to persuade audiences to accept extraordinary means are indeed ‘global’ but not environmental per se: what is explicitly pointed out as valuable enough to protect is neither climate, nature, ecosystems, nor species but something human, such as economic prosperity and development. Sometimes ‘we’ are less than global; what is threatened is life as we (affluent Europeans and Americans) know it. Other identities, however, may have sufficient legitimacy with powerful global audiences to be promoted as worthy of protection from the effects of climate change (Bjørst 2012). Among these, Arctic Indigenous peoples are not alone, but hold a distinct and prominent place. In the 2004 Arctic Climate Impact Assessment commissioned by the Arctic Council as a contribution to the work of the UN-sponsored global Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, Arctic Indigenous peoples “appear as embodiments and harbingers of what climate change has in store for the rest of the world. Standing for and speaking on behalf of at-risk cultures and livelihoods” (Martello 2008, 353). Because of dominant imaginaries about the Arctic (and Greenland) fabricated and repeated over the last 300 years, there is a trend in the international climate change debate to focus on things that suit our global imagination of vulnerability and risk. In other words, environ-

mental knowledge can easily become entangled with imperial knowledge (Grove 1995) and embedded subject positions. In effect, politicians, media, tourists, etc., want to witness climate change in the company of suffering agents. Thus, icebergs, polar bears, and the Inuit are some of the constructed victims that are suitable for our imagination and representations of the Arctic (Bjørst 2012; cf. Bravo 2009). In other words, global framing of climate change involves a specific position in this narrative for ‘local witnesses’ which freezes arguments and possible agency for Inuit (Bjørst 2012).

In continuation, possibly the largest single North American initiative to date to reduce fossil fuel extraction was not legitimized by the threat to the global climate but rather by threats to regional ecosystems and local people in the Arctic. In the waning days of his presidency, Barack Obama met with Canadian prime minister Justin Trudeau to announce a ban on oil and gas extraction in the Arctic, “due to the important, irreplaceable values of its Arctic waters for [1] Indigenous, Alaska Native and local communities’ subsistence and cultures, [2] wildlife and wildlife habitat, and [3] scientific research; [4] the vulnerability of these ecosystems to an oil spill; and [5] the unique logistical, operational, safety, and scientific challenges and risks of oil extraction and spill response in Arctic waters” (United States and Canada 2016). Conceivably, environmentalists were thrilled by this extraordinary action as they joined in the securitization of the livelihood of Indigenous peoples to support their primary securitization of ecosystems: “The governments of the USA and Canada have taken a huge and important step towards protecting the unique ecosystems in the Arctic, which are also a vital pantry for the humans living in the region, even while they are increasingly threatened by industrial activities and climate change” (Turnowsky 2016). Greenlandic representatives have long joined in the same securitization. In March 2014, when the UN secretary general visited Greenland, Greenland’s then premier described the visit as:

a unique opportunity to communicate some of those experiences that Indigenous peoples have from [their] meetings with climate change. . . . It is also important to see that the strong, proud culture in the Arctic is threatened because of climate change. . . . Climate change has a direct impact on our daily lives, on the household economy and that we get food on the table. (Government of Greenland 2014)

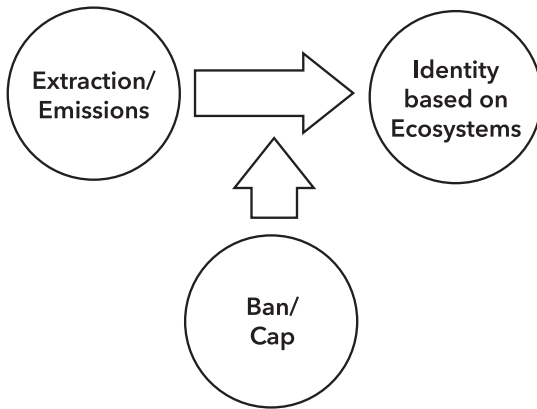


Fig. 3.6B. Securitization of climate change as threat to Inuit identity. Fossil extraction / CO₂ emissions pose existential threat to Inuit identity. Extraordinary means: ban extraction and cap emissions.

Moreover, from another speech by the same premier it is clear that what is at stake is not just ecosystems or material livelihood, but identity: “At the heart of Inuit culture, is the preservation and long-term protection of the living resources, on which life in the Arctic has always depended. These living resources are key to my identity and to that of my people” (Hammond 2014, 10). This variation of the basic climate securitization, illustrated in figure 3.6B, falls well into the overall way in which this securitization integrates referent objects across scales.

Countersecuritization: Ban and Cap Threatening Self-Determination and Development

For a long time, however, official Greenlandic politicians have consistently combined this narrative about the threats from climate change to Inuit identity with another narrative. This second narrative—in a parallel to the security configuration focused on hunting—points out certain measures taken to *avert* climate change as a threat to a different aspect of Greenlandic identity. There might very well be an urgent need to reduce global extraction of fossil fuels and global CO₂ emissions, but according to this second narrative, restrictions on *Greenlandic* extraction and emissions constitutes a threat to Greenlandic development and self-determination.¹⁹ Hence the premier, quoted above, continued to say that “Greenland will not be a passive victim of climate change. A likely scenario for the future of Greenland is an economic growth supported by new large-scale industries and oil and mineral extraction. This will profoundly affect our society and the environment” (Hammond 2014, 3–4). Correspondingly, the immediate reac-

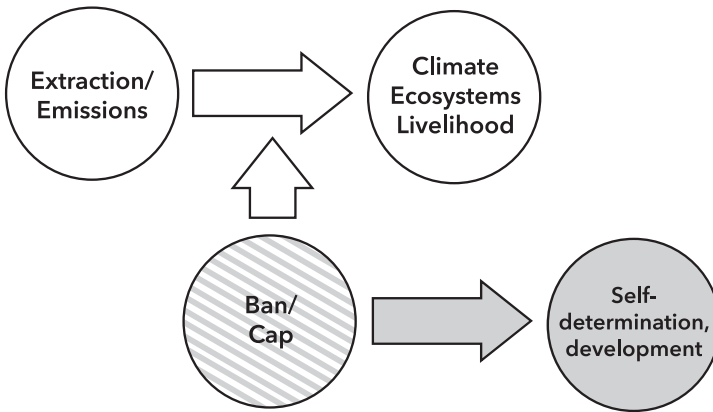


Fig. 3.7. Securitization of climate action: Ban/cap on fossil extraction / CO₂ emissions pose existential threat to Inuit development, self-determination, identity.

tion to the Obama-Trudeau ban on Arctic extraction from a Greenlandic minister was to welcome incoming president Trump's choice of oil executive Rex Tillerson as secretary of state, since "without revenues from non-renewable resource extraction, including oil and gas, Greenland cannot achieve political independence from Denmark" (Bell 2016).²⁰ His approach echoed positions taken by other leading Greenlandic politicians. When Greenpeace boarded a platform conducting exploratory drilling for oil outside the coast of West Greenland, then premier Kuupik Kleist claimed that "[t]his constitutes an obvious illegal act that disregards the democratic rules. . . . The Greenland Government regards the Greenpeace action as being a very grave and illegal attack on Greenland's constitutional rights" (Gerhardt, Kristoffersen, and Stuvø 2020).

Moreover, as illustrated in figure 3.7, the threat to Greenlandic development and self-determination comes not just from a ban on fossil fuel extraction, but also from a possible cap to Greenlandic CO₂ emissions. While preparing for the COP15,²¹ the same premier insisted that "climate policy must be seen in the context of the overall political objective of a financially self-sustaining Greenland" (Kleist 2009a), explaining that Greenland should "have the same opportunity as other countries which have been able to exploit their oil potentials [. . . and] emit CO₂" (Kleist 2009b, 12). This threat led Greenland to align with the

large group of countries led by China and India securitizing their development at the COP21, as argued by the minister dispatched to Paris:

A precondition for Greenland joining a new global climate accord must be that all countries will have possibilities for growth. As a matter of principle, the polluter should pay for the pollution and its consequences. . . . If Greenland accepts a continuation in a new climate accord of the quota system as implemented under the Kyoto protocol, Greenland will be paying massively for future activities in the raw materials sector and related business activities, while industrialized countries only commit to reducing emissions from already existing activities. (Nyvold 2015)²²

Returning from Paris, the minister seemingly felt left behind by these allies, who agreed to accept emission caps and reductions. Hence, he contracted the scope of the collective identity under threat from developing nations to Indigenous peoples, whom he described as having:

only in very small degree had influence on the harmful climatic change which currently affects the whole globe. . . . Indigenous peoples should not be committed to the same climate goals in the same way as big countries. . . . The international society should in the text of the accord have confirmed that Indigenous peoples enjoy special rights including the right to development. (Søndergaard 2015b)

*Desecuritizing the Countersecuritization:
The Exception of Greenland and the End of Exception*

In conclusion, the government of Denmark—at the request of the government of Greenland—excepted Greenland from obligations to reduce CO₂ emissions in order to “facilitate the goal of creating economic and industrial growth” (Naalakkersuisut 2020).²³ Hence no international obligations in relation to climate change hamper the development of Greenland. In a sense, this was a consequence of the way in which Denmark had moved to desecuritize the threat from carbon restrictions to Greenlandic self-determination. As the minister of foreign affairs for Denmark argued when agreeing to except Greenland from the Danish part of EU emission reduction obligations to be negotiated

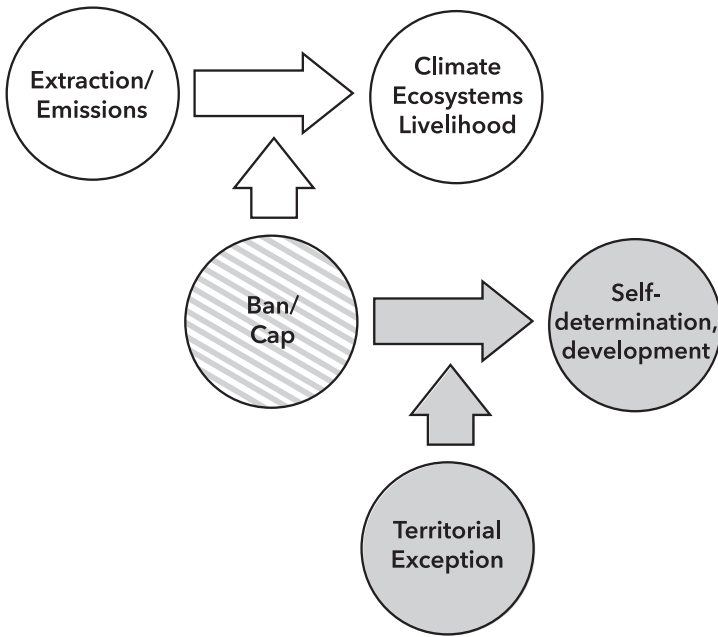


Fig. 3.8. Desecuritization of Greenlandic fossil extraction / CO₂ emissions. Extraordinary means: territorial exception.

at COP15, “[f]or 4000 years, nature has put some restrictions on development in the Arctic. When new opportunities arise, we cannot say that they cannot use them. Then they could as well say to us: You have had plenty of opportunities—now you are not allowed to use any further” (Løvstrøm 2009). Just as when securing animals from hunting, Greenlandic fossil fuel extraction and CO₂ emission are—as illustrated in figure 3.8—exempted from the existential threat. But contrary to the ‘Inuit exception,’ which has not in itself persuaded consumers to buy sealskin, the carbon exemption was accepted by relevant audiences sufficient for averting the threat for some time.

Recently, however, the grounds for this exception have shifted. Following the 2021 elections, the new Greenlandic government asked Denmark to lift the territorial exception of Greenland from the Paris agreement (Lindstrøm 2021a). The new government also announced a stop to oil exploration in Greenlandic waters (Naalakkersuisut.gl 2021). The reasoning behind the change of policies was that given the expected transition to green energy, no companies had lately been willing to

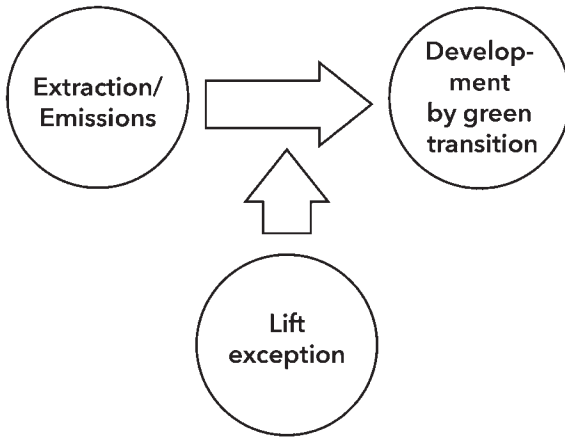


Fig. 3.9. Shortcutting the securitization of Greenlandic fossil extraction to fall in line with Greenland's green image. Extraordinary means: lifting territorial exception and banning extraction.

invest in exploration anyway (Dall 2021), and that the Paris agreement will not pose any limitations on industrial development, since ratification only obliges signatories to report emission goals, not that these will necessarily involve reductions (Lindstrøm 2021a, 2021b; cf. UNFCCC 2021; UN 2022). The Paris Agreement thus seems to be less of a showstopper for growth than suspected by Greenlandic politicians back in 2015, and the agreement might even prove to be an instrument for getting outside support for actions to a green transition and development in Greenland. Hence, even if some politicians attempt to keep the securitization of fossil bans and caps alive (Lindstrøm 2021b), the leading ministers see the pollution of Greenland's 'green' image by 'black' extraction and exceptions as a larger threat to foreign investments and economic development. This way of getting Greenland back in the global mainstream is illustrated in figure 3.9.

The Transfiguration of Environmental/Societal Security in the Arctic

The analyses above charted two Arctic security configurations involving both the environmental and the societal sectors. In important ways, the two configurations can be described as the result of similar dynamics (compare figure 3.4 with figure 3.8): First, securitization of an environmental referent object, then countersecuritization by Inuit, and finally more or less successful desecuritization of Inuit by being excepted from the threat. The two configurations, however, share more than this distinct isomorphism. If observed together with a focus on

the actors involved, the two configurations constitute a security transfiguration. Not just because some of the actors are the same in the two configurations, but also because the parties repeatedly choose to link the two configurations by reminding each other of the roles played in the ‘other’ configuration:

First, an alliance was established by environmentalists and Indigenous peoples’ representatives in relation to hunting, allowing Indigenous hunting—be it seals or whales—on grounds of their being sustainable or otherwise integrated in the natural environment. This alliance has seamlessly continued into an agreement on the need to protect Arctic species and ecosystems against climate change, for their own sake and for the sake of the humans depending on them. But when the accentuation of the Inuit position regarding hunting changes from a defense of a ‘naturalized’ Inuit way of life to defending Inuit’s right to self-determination as the referent object, the alliance with environmentalists is seriously strained. The strain becomes particularly stressed whenever Inuit want to use their self-determination to develop in ways that are at odds with environmentalist concerns with climate change, such as by extracting Arctic oil reserves and emitting CO₂ as a byproduct from other extractive industries.

Moreover, the alliance is undermined by the way Greenlanders link the two configurations on hunting and climate, particularly as concerns the parallel securitizations promoted by the environmentalists. One example can be found in the then premier’s reaction to Greenpeace’s campaign to end oil exploration in the Arctic: “Greenpeace has *once again* succeeded in impeding Greenland’s opportunities to secure the economic foundation for its people’s condition of life” (Gerhardt, Kristoffersen, and Stuvøy 2020, italics inserted). As Gerhardt, Kristoffersen, and Stuvøy sum up the relation: “Interfering with this right [to explore and exploit its subsoil], as Greenpeace has done, is thus seen as a postcolonial and patronizing attempt to once again take the right to self-determination away from the Greenlandic people. Exacerbating this sentiment is the particular history that Greenpeace has had in Greenland with regard to the seal hunt” (Gerhardt, Kristoffersen, and Stuvøy 2020).

Even if the two Greenlandic positions in relation to climate change seem to contrast, they at the same time work in alliance toward the bigger goal of Greenland’s self-determination with regards to both hunting marine animals and extracting mineral resources. Nevertheless, the combination of these two distinct positions appears highly fragile

when transfigured from the hunting figuration to the climate figuration: Warning, on the one hand, that your food security and culture is threatened by climate change caused by excessive CO₂ emissions sits uneasy with, on the other hand, claiming that restrictions on your own CO₂ emissions threatens your right to independently determining your development. Hence, a Greenlandic minister, representing the official government position, felt it necessary to explicitly establish a distance from the Indigenous peoples organization that counts among its members a series of Greenlandic NGOs as well as the Greenlandic parliament:²⁴ “The Inuit Circumpolar Council . . . has failed to deal with Greenland’s interests” (Bell 2016).²⁵

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have analyzed a security transfiguration across sectors: Animals, climate, and self-determination and the distinct ways in which securitizations of ‘environmental’ referent objects have interacted with securitizations centered on identities. Securitizing moves made by European and American actors directed squarely to the environmental sector appear in Greenland as identity threats, but the character of the added dynamics cannot be taken for granted. Sometimes threats to referent objects in ‘the natural environment’ may seamlessly cosecuritize aspects of Inuit material culture valued as core to identity. But sometimes, conversely, the extraordinary means promoted to avert a threat to an environmental referent object registers as an existential threat to different aspects of cultural and political identity. Moreover, actors party to a configuration may actively link it to another configuration by identifying opponents with positions taken in relation to other securitizations.

To adequately account for these synchronic cross-sectoral relations *and* for the diachronic changes in actor configurations requires, first, that sectors are not confining the empirical analysis but are used as stepping stones to study cross-sectoral dynamics, and second, a focus on transfigurations rather than only static configurations. An added value of such an analytical strategy has been to sensitize the analysis also to bottom-up agency, capturing what happens when Inuit do not take up the positions to which they are invited by global narratives but seek to rework them to their own purposes. This focus, we would argue, is pivotal when analyzing and understanding the security dynamics

under climatic thaw and geopolitical freeze in Greenland. The many transfigurations across sectors flesh out securitization and countersecuritization in the politics surrounding Greenlandic decolonization where Greenlandic authorities and Inuit representatives take up delicate positions to impact their room for maneuver. Whereas an Inuit/Greenlandic climate exception might be the right extraordinary means to secure the possibility for development and self-determination, the same exception can be just as harmful for the culturally important hunting traditions and possibly the economically vital fisheries export.

On the one hand, the basic tension between securitization of ecosystems and the right to self-determination and socioeconomic development, is neither unique to the Arctic nor independent of global configurations, including the disagreements between industrialized and developing countries over which part of the uneasy marriage between 'sustainable' and 'development' should be stressed (cf. Gad, Jacobsen, and Strandsbjerg 2020). On the other hand, our analytical approach has made it clear that the distinct constellation of actors in the Arctic has made for an environmental/societal security dynamic that is different from parallel global configurations. Particularly, the exceptionally high profile of Indigenous peoples, and the way this high profile has been accepted by the governments based in temperate zones as necessary for the legitimacy of extending their sovereignty to Arctic territories, has made for different and changing relations to global environmental NGOs.

Greenlandic politicians routinely lump together 'international NGOs' as 'outside environmentalists.' If we accept this crude aggregation, it is fair to say that by and large these forces have historically not fully understood those cross-sectoral dynamics offset by the reactions to their campaigns coming from people living in the Arctic. In effect, their initiatives to save the whales and the seals, to save Arctic species and ecosystems, and to save the global climate come out as a threat to Greenlandic development and self-determination. In other words, the 'we's' and 'our's' 'articulated by environmentalist IGOs (UN 2015) and other authorities based on environmental concerns exclude Inuit and Greenlanders. Hence they easily come to negate Greenlandic identity, both in aspects based on current practices and in aspects based on future ambitions. Being a Greenlander involves not just living among countrymen harvesting marine mammals, but also being part of a nation in command of the resources necessary to imagine a future where self-determination is supported by socioeconomic

development, ultimately culminating in economic self-support and formal statehood.

FUNDING

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NOTES

1. While the argument put forward in this article in the present form remains our responsibility, we are indebted to discussions in the core group of a research project on 'The Politics of Sustainability and Postcoloniality in the Arctic' sponsored by the VELUX Foundation. Particularly, the empirical analysis of the securitizations relating to sealing is informed by research conducted by Naja Graugaard as part of this project. We are grateful for comments on an earlier version of the chapter from the other contributors to this volume as well as from a seminar in the Foreign Policy and Diplomacy Unit at Danish Institute for International Studies. Particularly, Stefano Guzzini's comments were instrumental in getting the argument precise.

2. Except, perhaps, after the 2021 general elections, in which representatives for the incoming government seems to have changed course on Greenland's international obligations in relation to reducing climate change. We will return to this by the end of the chapter.

3. The Greenland chapter of the pan-Inuit organization ICC is highly engaged in discussions about the Arctic environment from a human rights perspective, but while their positions on various matters definitively have resonance (with wider or more narrow strata of the population), ICC is not a membership organization, and their relation to parliamentarian and executive representatives of the autonomous government of Greenland have, at times, been fraught (Jacobsen and Gad 2018).

4. A larger group of 'outside environmentalists' can also be identified by reading the list of NGOs mentioned in the "Appeal to the Greenlandic and Danish Governments and the European Union to Help Protect the Greenlandic and Arctic Environment" released February 10, 2021.

5. This overall image of the Arctic relies on a more extensive discussion in Gad, Jacobsen, and Strandsbjerg (2020). A wider set of narratives is lined up by Kristoffersen and Langhelle (2017), Steinberg, Tasch, and Gerhardt (2015), and Wilson (2007).

6. This proposition is developed in Gad (2005, 2017a) and Jacobsen (2014) building on, among others, Thomsen (1998).

7. Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde (1998) introduced the concept of 'constellation of securitizations.' inspired by Elias' concept of 'figurations': "The networks of interdependencies among human beings is what binds them together. Such interdependencies are the nexus of what is here called the figuration, a structure of mutually orientated and dependent people. Since people are more or less

dependent on each other . . . they exist . . . only as pluralities, only in figurations” (Elias 2000 [1968], 481–82). Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde defined ‘constellation’ in parallel, discussing how “it is not the units themselves in a static way that make up the whole; it is the way their movements, actions, and policies relate to each other that forms a truly political pattern at the level of relations of relations” (1998, 191, note 3). In other words, “the constellation is found at the level of interactions of interactions” (Gad 2010, note 71; cf. Buzan and Wæver 2009, note 17). By switching back to Elias’ ‘configuration’ from Buzan and Wæver’s ‘constellation,’ we intend no change of meaning, only ‘configuration’ lends itself better to changing the prefix to ‘transfiguration.’

8. Our ambition is thus separate from but related to Dreyer’s (2019) distinction between, on the one hand, ‘progressive securitization’ in which the referent object is not predefined but in flux during the securitization process, and, on the other hand, ‘conservative securitization’ in which the referent object is temporally pre-existing, spatially delineated, and politically Manichean.

9. Even though the concept of transfiguration involves a claim that something has changed, turning a previous state into a distinct, later state, the quotes included are not presented strictly in the chronological order in which they occurred. Formulations once made echo and may be taken up again, sometimes moving to center stage, sometimes reverting to the fringes of debate. Rather, the rationale behind the selection of quotes has been to explicate the dynamic logic of securitization/countersecuritization/deseuritizations and the reverberations from earlier configurations to later ones. For renditions of several of the quotes contextualized as part of more chronological narratives, cf. Bjørst 2012; Jacobsen 2014, 2015; Graugaard 2020a; Gerhardt, Kristoffersen, and Stuvøy 2020. Quotes from Danish-language sources have been translated by the authors.

10. Parliamentary debates in Greenland include similar threat constructions, such as “the EU legislation as well as the attitudes of more and more other countries are threatening our culture and traditional way of living” (Henningesen in EM2011/14, 02:16:41–02:17:02). For similar narratives promoted on behalf of Inuit elsewhere or in general, cf. Arnaquq-Baril (2016); Inuit Sila (2013); ICC (n.d.)

11. The opposition generally shared the same perspective (EM2013/14; cf. Jacobsen 2014, 33–34, 43–45).

12. The government of Greenland issued similar and more explicit threats of offering its resources and geopolitical position to global competitors in other communication with the EU (Gad et al. 2011, 21).

13. Our argument here relies heavily on the genealogy of how the concept of ‘sustainable sealing’ has emerged, available in Graugaard (2020a), even if we cannot here do justice to the nuances of her analysis. See Gad, Jacobsen, and Strandsbjerg (2020) for a discussion of sustainability as a political concept in the Arctic.

14. Following a WTO decision that supported a Canadian/Norwegian challenge to the initial ‘Inuit exception,’ the EU doubled down with a more detailed description of the distinct character of Inuit hunting (EU 2015, §2)

15. The Faroese *grindadráp* hunting of pilot whales provides a subtle but informative contrast in this regard. Struggling for decades with the *Sea Shepherd* organization, a radical splinter group branching off from Greenpeace to focus on whaling, the government English-language website advances many of the same arguments

as the Greenlandic government: that whaling is a “sustainable, regulated, communal, natural [way to supply] food,” but instructively refrains from labeling the Faroese practice ‘Indigenous’ (Government of the Faroe Islands, n.d.).

16. Graugaard explains how the quest for original ways mandated by EU and IWC regulation is indeed a mirage, since current Indigenous practices are the result of centuries of engagement with colonial projects and capitalist markets: “Even though seal meat plays an important role in sharing economies, in households, and in ensuring food security in the Arctic, the incomes from selling the sealskins are equally important for supporting the lives and families of hunters, tailors, and seamstresses” (Graugaard 2020a, 116).

17. Restrictions on whaling for domestic consumption have—for now—been averted to what seems to be an acceptable level. In 2021, however, a new, local twist to the debacle appeared. The hunters and fishermen’s organization KNAPK criticized the capital municipality for a decision to protect the humpback whales in the Nuup Kangerlua (Nuuk Fiorth) from hunting. The municipality argued that the whales constituted an asset for tourism and recreation, whereas KNAPK saw their protection as a threat to the hunting culture. In effect, they explicitly equated the decision with Brigitte Bardot’s intervention, which has become iconic for the anti-sealing campaign (Schultz-Nielsen 2021).

18. For discussions of the ontological status of scales in parallel problematics, cf. Gad, Jacobsen, and Strandsbjerg 2020; Jacobsen 2020; Berling et al. 2021, chap. 5.

19. Notably, this second narrative is not limited to a narrow elite. Bjørst (2012) relays how, when invited to address an NGO meeting arranged by climate activists in the margins of COP15, two “hunters did not speak on behalf of the climate and nature on a global scale. Now, they were speaking on behalf of Greenlandic society and local dilemmas, about the future of their children and the community as such,” and likewise, two young Greenlanders “could not feel the pollution locally and felt that Greenland’s emissions were so minimal that they do not have an impact on the global environment and people living in other parts of the world.”

20. On Trudeau’s home turf, a parallel dissatisfaction came in a joint statement from premiers of Nunavut and Northwest Territories, describing the extraction ban as a step backwards in the devolution progress, as they were only given two hours’ notice before the official announcement (Dusen 2016). The two premiers argued that “[t]he economies of the two territories are small and depend heavily on resource development as the major contributor to GDP and source of jobs and income for their residents at the present time. . . . All Canadians deserve to share in the opportunities and benefits of living in a sustainable and prosperous Canada” (Taptuna and McLeod 2016). In this way, they protested the Trudeau administration’s overruling of the two northern territories’ interests (Jacobsen 2020, 64).

21. The Conference of the Parties (COP), the supreme decision-making body of the UNFCCC (The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change), meets yearly to take decisions that will make the objectives for the climate achievable. The 15th of those yearly meetings, COP15, was held in Copenhagen in 2009 without much progress, while in 2015 COP21 resulted in the Paris Agreement, hailed for setting 1.5 degrees Celsius as a maximum acceptable global warming and extending an obligation to set emissions goals from all industrialized countries.

22. Greenland did not meet its obligations, according to the Kyoto Protocol

(1998), by reducing emissions by 8 percent (2008–2012). Rather, in agreement with the Danish Ministry for Climate, Energy and Building, Greenland's fulfillment of the first commitment period was secured through the purchase of CO₂ credits in 2012.

23. Formally, for the second commitment period (from 2013 to 2020) of the Kyoto Protocol, Greenland was covered by a territorial exception from Denmark's international reduction commitments (Vidal 2016). Likewise, Greenland was exempted from the Danish ratification of the 2015 Paris Agreement (Denmark 2016). Even though one minister for energy had to step down after denying man-made climate change (Krog 2019), most Greenlandic politicians acknowledge that Greenland shares some responsibility for contributing to limiting climate change. A survey found that a majority of the electorate support Greenland's submission to the Paris Agreement and the regulation of industrial CO₂ emissions in Greenland, but in the same survey only minorities supported raising taxes to curb the use of fossil fuels and stopping oil exploration in Greenland (Turnowsky 2019).

24. For a discussion of the complex relation between the ICC and the, formally civic/territorially based, Government of Greenland, cf. Jacobsen and Gad (2018).

25. Even more so, the double narrative leaves the government of Greenland open to attack for double standards. A small example comes from the debates on a projected iron ore project in Mary River, across the Davis Strait in Arctic Canada. On behalf of the government of Greenland, two biologists from the Greenland Institute of Natural Resources submitted that the project "will affect wildlife in Greenland, and probably also for hunting and fishing," listing a range of threats including whale collisions and accidents along the shipping lane as well as disturbances to narwhales and other marine mammals from ice-breaking and noise caused by shipping, but also "oil spills" (Anselmi 2020). An anonymous reader tersely found the objection "hilarious given that Greenland has had no issue approving oil and gas exploration on their side" (Facebook comment on Anselmi 2020). Wæver (2017, 124) notes that it will be more difficult for Arctic actors like Greenland to place responsibility for action against climate threats with faraway governments if they themselves come closer to statehood. In our analysis, the Greenlandic trouble seem to come less from assuming formal statehood and the responsibilities coming with sovereignty; rather it is the decisions and the development ambitions substantiating self-determination that makes for the difficulties.

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