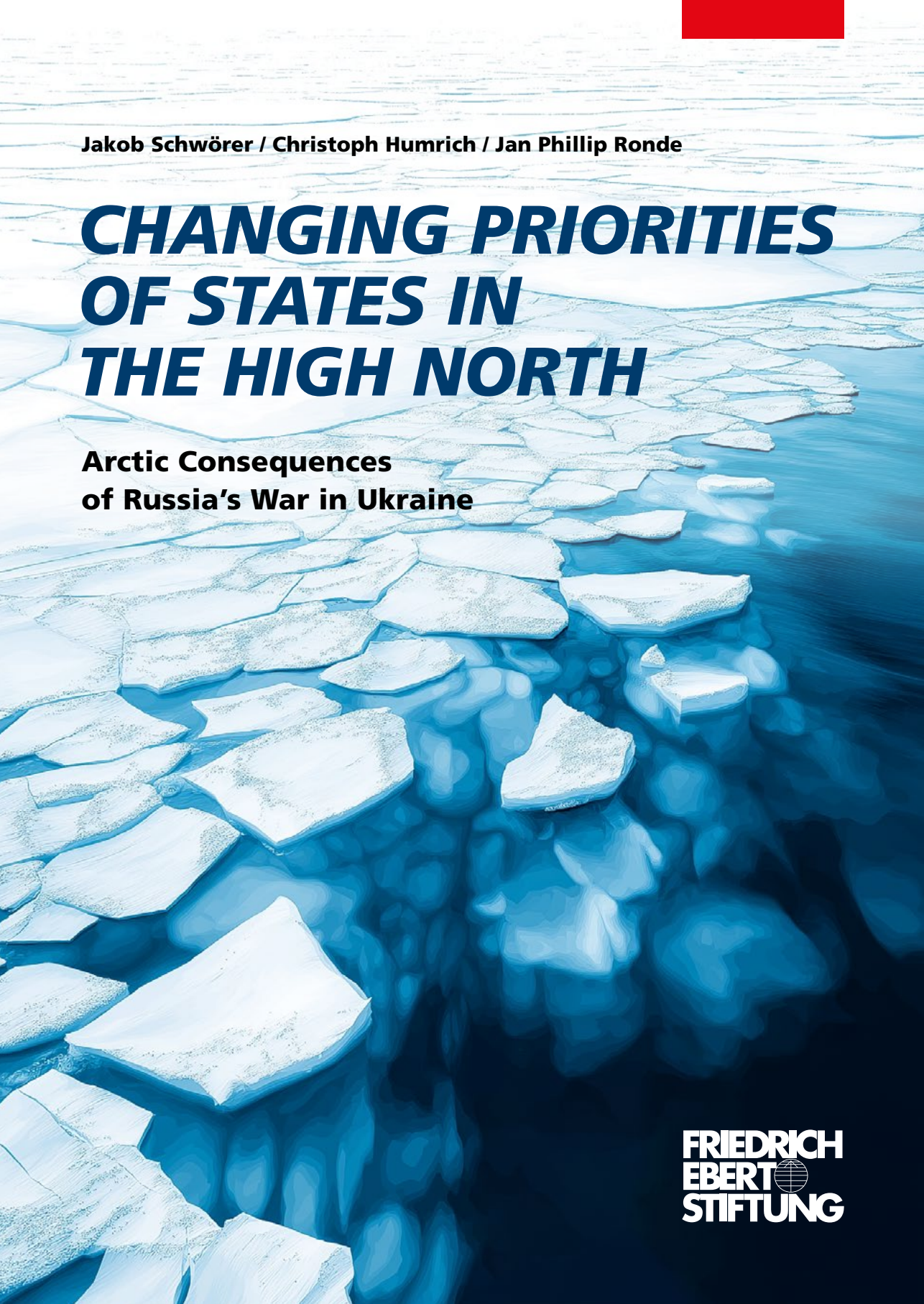
Jakob Schwörer / Christoph Humrich / Jan Phillip Ronde

CHANGING PRIORITIES OF STATES IN THE HIGH NORTH

Arctic Consequences of Russia's War in Ukraine



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About the Authors

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CONTENT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Russia's full-scale war in Ukraine has significantly altered the global and European security landscape. The ramifications have also reached the Arctic, a region often described as 'exceptional' because the regional cooperation between Russia and the seven Western Arctic states seemed impervious to geopolitical tensions elsewhere. However, one of the most significant effects of Russia's February 2022 attack on Ukraine was the Western Arctic states' immediate cessation of collaboration with Russia in the Arctic Council, a distinct change in the landmark feature of 'Arctic exceptionalism'. While diplomats have since agreed on terms for the Arctic Council's working groups to start operating again on an informal level, Sweden's and Finland's accession to NATO will mean more lasting change.

While it seems rather obvious that security concerns have risen to the top of political agendas related to the Arctic since February 2022, it is less clear what this means for other issues formerly on states' priority lists for the region, including resources and economic development, climate and environmental change, Indigenous peoples' rights and livelihoods, and the evolution of effective multilateral governance in these issue areas. Will the rise of security as the dominant theme come at the expense of the other issue areas or subordinate them to overarching security concerns ('securitization'), as was the case during the Cold War? This study seeks answers to these questions, attempting to capture the shift in states' Arctic priorities since the start of Russia's full-scale war. Evidence was gathered through an expert survey and qualitative interviews with scholars and (local) policymakers, as well as through content analysis of foreign ministries' communications on Twitter/X.

The findings confirm an increased emphasis on military and security concerns. Moreover, experts predict that this elevated emphasis is here to stay for the foreseeable future, even though the likelihood of significant military confrontations in the Arctic is estimated to be very low. Experts have expressed concern about the shift away from environmental and Indigenous issues, which are not expected to increase significantly in political salience even though the majority of experts consider them to be the most pressing challenges facing the Arctic. Moreover, this study presents indications that resources are increasingly being viewed from a security perspective as the supply of critical raw materials and energy resources becomes less dependent on Russia (and China). Military build-up and infrastructure are becoming part of economic development.

From a bird's eye view, the evidence shows certain warning signs of a trend towards security-dominated or securitized regional agendas, which could make domestic conflicts about urgent environmental policies and sustainable transition, as well as pressure on Indigenous rights and livelihoods, more pronounced. To counter such trends and safeguard the possibility of progressive change, concerted efforts should be made to significantly increase learning potential for a sustainable transition and effective recognition of Indigenous rights and livelihoods.

INTRODUCTION

ARCTIC CHANGE

Scholarly perceptions of the Arctic have long been dominated by two competing imaginaries. The first emerged after Russia planted a flag on the seabed at the North Pole in 2007. As a result, the Arctic looked poised to become a security and military hotspot, a 'region of geopolitical tension and conflict'. However, the forces identified as driving the region in that direction have varied over the years. At first, maritime status and boundary disputes, together with resource extraction and the opening of sea lanes, were seen to constitute a 'toxic brew' and lead to 'armed brinkmanship' potentially with global repercussions (Borgerson 2008). Upon a closer look, neither the alleged resource race nor significant shipping traffic along new routes materialized. Disputes were either resolved or remained politically irrelevant. However, the 'security region' imaginary stayed even after its supposed dynamics had changed. After Russia illegally annexed Crimea in 2014 and China became more visible on the Arctic stage, it seemed as though global trends were having Arctic repercussions (not the other way around). These repercussions were framed primarily in two ways. The first framing is of an Arctic great power competition, a sketch of which was delivered by the then US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo in an infamous speech on the occasion of the 2019 Arctic Council Ministerial (Humrich 2020). Alternatively, they were seen in terms of a more narrowly defined strategic competition over the Euro-Atlantic High North or a classical security dilemma, mainly between Russia (supported by China) on one side and the NATO allies on the other (Kramnik 2022; Suslov and Kashin 2022; Padrtová 2017). Both framings, however, are associated with a marked militarization in Russia and respective responses from the West. While the former versions of this imaginary are still present, it is the latter that seems to be evoked in most analysis now.

The second imaginary, the 'region of stability and cooperation', initially took shape as a reaction to the various versions of the 'region of geopolitical tension and conflict'. Through either trying simply to debunk alleged conflict drivers[1] or emphasizing existing extensive cooperation between Russia and the seven Western Arctic states, this imaginary portrays the Arctic as 'one of the world's most stable regions, defined by the absence of military confrontation or conflict, as well as an expanding institutionalized and inclusive network of organizations and processes focused on cooperation on common interests and challenges' (MacDonald 2019, p. 1). Common interests in this context are understood primarily to include adaptation to and mitigation of Arctic climate change and pollution, and the furthering of Indigenous rights and livelihoods. When cooperation in the Arctic continued despite a spike in tension between Russia and the West in response to the annexation of Crimea in 2014, the expression 'Arctic exceptionalism' became increasingly prominent (Byers 2017; Devyatkin 2023; Heininen 2022; Heininen et al. 2022; MacDonald 2019; Rahbek-Clemmensen 2017). This is exemplified by the repeated nomination of the Arctic Council for the Nobel Peace Prize as the embodiment of this exceptionalism.

For a long time, it seemed that the second imaginary, that of the Arctic as a region of stability and cooperation, was much more accurate than its competing viewpoint. Just one day

1 For example, there was broad scholarly agreement that armed conflict over Arctic resources was highly unlikely, because of the resources' economic value and their being located mostly in the undisputed exclusive economic zones (EEZs) of the Arctic states (Claes and Moe 2018; Dodds and Nuttall 2016; Łuszczuk et al. 2014; Østhagen 2021; Tamnes and Offerdal 2014).

before Russia's invasion, Russia's ambassador to Norway quoted a speech by Sergey Lavrov at the Kirkenes Conference in Norway, emphasizing that Arctic cooperation should 'maintain its pace and continue to contribute to maintaining trust, stability and good neighborliness in Northern Europe'.[2] A day later, the stage was set for an unprecedented shift in Arctic politics and governance. Even though much diplomatic effort is currently being invested in preserving the status quo since the start of Russia's full-scale war, 'Arctic exceptionalism' undeniably suffered a 'disruption' when the seven Western Arctic states paused their cooperation with Russia in the Arctic Council. The question now is, how exactly will this unprecedented shift play out?

In the aftermath of the invasion, scholars and policymakers alike have started to speculate about what kinds of consequences Russia's war in Ukraine will have on the Arctic. The prevailing image seems to confirm the end of Arctic exceptionalism and the final emergence of the Arctic as a region of geopolitical tension and military conflict. Be it because Russia, faced with international sanctions and a military quagmire in Ukraine, may seek to strengthen its presence in the Arctic as a face-saving measure in light of its losses in Ukraine (Hedlund 2023; Kendall-Taylor et al. 2022) or because Russia's nuclear posturing and hybrid attacks, such as sabotage and intelligence gathering, become more aggressive as sanctions and material losses in Ukraine have weakened its conventional military forces in the Arctic (Østhagen 2023; Wall and Wegge 2023; Wishnick and Carlson 2022).

Our study aims to make an empirical contribution to accounts of the unprecedented shift the Arctic is experiencing. We seek to move beyond the two dominant imaginaries: (1) the Arctic as a region of geopolitical tension and conflict, and (2) the Arctic as a region of stability and cooperation, also termed 'Arctic exceptionalism'. While these two imaginaries stand in stark contrast to one another, both fall short in at least three key aspects.

First, they share the implicit idea that the Arctic is a single region. This is often and rightly considered a misconception (Østhagen 2021). Accordingly, we start with the assumption that the Arctic is now not only divided between Russia and the West, but that interests also differ within the West and might diverge even more in the future despite the West's common stance against Russia. We searched for evidence of states' individual national interests and priorities in order to consolidate a more differentiated picture.

Second, the 'geopolitical conflict' framework emphasizes security concerns, while 'Arctic exceptionalism' as a paradigm focuses on the environment and Indigenous peoples. Though resources and economic development are important for both, they remain underappreciated by both of these imaginaries. While the so-called 'Arctic Resource Race' or 'Resource War' has not yet materialized (Østhagen 2021), Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the subsequent cut-off of Russian gas and energy for Western countries, and the increased willingness to become energy independent from Russia as a means of enhancing security could significantly accelerate resource exploitation (Debanck 2023; Payva Almonte 2023). Likewise, the commitment to the green transition in the face of climate change increases the need for mineral resources for the production of high-tech products, such as batteries, semiconductors, magnets and catalysts (Watson et al. 2023). Thus, a heightening of the importance of economic activity is to be expected.

This brings us to the third aspect missing from existing perspectives. The two presented imaginaries systematically turn a blind eye to domestic politics, focusing instead solely on inter-

2 https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1800074/?lang=en

state relations in the Arctic, both in the sense of changing priorities due to shifting governments and vis-à-vis how domestic politics impact dynamics at other levels. Local communities and Indigenous societies may be affected, both by increasing domestic emphasis on security or actual security-related activities as well as by increased pressure for economic development of the Arctic. These may come at the expense of the local environment as mining or shipping activities increase. Increased human activity in the region and climate change might aggravate so-called 'transition conflicts' between local communities and state or economic interests. Some scholars expect a revival of 'traditional colonialist approaches to the region', 'green colonialism', or a security-justified override of Indigenous rights (Payva Almonte 2023).

The present study aims to assess whether Arctic states have adjusted their policy agendas and strategic orientations in response to Russia's full-scale war, focusing on differences among the Arctic states rather than treating the Arctic as a homogeneous region. We examine whether aspects discussed above and in the academic literature (for example, Finger and Rekvig 2022) have become more or less important in the post-invasion era. We seek to reveal the potential consequences for the Indigenous peoples and the other Arctic inhabitants.

The central conundrum of our study revolves around the uncertain trajectory of Arctic geopolitics. Are states indeed prioritizing military and traditional security concerns at the expense of environmental sustainability and the interests of Indigenous communities?

Our concern is that security issues will increasingly dominate the agenda of individual Arctic states or even lead to 'securitization' of the region or other issue areas. 'Securitization', as defined by Buzan et al. (1998), rests on the identification of existential threats and enables the justification of reactive measures which would not be considered legitimate under normal political circumstances. Russia's presence in the Arctic has been portrayed as this type of threat since February 2022. It has already been used to justify increased military spending and activity in the region. The NATO membership of Finland and Sweden will most likely have further implications for the governance of non-military issues in the Arctic, as will the temporary pause of the Arctic Council and its future operations in the absence of the political level (Melchiorre 2022; Wishnick and Carlson 2022).

While this study is largely descriptive, with a focus on various actors' changing priorities, our ultimate goal is to provide a basis for progressive actors to politicize these trends. While the idea of progressive change has recently and increasingly been criticized, particularly in a post-colonial context, we want to retain it. Drawing on Rahel Jaeggi's recent attempt (2023) to redefine progressiveness as an increased capacity for learning—and regression, conversely, as its reduction—our study suggests that securitization may have regressive effects. Only with an increased understanding of the consequences of changing priorities in the Arctic will there be a chance for progressive change in the Arctic despite increasing geopolitical tensions.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Our study takes a comprehensive approach to understanding the evolving priorities of the eight Arctic states,[3] as well as China, Germany and the EU. We looked for shifting preferences in five issue areas, taking two steps, each combining qualitative and quantitative methods and multiple sources of information. The five areas were derived from a comprehensive review of the literature. They are as follows:

a. Traditional security and defence issues. Geopolitical tensions arising from Russia's war and the increasing, albeit contested, accessibility of sea lanes may affect Arctic states' security and defence priorities. We examine whether defence issues have become more prominent for states interested in the Arctic after Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

b. Economic issues, resource exploitation and access to shipping routes in the Arctic. As Western nations seek to replace energy supplies from Russia and achieve a green transition, increased access to resources and rare earth minerals may become increasingly important in the coming years in the wake of the 2022 invasion.

c. Action against global warming and pollution. The need for resources and military armaments is expected to trump the need for climate and environmental protection in the Arctic in the coming years.

d. Indigenous interests and participation. We assess whether the need for resources and increased military presence after the launch of Russia's full-scale war will result in less emphasis on the interests of local Indigenous communities.

e. Multinational Arctic governance. The Arctic governance structure involves a wide range of actors, including Russia. We will assess whether states continue to attach importance to multinational governance following Russia's suspension from the Arctic Council.

Given the complexity of the issue, expert opinion is crucial; experts can effectively synthesize different sources of information.[4] We therefore conducted qualitative interviews as well as a quantitative expert survey for the principal analysis. In total, we draw on 23 qualitative interviews with researchers and experts on the Arctic, including scholars from various fields (such as political science, security studies, gender and Indigenous studies, and environmental science), politicians from the local and national levels, a senior government official, and Indigenous people (and people working

3 The United States, Russia, Canada, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Finland and Denmark (including Greenland). However, Denmark and Greenland are treated as two separate actors in this study.

4 As an analysis of expert assessments on party positions has shown, expert surveys usually allow for comparisons across countries and over time (Ecker et al. 2022). Expert surveys offer two key advantages: they are not limited by the availability of specific types of data, and they are relatively inexpensive to conduct (Hooghe et al. 2010).

for Indigenous organizations).[5] Moreover, we conducted a quantitative online expert survey with 30 respondents, mostly 2023 Arctic Circle Assembly participants.[6]

The qualitative interviews inquired explicitly about the interests and priorities of the above-mentioned states. We used open-ended questions to gather information on whether these states changed their behaviour after Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022. We also asked about changes in the Arctic region as such and about the respondents' personal impressions of what they consider to be the most important issues in the Arctic.[7]

For the quantitative interviews, we designed an online survey with structured questions asking respondents to rate the salience of specific issues for individual states on a scale of 0 to 5 for 2020 (before Russia's full-scale invasion), for 2023 (after Russia's full-scale invasion), and in five years.[8] We instructed respondents to answer only those questions about which they believed they had knowledge in order to avoid uninformed responses, resulting in a minimum of ten responses per question (considering each country and time period).[9] The specific question was:

> *"On a scale of 0 (not important) to 5 (very important), how important are the following issues for each government in 2020; 2023; five years?"*

The issues rated by respondents are those listed above. To assess the reliability of our data, we calculated the standard deviation, which indicates the variation of a variable around its mean, for each of the 216 questions in our survey as a measure of expert consensus. The calculation suggests that the data are reliable and that the experts had a clear and similar understanding of our questions.[10]

In our second step, we checked the expert opinions against official government communications. This step also had both a quantitative and a qualitative part. Most states with interests in the Arctic have published an official Arctic strategy (Soika and Wagener 2023); unfortunately, they were largely published before Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine and therefore do not reflect shifts in states' priorities. At the time of writing, only the United States had updated its Arctic strategy after February 2022.[11] Therefore, our main analysis here takes an alternative approach to capture changing priorities after the invasion. All countries have an actual foreign ministry Twitter account and publish regularly in English on a wide range of Arctic issues. Thus, we conducted a quantitative content analysis of Twitter ('X') communication from the official profiles of foreign ministries before and after the invasion (Table 1).[12]

5 A list with anonymizing descriptions of the interviewees' backgrounds can be found in Appendix C.

6 The Arctic Circle Assembly in Reykjavik is a flagship event for experts and policymakers on Arctic issues; we expected to find expertise among its participants. We conducted most of the pre-organised qualitative interviews at the Assembly and continued with some online interviews via Zoom until the end of 2023.

7 The questionnaire can be found in Appendix A.

8 The questionnaire for the expert survey can be found in Appendix B.

9 This is above the number of responses considered necessary for reliable and valid results in expert surveys (Hooghe et al. 2010).

10 Further information can be found in Appendix D.

11 In September 2024, Germany published an updated Arctic strategy entitled 'New guidelines for German Arctic policy. Security and stability in the Arctic'.

12 Twitter was sold to Elon Musk in October 2022. The first period of analysis is therefore before Twitter became 'X', the second period of analysis reflects the time after Musk changed the name of the platform. We've checked whether there's any evidence that ministries generally published more on Twitter before Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. However, as shown by randomly selected months in Appendix F, ministries do not publish much more (or less) after Russia's invasion.

We have chosen a period of almost two years (23 months) before and after 24 February 2022. The aim is to assess the salience of different political dimensions in the context of Arctic politics. In the first step, we filter for tweets containing 'Arctic keywords' (keywords are: Arctic, high north, far north, polar, pole) using Twitter/X's 'Advanced Search Tool'.

Table 1 ***Selected Twitter/X Profiles of Foreign Ministries***

Country	Twitter/X profile
Russia	@mfa_russia
USA	@StateDept
Finland	@Ulkoministerio
Norway	@NorwayMFA
Canada	@CanadaFP
Denmark	@DanishMFA
European Union	@eu_eeas
Iceland	@MFAIceland
Sweden	@SweMFA
Germany	@GermanyDiplo
China	@MFA_China

After collecting all Arctic-related tweets through our dictionary search, we manually coded these tweets in a second step, using a category system with deductively constructed codes derived from the literature, which we adapted slightly to the textual material (for a similar methodological approach, see: Schwörer 2021). The categories can be found in Table 2.[13] The unit of measurement is the individual tweet. An individual Tweet can be coded according to several categories. Therefore, we conducted a reliability test with a second coder. The resulting reliability score based on Cohen's Kappa is quite high, ranging from 0.83 to 1.0, indicating almost perfect consistency according to Landis and Koch (1977), as mentioned in Table 2.[14]

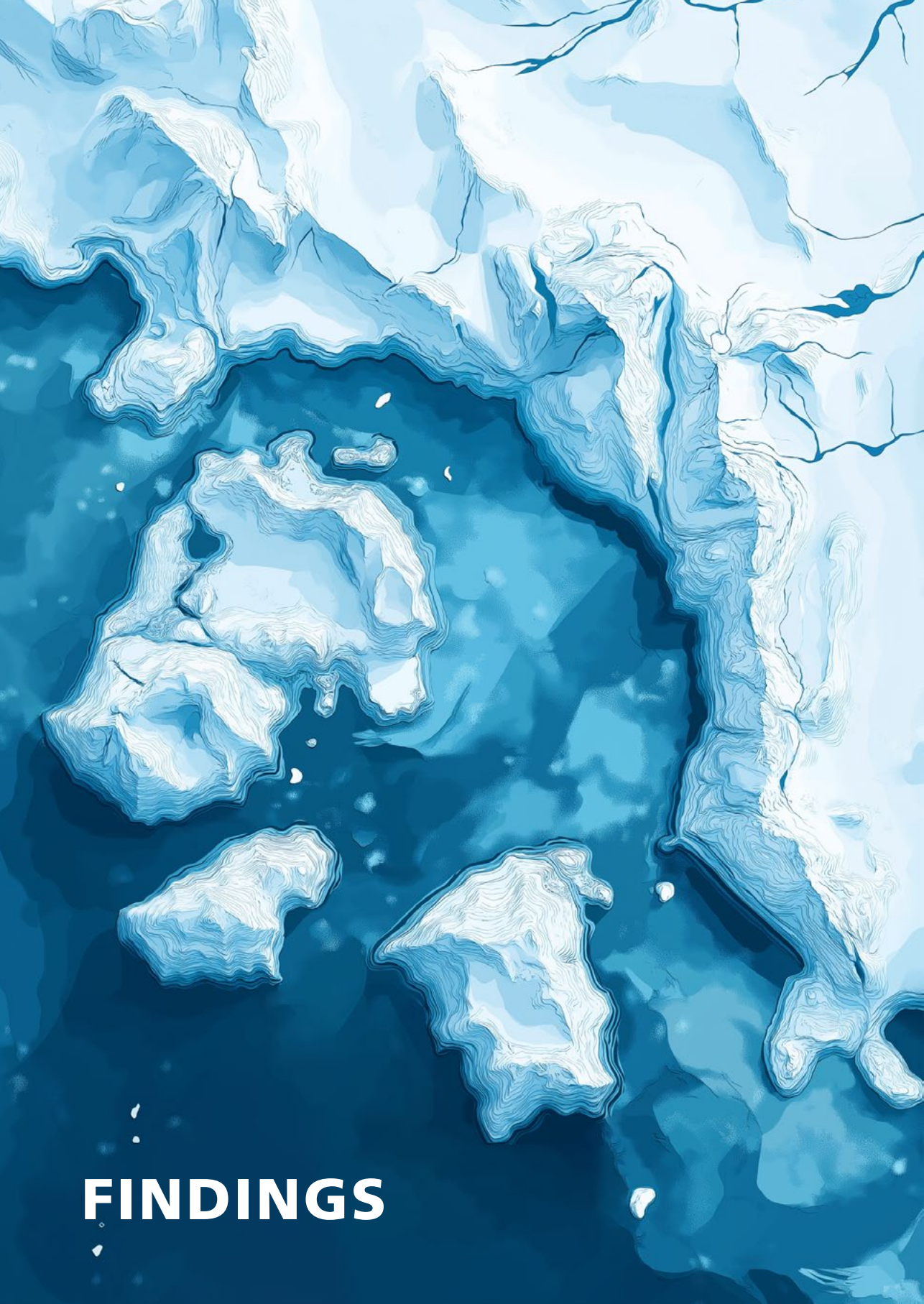
13 Another dimension measured, but not presented, in the report, was references to local communities without explicit reference to Indigenous peoples. All data is available upon request.

14 Further information can be found in Appendix E.

Table 2 ***Category System and Reliability Scores (Cohen's Kappa) for the Twitter/X Analysis***

Country	Subcategory	Operationalization	Cohen's Kappa
Economy/ trade/growth	/	References to any economic dimension of Arctic policy, such as resource exploitation, energy, or infrastructure projects; communicating the goal of creating economic growth in the Arctic.	1.00 * (n=24)
Security and defence issues	Safety/ Peace	General references to peace, security and safety without a military or deterrence component.	0.929 * (n=28)
	Defence/ Military issues	References to deterrence, military and explicit defence issues (including sanctions and hostility towards other states).	1.00 * (n=24) **
Multinational governance	/	Positive references to multinational institutions (for example, the Arctic Council) and cooperation in the Arctic (simple bilateral cooperation is not coded).	0.833 * (n=36)
Environment and climate	/	Mentioning environmental measures and challenges in the Arctic, including references to climate change and climate protection.	1.00 * (n=32)
Indigenous communities	/	Explicit references and mentions of Indigenous peoples (not just "communities in the Arctic").	1.00 * (n=24)

* = p<0.001; ** „n" refers to the sample for the Cohen's Kappa analysis.



FINDINGS

ISSUES

Military Security

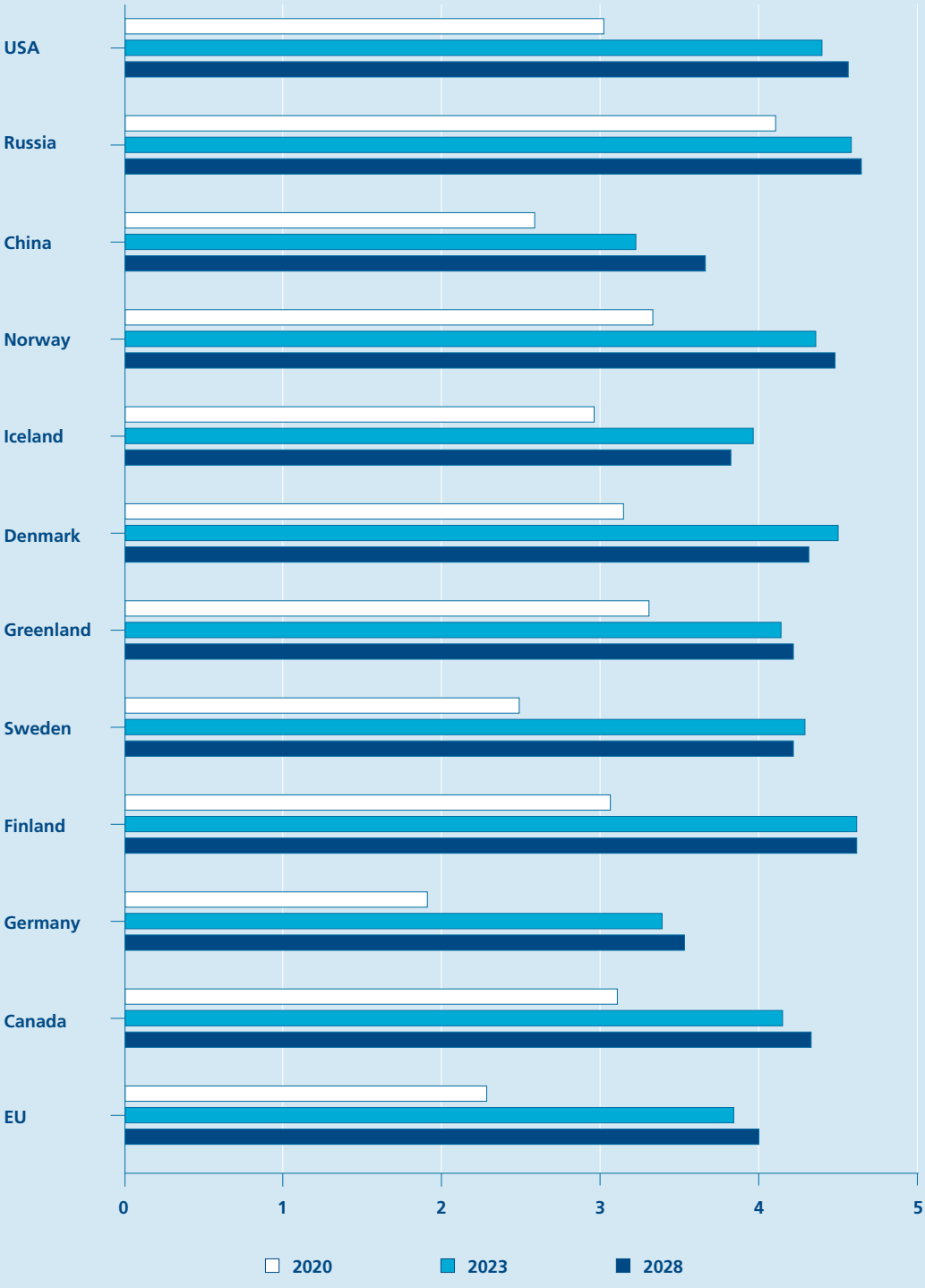
Security has risen up the Arctic agenda. The experts' opinions confirm common perceptions. Without exception, all actors under examination here — including the EU — are seen as focusing more on military security in 2023 than in 2020 (Figure 1). With a few notable exceptions, to which we turn below, the emphasis on security issues is expected to increase even further between now and 2028.

Regarding the causes of this rise, experts unsurprisingly point to the war in Ukraine. As a side note, none of the respondents expected conflicts over resources or state borders, contrary to the often alluded to "Arctic resource race". The more interesting question is how exactly the rise of military security and the war in Ukraine are related. Here, experts' judgments reflect the broader academic discourse with the two partly diverging, partly overlapping analyses of the regional situation we mentioned in the introduction: great power competition and Russian strategic needs in the Euro-Atlantic High North as the main underlying drivers that link the war in Ukraine to the Arctic. The former view (great power competition) sees Arctic security as part of, rather than isolated from, broader global dynamics. The Arctic, then, is just one of several areas or arenas of conflict between the West and Russia and the West and China (R5; R6; R13; R22). The latter view comes to the fore in the emphasis of one interviewee (R9) on the view that Russia's invasion is "the only reason" for the increased focus on military issues. In both views, however, the strategic significance of the Euro-Atlantic High North for Russia, given its nuclear arsenal on the Kola Peninsula (R22), must be considered a motivation for Russian activities. Accordingly, some of the experts identify hybrid threats from Russia (R6) and potential military incidents (R12) as the main threats to security and stability in the region. But regardless of what the main dynamics might be, none of the respondents actually expect an imminent military exchange in the Arctic or a conventional attack from Russia (R5; R6; R7; R11).

It seems that an emphasis on the strategic significance of the Euro-Atlantic High North is also reflected in differences in the relative position security occupies on states' agendas, on one hand, and the expected development of that position on the other. There seem to be different 'groups'. First, for the Arctic nuclear powers (Russia and the USA) experts see security as by far the most important issue on the agenda, together with economic activities. Second, for the two Arctic state actors without a military, Greenland and Iceland, by contrast, military security is not the highest item on the agenda. The same applies to the observer states and the EU. Third, for the Nordic countries, military security has become the most important issue since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Regarding the experts' predictions for the coming years, there is a very small but interesting difference between Norway and the rest of the Nordic countries, especially Sweden and Denmark. This difference should not be over-interpreted, as the slight change in the data may be due to a slightly different assessment by just one expert in the survey. However, assuming for a moment that these small differences accurately reflect political changes, they can be well explained by the geopolitical situation.

Norway is located on the High North maritime frontline of the Russian nuclear forces and is disproportionately affected by Russian activities. Security concerns only increased after 2023.

Figure 1 *Salience of State Security in the Arctic Over Time*



Note: For standard deviations, see Figure 6.
Source: Data from the Expert Survey

In the case of Sweden, however, experts do not expect the relative priority of the issue to increase in the future. Finland is also not expected to push for more military security in the Arctic in the coming years (but neither is it expected to push for less). Despite Finland's long territorial border with Russia and its concerns about Russian naval incursions, NATO membership is seen by some experts as providing more security in the long run. The fact that Denmark's relative security priority is also expected to decline slightly in the future may be a sign that the Baltic Sea is becoming less important as a military arena in the confrontation with Russia. This may be both an indication of the stability provided by NATO and a consequence of the growing importance of strategic nuclear forces and thus of the Euro-Atlantic High North. This is also consistent with the observation that the discourse among states and governments on deterrence against Russia has generally increased (R2; R4; R22). Again, although there are good explanations for the developments in the High North after 2023, the changes in the data are too small to confirm these theoretical considerations.

According to respondents, the increased emphasis on military and security issues goes along with two domestic developments. The first and most immediate is an increased focus on military exercises in the High North and generally increased military activity. Among the former is military training in northern Fennoscandia to adapt troops and equipment to weather conditions (R2; R10; R19) and largescale international manoeuvres. An example of the latter is the expectation that the European Space Agency in Kiruna will focus more on security aspects such as espionage from Russia, and the observation that 'there are new regiments opening up again in northern Sweden that have been inactive since, I would say, the 1980s, 1990s' (R2).

This is supported by the second development: a greater willingness to increase military budgets, also in line with NATO's goal of spending at least 2 per centof GDP on defence (R4). This is particularly the case for Finland, a new NATO member, and Sweden (Figure 1), which joined NATO in March 2024. These investments may lead to significant socio-economic change in the northern parts of the Arctic states, and might also benefit the local population. According to R6, the investments will also mean 'new infrastructure. They're going to build new ports, new airports. They're going to build new connectivity. They're going to build new housing for the troops.' The question of course is whether or how these can be sustainable investments. At the end of the Cold War, as defence budgets shrank again, troops left and bases were closed, creating significant economic challenges in the affected regions.

Security and economic/resource issues are closely intertwined. Turning to the economic issues on Arctic agendas in the next section we shall show that there are numerous links between the two. But security is not only linked to economic issues. In the qualitative interviews, several of our interviewees referred primarily to the military security dimension, or returned to it frequently, even when discussing economic, environmental or Indigenous issues. To us, this indicates the extent to which security has become a priority with regard to the region, with ongoing securitization.

The Economy

Economic issues are salient on Arctic agendas. Our experts see them as gaining increasing attention among states since 2020, albeit to a lesser extent than military and security issues, with the sole exception of Germany, which shows a small dip on the priority scale following Russia's attack

on Ukraine (Figure 2). The experts also expect economic issues to continue to grow in importance in the future.

However, the picture is more complex. Despite the general increase in importance, there is a clear bifurcation of Arctic actors: on one hand, there are those for whom economic issues are trumped only by security on the relative preference scale (RUS, USA, CAN, NOR, CHN). On the other hand, there are actors for whom economic issues are not among the most important (ICE, DEN, SWE, FIN, GER, EU).

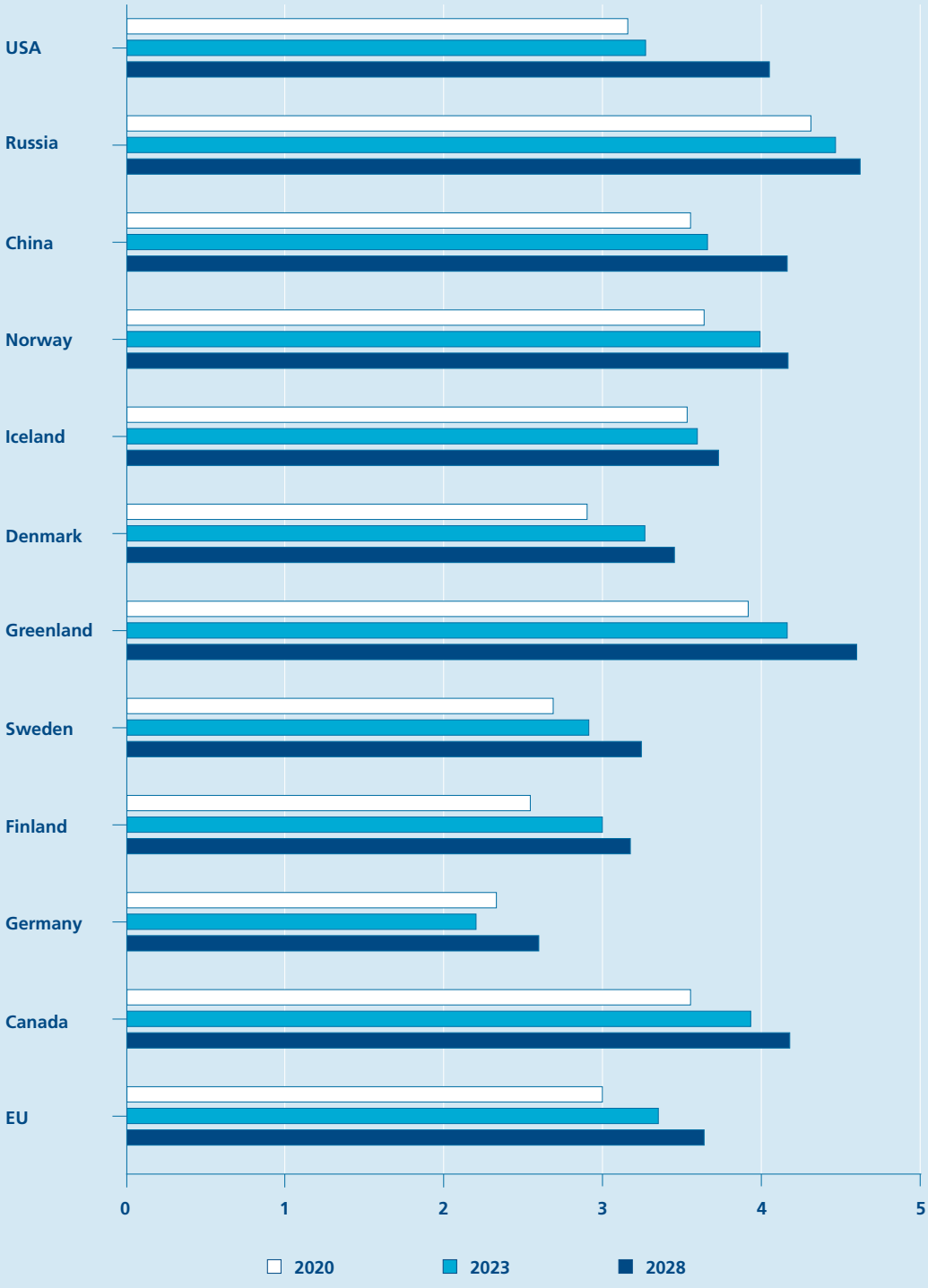
Moreover, while the respective quantitative data (Figure 2) do show an increase in the importance of economic issues over time, they do not show a particularly sharp increase after Russia's invasion of Ukraine and in the near future, as we have observed for the security dimension. At first glance, this might seem to contradict the link between security and the economy suggested in the previous section and emphasized by the interviewees, given that Western states are exploring for resources, oil, gas and minerals in the Arctic region in order to become independent from Russia (R1; R6; R8; R9; R11; R15; R20; R22). A closer look, however, and considering the aforementioned bifurcation, only points to the need for more differentiation between sectors, as well as attention to the drivers and barriers pertaining to economic development in the region, which differ between Arctic actors. This was clearly evident in the responses of the experts during our qualitative interviews.

From the experts' responses we can extract three different factors with regard to economic development in the Arctic: political, economic and geophysical. All of them may have a positive or negative impact on the salience of economic issues for states in the Arctic, depending on the actor and sector in question.

Starting with the geophysical factors, climate change is causing sea ice and permafrost to melt. While the former could allow more shipping on Arctic routes, the latter could make mining and infrastructure development more difficult, potentially affecting shipping prospects. As one respondent pointed out, melting permafrost could not only be an obstacle for the oil and gas industry in the Arctic, but could actually 'ruin' the entire sector, as well as affecting mining in the future, as melting permafrost will also make it difficult to build infrastructure, such as new railways (R6). In this context, R1 described political discussions in the American/Canadian context a few years ago, when Russia was building a railroad in the High North: 'Well, we're going to build a railway because that's what they do in Russia. And then I remember when that discussion was going on and I thought, what happens to these railways? In Russia they look like spaghetti now because of the change in the permafrost.' But where the melting permafrost is less of an obstacle, particularly in the Fennoscandian High North, investment in rail and port infrastructure may actually increase, according to local politicians (R19).

However, even where climate change may enable economic development, particularly shipping, the second set of factors, namely political, may now create barriers. Several respondents argued that economic activities (for example, mining and shipping) will be more difficult in the future due to the conflict with Russia (R5; R6; R8; R12). Western shipping companies are not using the Northern Sea Route because of sanctions or security concerns, according to respondents (R8). But the politically induced cessation of scientific cooperation with Russia also creates potential problems for shipping. A lack of data, for example, could hamper sea ice forecasting for the shipping industry: 'If you're training your sea ice model and half the Arctic is not included, it's not super useful' (R13).

Figure 2 *Salience of State Economic Interests in the Arctic Over Time*



Note: For standard deviations see Figure 6.
Source: Date from the Expert Survey.

But political factors can clearly also be drivers of economic development, most clearly in the Euro-Atlantic High North. Here, both the green transition and the politically safe and secure supply of raw materials for the EU and Western economies must be mentioned, as well as the abovementioned increase in security-related activities (such as the construction of infrastructure, ports, airports and housing for troops (R6)). Accordingly, some respondents argue that economic activity in certain parts of the Fennoscandian North has indeed increased significantly since the war, such as mining in the Swedish Arctic and resource exploitation in Norway (R8; R11; R22), both related to the increased demand for renewable energy for the green transition (for example, wind farms in northern Norway) and the need for energy independence from Russia.

But there are other economic factors at play, more narrowly conceived. According to R5, 'there is no rush for oil resources in the Arctic' because, even in the long run, Arctic oil may simply be too expensive on the world market. The alleged 'race for resources' has been exposed as mere 'hype' in the literature (Tunsjø 2020). Thus, the Russian attack on Ukraine is not expected to have a major impact on the Western oil and gas industry. However, according to one Swedish politician, companies are increasingly moving to northern Sweden as a safe place to do business. Mainly because of the minerals, but also because Sweden is a more reliable partner for companies than authoritarian regimes, especially since Russia's invasion of Ukraine (R15). This somewhat contradicts the quantitative data on the importance of economic issues in the Arctic for Sweden.

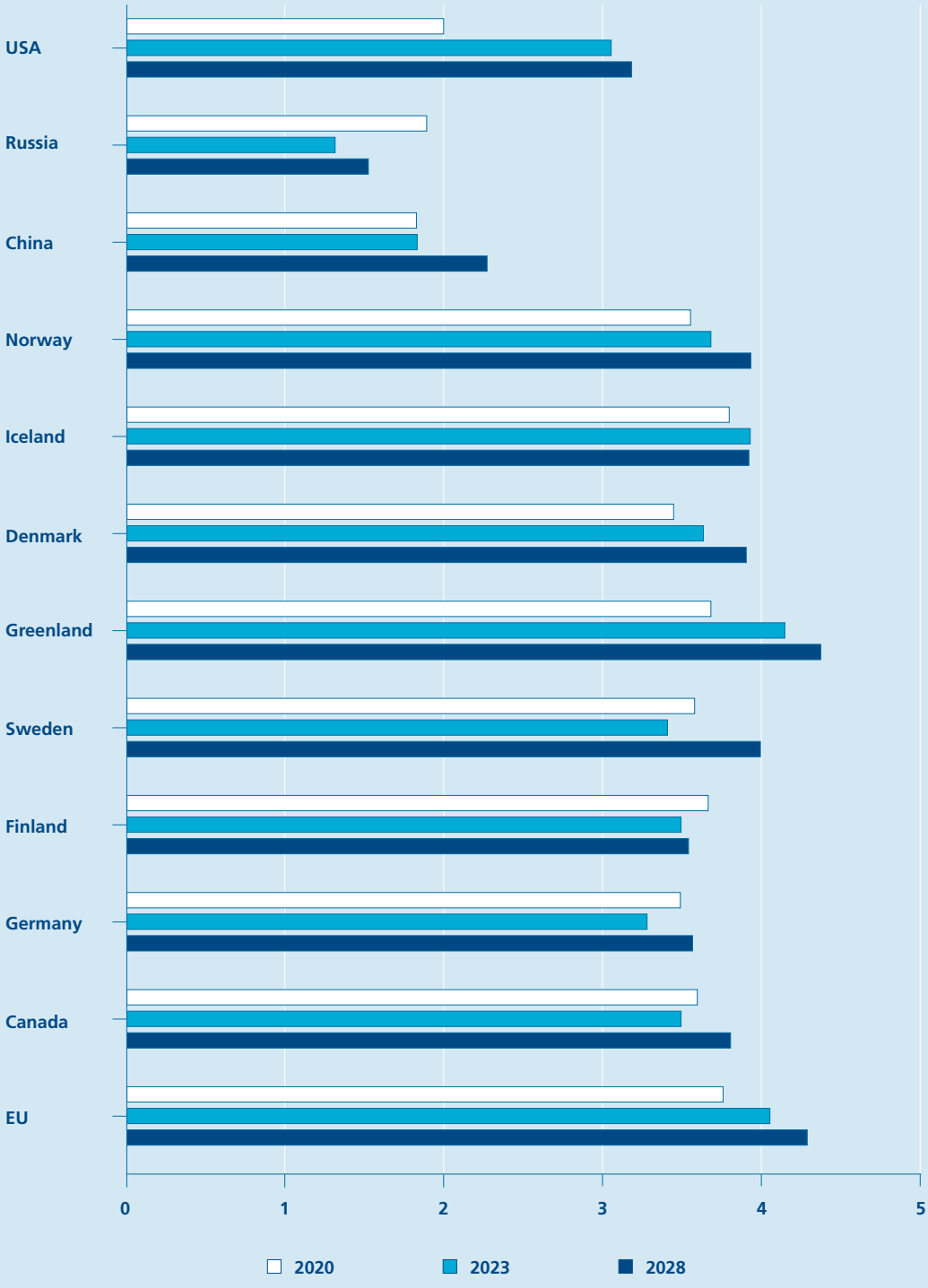
In summary, it seems that the states for which economic issues are next on the agenda are those in which Arctic economic development is a matter of national, not just regional importance and is closely linked to issues of political sovereignty and security concerns. In the group in which economic issues are relatively lower on the agenda, it appears that external political (such as the EU's green transition or raw materials security act) or economic drivers are more dominant, but have less overall impact and receive less attention in political agendas, although changes are taking place, sometimes, as in Finland and Sweden, also driven by increased military activities and thus security priorities.

Several respondents mentioned major domestic – as opposed to alleged international – conflicts over fair access to these resources. As these involve the rights, interests and land-ownership of Indigenous groups, as well as environmental aspects (R6; R11; R17), we return to these in the following sections.

The Environment

In general, experts do not consider the environment to be very high on states' Arctic agendas. Security and the economy are much more important, and sometimes even governance issues. The exceptions are Germany and the EU, actors without direct access to economic development opportunities in the Arctic, where environmental concerns may not directly compete with economic growth in the region (Figure 6). However, Denmark, Sweden and Finland also place more emphasis on environmental protection than on economic activity, although the security dimension clearly dominates. The 'big three', the United States, Russia and China, were given the lowest absolute priority scores by our experts. In no other country is the environment less important than in Russia, followed by China and the United States, according to the quantitative data (Figure 3).

Figure 3 *Salience of Environmental Interests in the Arctic Over Time*



Note: For standard deviations see Figure 6.
Source: Data from the Expert Survey.

In terms of evolution over time, experts believe that the environment is not much less important on the agendas of many countries today than it was in 2020, with the exception of Russia. In some countries, the environment scores slightly lower in 2023 than in 2020 – for example, in Sweden, Finland, Canada and Germany – but the experts expect its importance on state agendas to rise again, even above the levels attributed to it in 2020. The qualitative interviews suggest that this assessment by experts is due to their anticipation of the inevitable force with which climate change (together with Indigenous rights) will become the most important issue for regional policy in the medium to long term (R11; R13; R15; R16; R17; R20; R2; R1).

The question, then, is what explains why environmental issues are not already more important today? On one hand, there are the factors discussed in the previous two sections: increased concerns about security and military activity sideline environmental protection. The war in Ukraine has also accelerated the perceived need to become independent of Russia and China in terms of energy and mineral resources, thus pushing for rapid and increased investment in the green transition (R9; R15; R19). With the green transition – also driven by the increased need to mitigate climate change, for example, increasing investment in green energy projects in northern Fennoscandia (R15) – an environmental paradox emerges: the northern environment is threatened by economic development in the very name of climate/environmental protection. The Arctic is becoming what critics have called a 'sacrifice zone'.

On the other hand, there are increasing transition conflicts, not least fuelled by the environmental paradox mentioned above. As issues such as inflation, household energy costs and loan interest rates become more salient to the population, costly environmental regulations or large-scale public investment come under political pressure. How governments respond to this pressure depends on the parties and ideological composition of the government, as one expert points out (R2), but it seems that where transition conflicts have been pronounced, the political focus on Arctic environmental protection has generally decreased and certain environmental problems have become less important for states (R19).

But the war in Ukraine is affecting environmental attention not only through increased security concerns and economic developments in the Arctic, experts say, but also through disruptions in governance and scientific cooperation. The latter, together with data availability, affects the ability to address environmental and climate challenges effectively. Several respondents mentioned that the lack of scientific data from Russia since the start of the war has made climate forecasting and research on permafrost much more difficult (R1; R9; R11; R12; R13; R17; R21). At the same time, even unofficial cooperation with individual Russian scientists is difficult because of the risk of repression by the Russian regime. As Arctic governance forums are also affected by political tensions, coordinated research and action becomes more difficult.

Indigenous Communities

Compared with the other dimensions we asked about, Indigenous peoples' concerns do not seem to be a priority for states. They tend to occupy the lowest ranks, with the stark exception of Greenland, an Indigenous polity, where this dimension ranks first. In Canada, where Indigenous advocacy is strong and uses multiple channels, and in Sweden, Denmark and Finland, where transition conflicts involving Indigenous peoples are increasing, Indigenous issues are at least as

important as the economic dimension, although they still rank behind security and even multinational governance (Figure 6).

The relatively lower priority of Indigenous issues in Norway compared with other issues may be explained by the high absolute salience of the issue (third behind Greenland and Canada if all periods are considered) – that is, Indigenous issues are at least as salient as in Sweden, Finland and Denmark (Figure 4), but less important to the Norwegian government than all other issues. In addition, and despite prominent counter-examples such as the Fosen windmill case, the Indigenous dimension in transitional conflicts in Norway seems to be somewhat less pronounced than in Sweden and Finland. This may be because a larger part of the new economic and military activities concern marine and offshore issues and intersect less with traditional land use struggles.

In absolute terms, and not surprisingly, Indigenous issues score highest in states with Indigenous populations, and also relative to the proportion of these populations in the respective Arctic peripheries. The exception is Russia, where, again unsurprisingly, concern for Indigenous rights and well-being is not much higher than in non-Arctic China. The Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North (RAIPON) was sharply brought into line by the Kremlin, even more so after the invasion.

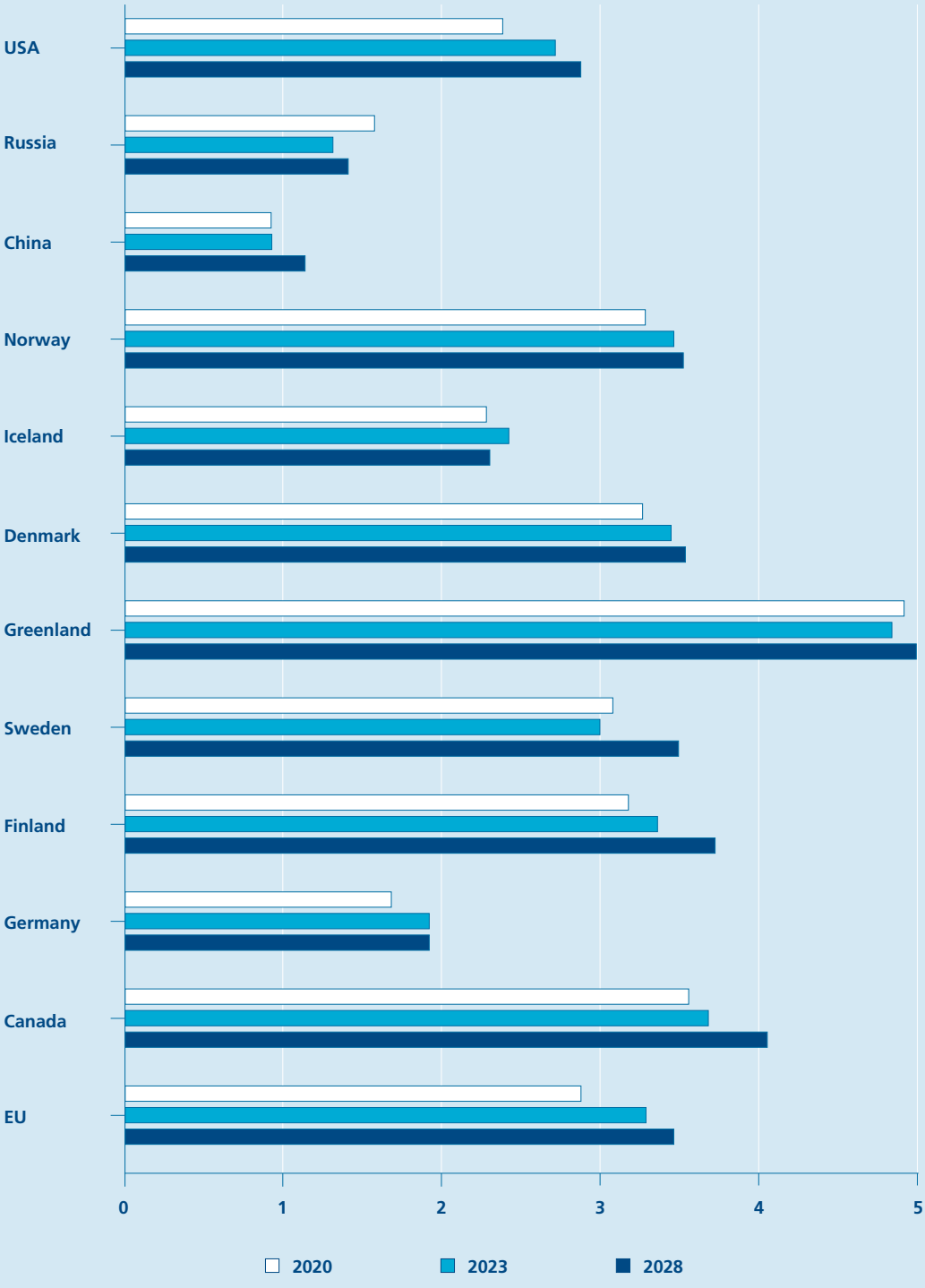
In terms of changing priorities after Russia's attack on Ukraine, Arctic actors have not significantly increased their focus on Indigenous issues. Interestingly, despite the fact that most states focus more on the military and economic dimensions, several respondents argued that they personally believe that the Indigenous issue is one of the key matters in Arctic politics and will remain so in the future, along with environmental challenges (R11; R13; R15; R16; R17; R20; R2; R1).

A closer look at the qualitative interviews reveals the reasons for these beliefs. Although the challenges for Indigenous peoples vary widely across the Arctic, in general Indigenous rights and well-being are seen as increasingly threatened. This is linked to trends in the other dimensions of our survey and qualitative interviews. A common issue highlighted by respondents is the lack of representation of Indigenous concerns and ownership over economic projects in their homelands and over military security (R9; R10; R17; R21), while military and economic activities are increasing.

Thus some experts suggest that transitional conflicts between states and their Indigenous groups may also increase as a result of the war in Ukraine (R2; R5; R11). For example, the increased focus on extractive industries in the Swedish Arctic may reduce consideration of Sámi rights by state and business actors. As a former Indigenous representative points out, 'if an extractive industry or project affects some interests [of Indigenous people], they should be consulted, but in many cases I don't think they even have the economic or administrative resources to analyse the case' (R2). R5 agreed that conflicts between Indigenous groups and perceived national interests could increase in the Fennoscandian Arctic because 'we need resources, we need minerals, we need oil' and 'that's what Indigenous groups are afraid of, that their rights will be set aside because it's the core national interests that are important'. A local politician from a Swedish Arctic town made a similar argument:

> One of the problems or the difficulties is that many of the things [...] in our area [are affected by] rapid growth in industry. And for industry we need ports, windmills, railroads, we need new maintenance, we need new housing. So we're using more and more land in this area. And that will, of course, affect people living there today. Because they will be the ones who will not have the land anymore (R15).

Figure 4 *Salience of Indigenous Issues for States in the Arctic Over Time*



Note: For standard deviations, see Figure 6.
Source: Data from the Expert Survey

However, two caveats should be noted. On one hand, some respondents see conflicts between national economic interests and Indigenous groups as unaffected by the war: they have been an issue for decades and are therefore nothing new (R11 – however, most respondents saw the situation of Indigenous communities in the Fennoscandian Arctic as clearly affected by Russia's full-scale war). On the other hand, transitional conflicts seem to be most pronounced in the European High North. An interviewee from the Inuit Circumpolar Council (R1) pointed out that in Canada (and Greenland; R22), issues such as 'infrastructure improvements [...], health, reducing the rates of tuberculosis, suicide, all those kinds of things, are still at the forefront of people's minds.' While certainly not unconditional, investment in economic development and infrastructure is therefore often welcomed by Indigenous groups there, whereas Indigenous groups from Sweden, Norway and Finland seem to fear increased economic and military activity in their homelands.

The lack of representation and ownership at the national level is exacerbated by increasing difficulties in organising transnationally and regionally. If the Arctic Council becomes less relevant due to a lack of high-level political participation or the absence of Russia, the ability of Indigenous peoples' organisations to shape circumpolar policy may also decline (R10). What made the Arctic Council unique was the status of permanent participants, which gave Indigenous peoples a unique voice in regional governance. However, even if the Arctic Council continues to exist, it is a direct consequence of the Russian invasion that contact between Indigenous peoples in the Western Arctic states, such as the Sámi in Norway, Finland and Sweden, and Indigenous groups in Russia has become extremely difficult. Even if this was not the intention of the various governments, sanctions and political pressure in Russia limit such exchanges (R4; R7; R8; R9; R13; R22).

Multinational Governance

As mentioned in the introduction, it was in the 'pre-eminent forum' for regional governance, the Arctic Council, where consequences of Russia's full-scale attack on Ukraine became immediately obvious. The Western Arctic states put cooperation with Russia in the Arctic Council on hold just a few days after the attack. In the meantime, and after much diplomatic effort, limited cooperation with Russia has been resumed in the working groups of the Arctic Council. It remains to be seen, however, whether the Arctic Council could provide the much needed governance in view of increasing challenges posed by a worsening regional security situation, accelerating climate change, economic development, and threats to Indigenous peoples' rights by the preceding challenges. In the quantitative questionnaire, we therefore asked about the importance of 'multinational governance' for each country. In our qualitative interviews, multinational governance was mentioned as closely intertwined with the other dimensions of Arctic politics by several interviewees, even though it was not an explicit part of our questionnaire.

In line with the diplomatic efforts to save the Arctic Council, the quantitative data show that experts do not see the general interest in multinational Arctic governance diminishing after the start of the war in Ukraine, quite the opposite, in fact (Figure 5). According to our experts, the importance of governance on the agendas of all Western Arctic actors increased remarkably between 2020 and 2023. Even more notable is the sharp decline in its importance on Russian agendas over the same period. For the following years, the picture is more mixed: a continued increase in

attention in the US, China and Canada, and to some extent in the EU, and only a slight increase in Denmark and Greenland. In addition, there is a slight projected decline between 2023 and 2028 in Norway and Germany, more or less unchanged levels in Iceland, Sweden and Finland, and a slight increase, albeit at a very low level, in Russia. While it is difficult to discern a comprehensive explanation for this variation from our data – and considering that most of the changes are very small and should not be overestimated – the expected slight decline for Norway could be explained by the end of the Arctic Council chairmanship in 2025. Similarly, the high value for Russia in 2020 and the dramatic decline could reflect its chairmanship from 2021 to 2023, combined with the political consequences of its attack.

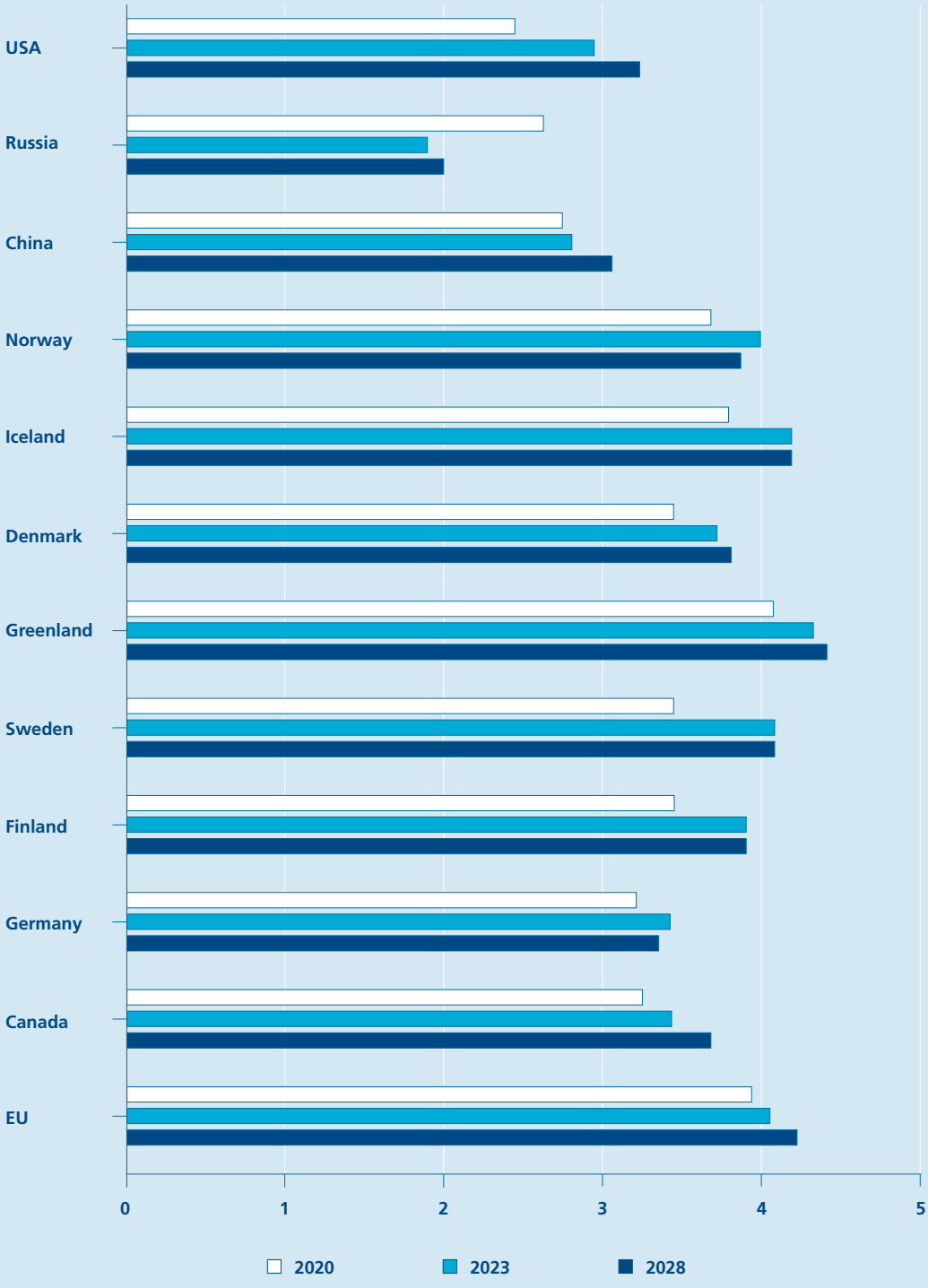
In terms of absolute scores, there are again signs of a tripartite division: as with the environment, the three major powers have the lowest scores, in the order Russia, China, USA (Figure 5). On the other hand, the smallest actors, Iceland and Greenland, and the only actor fully dependent on multilateral cooperation, the EU, receive the highest scores. In between are the Western middle powers, with the Nordic countries, whose cooperation has intensified following the Russian attack, unsurprisingly rating multilateral governance as more important than Canada.

In terms of multinational governance, the dual finding of increased emphasis in the West and decreased relevance for Russia may indicate an emerging split: While the Western Arctic states are trying to intensify their cooperation with each other, Russia is rather isolated. According to some experts, it may focus less on cooperation with the Nordic countries in the future as a result of Sweden and Finland becoming new NATO members (R18; R21). While de-emphasising multinational governance with the rest of the Arctic states, Russia has shifted towards primarily bilateral relations with China (R12; R22) and India (R22), and may be open to multinational cooperation on Arctic issues within the BRICS framework (R21; R22).

The question, then, is what will become of the Arctic Council, the forum that was the emblem of 'Arctic exceptionalism'? For respondents to the quantitative survey, the Arctic Council remains the preferred multinational governance forum for addressing Arctic policy issues. Only one out of 17 experts who responded to the open-ended question 'Which institutions are appropriate to address the challenges mentioned (resources and economy, climate change and environment, security and defence, and issues affecting indigenous communities)' did not mention the Arctic Council. In contrast, the Barents Euro-Arctic Council, now a purely Western forum, was mentioned by three respondents only in the context of environmental and Indigenous issues. For military security issues outside the scope of the Arctic Council, NATO and bi- or trilateral negotiations with Russia and China were occasionally seen as the most appropriate platforms for discussion.

However, that does not yet answer the question of whether and if so how cooperation between the Western Arctic states and Russia will remain possible within the Arctic Council. While Russia blames the West for isolating it against established practice in the forum and threatens to leave it if it ceases to serve its interests, one respondent argued that this is not just because Western states have excluded Russia from multilateral discussions. Instead, 'the US has wanted to cooperate with Russia on some areas of climate change issues after the war, but Russia says no – that's twisting it around' (R5). Yet, as respondents pointed out, in the end, Russia handed over the chairmanship of the Arctic Council to Norway despite the West's refusal to let that take place on the high political level. The qualitative interviews further revealed that Western governments differ in their views of what future cooperation should look like. One senior government official from

Figure 5 *Salience of Multinational Governance for States in the Arctic Over Time*



Note: For standard deviations see Figure 6.
Source: Data from the Expert Survey.

an Arctic state (R23) argued that the US has little interest in signalling to Russia that it should join the Arctic Council – or any form of cooperation – in the near future, and similarly Finland (under both social democratic and right-wing governments), while Norway is still trying to keep the door open for future cooperation. Some respondents still hold out hope that Russia does not want to be permanently isolated from this governance forum (R5; R18). In this view, the fact that the Arctic Council does not play a role in Russia's newest strategic documents should not be overinterpreted (R5; R10; R23).

COUNTRIES

The analysis of Arctic actors' priorities in our five dimensions has, we believe, provided some indication that differences between states require that we develop a more complex picture of the region. Unsurprisingly, the clearest differences are between the Western Arctic and the Western Arctic Council observer states, on one hand, and China and Russia on the other. But even within the Western camp there are considerable dividing lines. The more complex picture suggests that, in addition to treating the United States as the Western Arctic power, it makes sense to distinguish between the Euro-Atlantic Arctic, with the Fennoscandian countries, and the Amero-Atlantic Arctic, with Iceland, Denmark/Greenland and Canada. The Western observers in the Arctic Council, Germany and the EU, are analysed as a separate group.

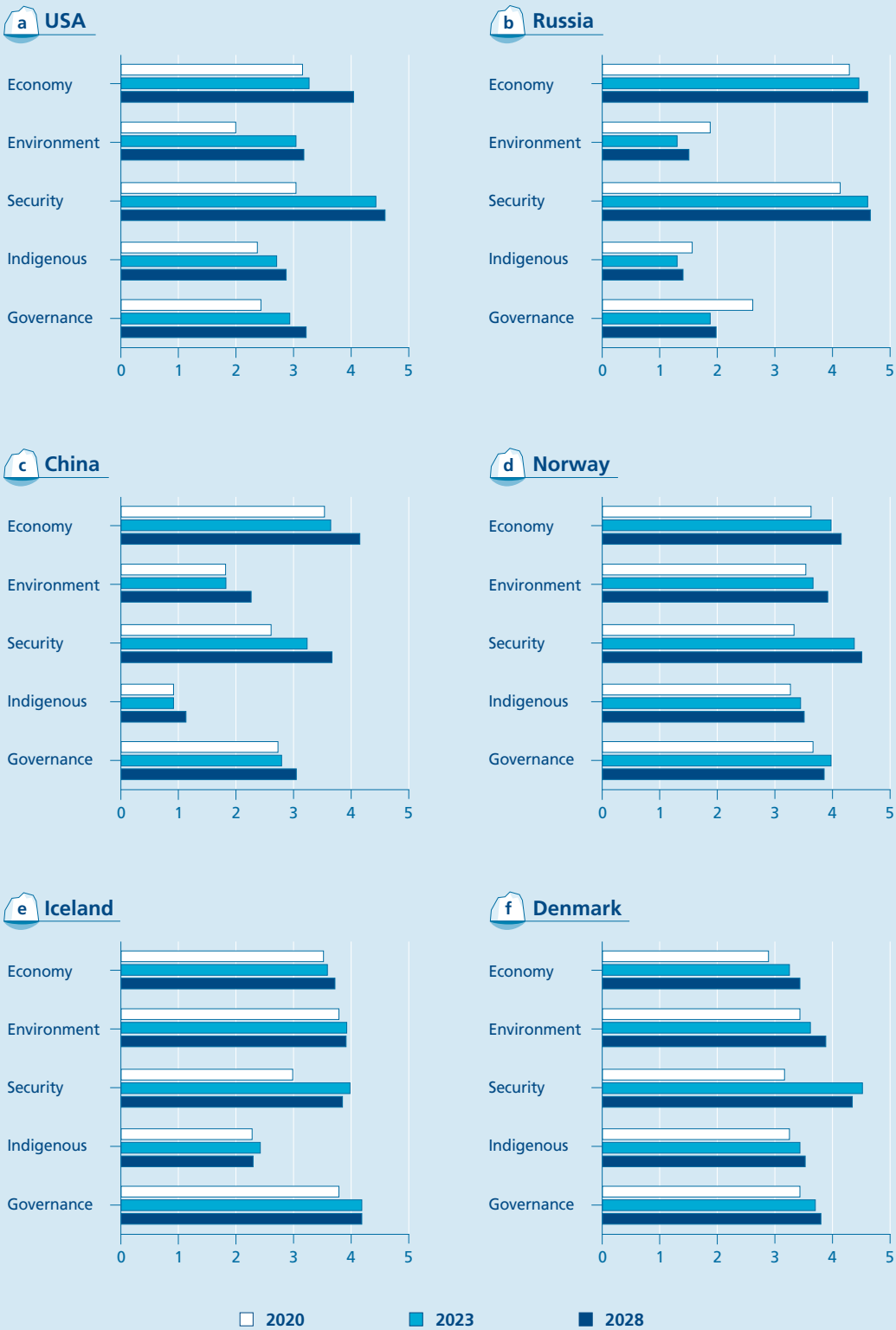
In general, as shown in Table 3, almost all states seem to pay more attention to Arctic policy pertaining to the near future (2028), at least compared with 2020, before the Russian invasion. However, the most substantial increases are in the security dimension.

Similar to Figure 6, which shows the salience of different issues for the individual countries over time, Figure 7 summarizes the changes over time for each country and each policy dimension in radar charts rather than bars. The figures again show that the Arctic in general seems to be becoming more important. In the radar charts, the values increase over the three time periods, with the webs expanding progressively outward. Most states put more emphasis on all dimensions of Arctic policy in 2023, a trend that seems set to continue for the next five years.

Table 3 ***Change of Salience of Different Issue Dimensions between 2020 and 2028***

State	Economy	Environment	Security	Indigenous	Governance	Average
USA	+0.89	+1.19	+1.56	+0.49	+0.79	+0.98
EU	+0.65	+0.53	+1.76	+0.59	+0.29	+0.76
Sweden	+0.56	+0.42	+1.75	+0.42	+0.64	+0.76
Finland	+0.64	−0.12	+1.58	+0.55	+0.45	+0.62
Canada	+0.63	+0.21	+1.25	+0.50	+0.44	+0.61
Denmark	+0.55	+0.45	+1.18	+0.27	+0.36	+0.56
Greenland	+0.69	+0.69	+0.92	+0.08	+0.33	+0.54
China	+0.61	+0.44	+1.06	+0.21	+0.31	+0.53
Norway	+0.53	+0.38	+1.18	+0.24	+0.19	+0.50
Germany	+0.27	+0.07	+1.64	+0.23	+0.14	+0.47
Iceland	+0.20	+0.13	+0.87	+0.02	+0.40	+0.32
Russia	+0.32	−0.37	+0.53	−0.16	−0.63	−0.06

Notes: Ranked from highest to lowest. Calculated by subtracting the values for 2020 from the values for 2028.
Source: Data from the Expert Survey.


a USA
b Russia
c China
d Norway
e Iceland
f Denmark
Economy
Environment
Security
Indigenous
Governance
0
1
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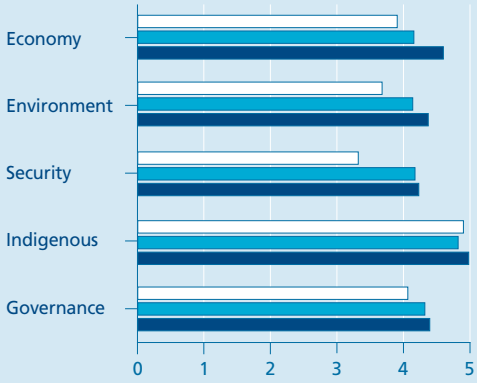
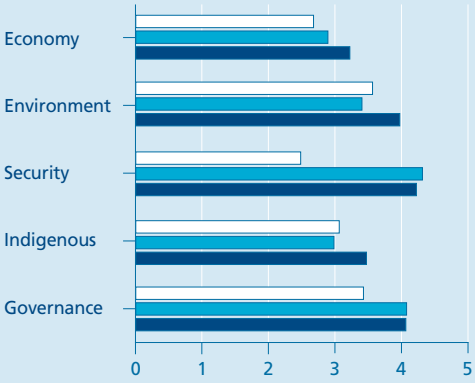
2020
2023
2028

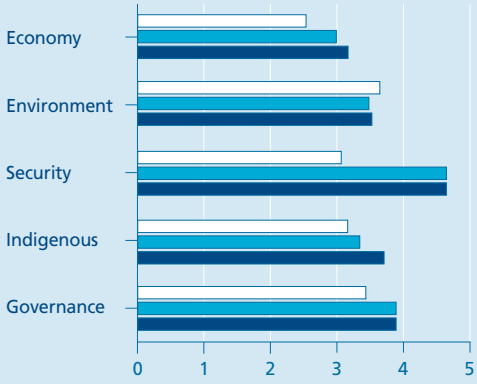
g Greenland



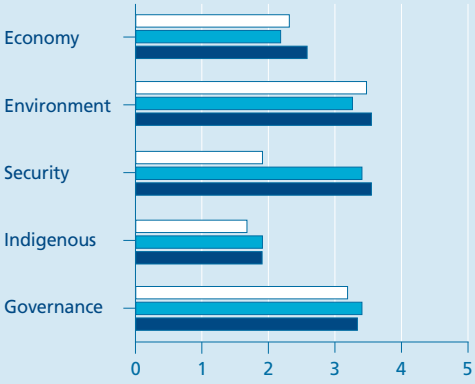
h Sweden



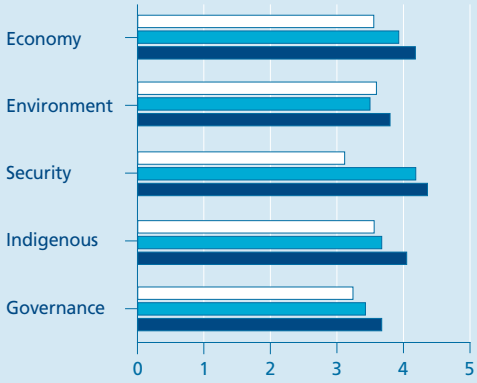
i Finland



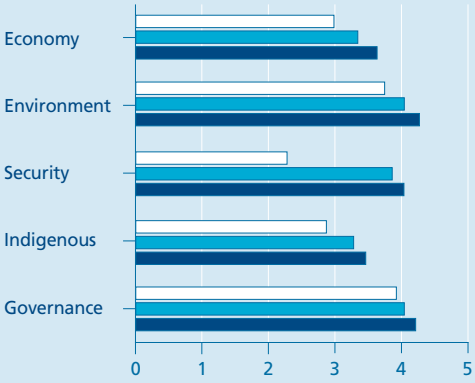
j Germany



k Canada

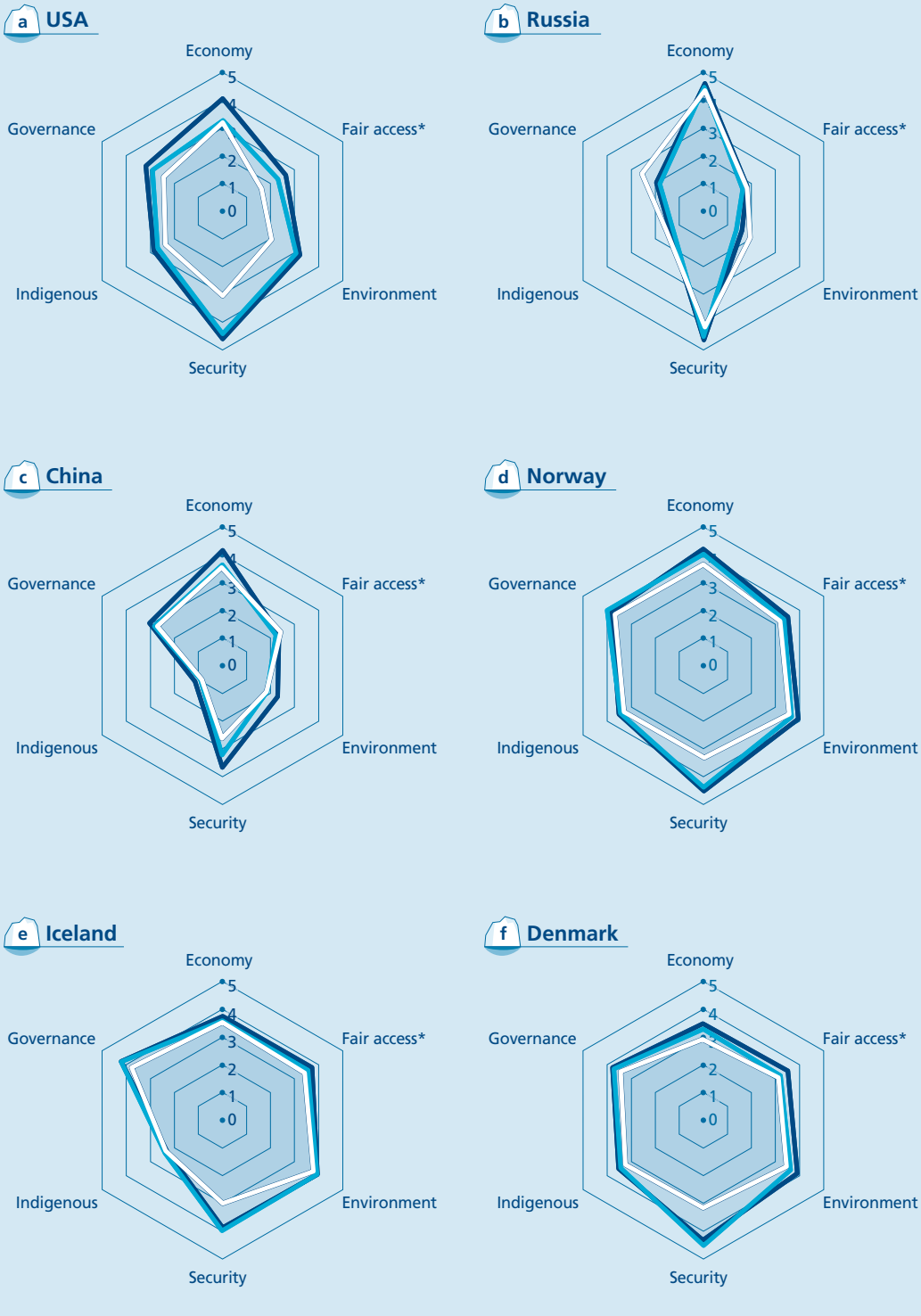


l EU

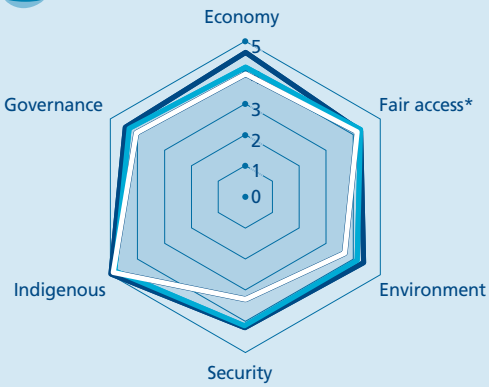


Source: Data from the Expert Survey

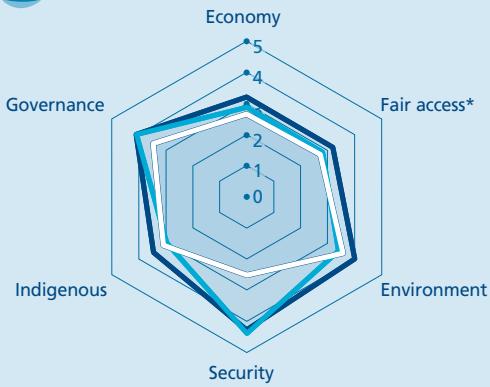
Figure 7 ***Shifts of Countries' Priorities in Arctic Politics*** *(Radar Charts)*



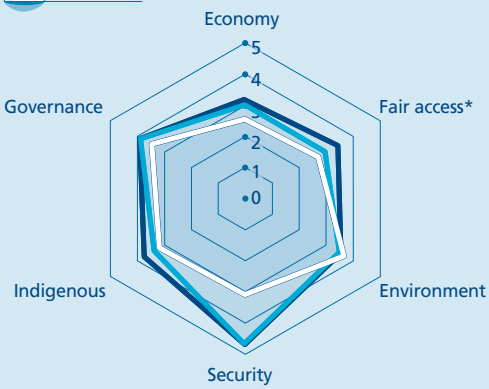
g Greenland



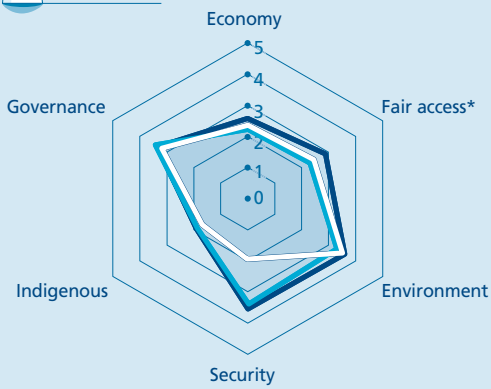
h Sweden



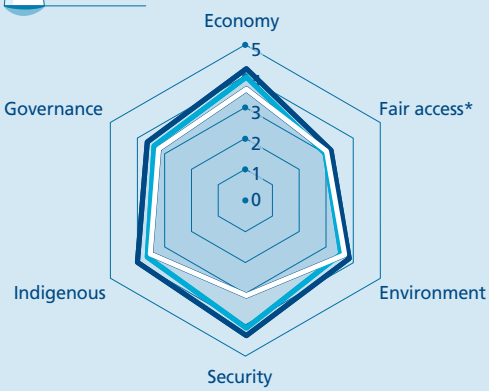
i Finland



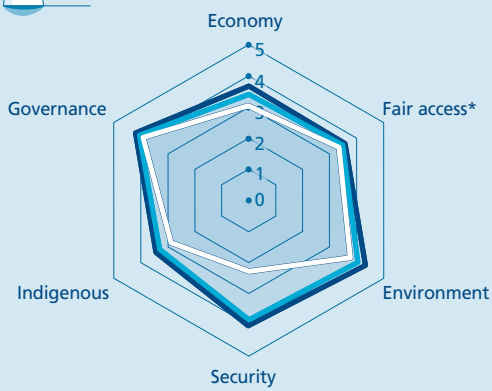
j Germany



k Canada



l EU



* The ‚fair access' category refers to the importance of fair access to Arctic resources for states. However, as the experts did not reach a sufficient level of consensus on this category (see Appendix D), we do not mention it further in the text and strongly recommend that these data be treated with caution. Source: Data from the Expert Survey

Russia and China

According to our quantitative data, Russia had a strong focus on military security in the Arctic even before it attacked Ukraine in 2022 (Figure 6/7). As some respondents noted, Russia was forced to withdraw some of its conventional assets from the Arctic after February 2022, as forces were depleted in the Ukraine war. However, this has not diminished the importance of security issues on its Arctic agenda, but only shifted the focus. The nuclear arsenal on the Kola Peninsula has become more important (R3; R5; R22). However, there has also been an increase in Russian hybrid activities against its Euro-Atlantic Arctic neighbours. Compared with 2020, the outlook for 2028 suggests that Russia will increase its focus on military and economic activities in the Arctic (Table 3). However, Russia will not pay more attention to the Arctic in general (see the 'average' column in Table 3), as it will de-emphasise all other dimensions of Arctic politics.

In general, the Russian Arctic plays a key role in the country's GDP and is therefore particularly important (R12). According to experts, the importance of economic issues on the Russian political agenda is also increasing, although only slightly since the start of the war, as the quantitative data show (Figure 6/7). However, even before the attack on Ukraine, Russia was the country with the highest economic interest in the Arctic and remains so, as shown in Figure 2. Respondents differ in their assessment of whether Western sanctions have had a major impact on Russia's state finances (R6; R9; R12). What is changing, according to the experts, are the buyers of Arctic resources. For example, experts report that Russia has shipped more gas to China (R5; R6; R8) and is focusing more on countries such as India and the other BRICS (R21; R22).

In contrast to the salience of economic issues, Russia places less emphasis on environmental protection in the Arctic than any other country in our sample, including China. While the country did not prioritise environmental concerns before the start of the war either, Russia at least talked publicly about climate change in the context of the Arctic, as one respondent pointed out, for image reasons (R5). Since the war began, however, it seems to have become even less focused on environmental and climate issues. In particular, scientific research on climate-related issues has suffered because of the war (R5; R17).

The same applies to the issue of Indigenous rights and welfare. According to our quantitative survey, Russia, with an Indigenous population of about 250,000, places less emphasis on Indigenous issues than any other Arctic state. Not only is there a lack of attention, but there is also – in line with the general autocratic rule of the Russian government – a blatant disregard for Indigenous rights and welfare, as some respondents made clear. Especially since Russia started its full-scale invasion, Indigenous communities in Russia can hardly raise their voices to the state authorities – 'they would probably just end up in jail' (R4). Unsurprisingly, this lack of emphasis and disregard for rights is unlikely to change in the near future.

In sum, Russia has always focused almost exclusively on economic, military and security issues in the Arctic. This picture has become even more pronounced following its full-scale invasion of Ukraine. While environmental and Indigenous issues have always been absent from Russia's agenda, it has shown at least some interest in multinational governance with the West. But even this collapsed after the invasion of Ukraine.

As a non-Arctic state, China generally has only a moderate interest in the Arctic. This concerns mainly the economic and, increasingly, the security dimensions. The environmental

dimension is rated as relatively low, with only Russia having less interest in Arctic environmental protection. Indigenous issues are given the lowest absolute importance by the experts of all countries (Figure 4). In the qualitative interviews, not a single interviewee mentioned Indigenous issues when discussing China's priorities in the Arctic. However, the quantitative results suggest that China will pay more attention to all Arctic policy issues in 2028, but especially to economic and security issues, while interest in Indigenous and environmental issues will remain low (Table 3; Figure 6/7).

With regard to the economic and security dimensions, we are also confronted with some mixed responses. While the quantitative survey reveals increasing importance, this was qualified to some extent in the qualitative interviews. This reflects an uncertainty among experts about China, which is not only seen as a 'wild card' in security terms and one whose intentions are rather vague (R4), but whose economic activities in the Arctic also depend on how a number of factors develop in the future. Several interviewees argued that China's interest in economic activities in the Arctic has not grown tremendously recently (R5; R9; R12). Rather, 'they're maintaining the investments they've made, for example Yamal LNG, but they're not starting any big projects' (R12). Similarly, another respondent (R9) said:

> *"The investment projects that were attempted 10 years ago, including the purchase of land, deep-sea ports, whether in Sweden, Iceland or elsewhere, have not gone back to zero, the attempts are probably still going on, though more in secret, and the investment volume, as far as we can see from official sources, is rather negligible. So the famous China hype is actually over."*

Others argue that this is not necessarily due to a lack of interest, but also to Western reactions to China's ambitions in the past, such as the Danish veto on further Chinese investment in Greenland (R4). One argument in favour of Chinese investment opportunities in the Arctic in the future is Russia's increasing dependence on China in the wake of Western sanctions (R9; R10). However, whether this will actually happen was seen as uncertain, but to some extent reflects the future prospects of China's interest in Arctic economic activities shown in Figures 2 and 6.

Based on the quantitative survey, China also appears to be placing more emphasis on military security in the Arctic, a trend that is likely to continue in the coming years. However, compared with other countries, the absolute salience is rather low (Figure 6). The qualitative interviews did not reveal very concrete initiatives in this regard. However, one interviewee (R9) highlighted China's military-civilian fusion strategy to become a world-class military power, which may explain to some extent the increase in military interests in 2023:

> *"The Chinese naval build-up is continuing steadily. We now have a situation in which the Chinese navy alone has overtaken the Americans in terms of numbers. This means that we no longer have to assume a defensive naval strategy [...] but an offensive one that is bipolar, designed for both poles. And which is increasingly geared towards power projection. Also on expeditionary forces. It is no longer just Taiwan. Instead, China remains interested in the polar Silk Road."*

It is this kind of development that underlies the Western perception of China as a growing security challenge in the Arctic.

To sum up, China, like Russia, is interested primarily in economic issues in the Arctic and increasingly in military security. However, while the quantitative findings clearly indicate an increased interest in economic issues for 2028 (compared with 2020), the findings from the qualitative interviews suggest that this should not be overestimated, as there do not seem to be any tendencies towards a huge wave of investment in the Arctic region. However, unlike Russia, China seems to remain moderately interested in multinational governance in the Arctic.

The United States

The United States has often been described as the 'reluctant Arctic power'. That this has changed has been observed repeatedly. What is notable is the relatively large increase in the salience of US Arctic priorities according to experts in several of our dimensions – on average, the US is expected to experience the largest increase in the salience of Arctic issues in 2028 compared with 2020 (last column in Table 3). In general, the United States scores lower than the other Western Arctic states on most dimensions, and is thus more comparable to the other two global powers. However, although it is by no means the country with the highest economic interests in the region, it will experience the largest increase in economic interests in the Arctic in the near future (Table 3). Changes in the salience of security, environmental issues and governance are also among the highest in the sample. The experts see US Arctic priorities as clearly changing. But again, there are some discrepancies between the quantitative survey and the qualitative interviews that cast some doubt on the relationship between the Russian attack on Ukraine and the change in priorities. Moreover, the experts' responses in the interviews again significantly qualify some of the quantitative trends.

Perhaps most clearly linked to Russia's attack on Ukraine and the general rise in tensions between the West, on one hand, and Russia and China on the other, the focus on security increased by almost 1.6 points between 2020 and 2023. This is one of the highest overall scores for security. Interestingly, the experts emphasise in particular that the US government will increase security cooperation with the Nordic countries (including Iceland) and Greenland, including in the area of aerospace and maritime surveillance capabilities (R3; R9; R14).

In contrast to the notable increase in the priority score in the quantitative survey, US economic ambitions were not discussed in the qualitative interviews. This may indicate a difference between the federal government, for whom economic interests are not high on the Arctic agenda, and Arctic activities that take place in and are driven by the politics of the state of Alaska. As economic interests did not increase significantly after Russia's invasion of Ukraine, but only in 2028, the Russian war as such may not be the main trigger here, but, for example, Alaska's search to replace revenues from fossil resources that have passed their peak of exploitation.

The same could apply to the salience of Indigenous issues. Indigenous communities have always had a problematic status in the United States due to the specific legacies of settler-colonialism. The average absolute score is the lowest of the Western Arctic countries, even though Alaska is home to diverse groups such as the Iñupiat, Yupik, Aleut and Athabaskan peoples. None of the interviewees in our qualitative analysis actually mentioned Indigenous issues as a priority in the US context, confirming our quantitative findings.

In contrast, because of the large federal nature protection sites in the state of Alaska, environmental issues matter to some extent on the federal agenda, according to the experts. However,

when comparing the scores of the individual countries in the three periods mentioned in Figure 4, the United States puts less emphasis on the environment than any other Western country (this is also true for 2023 and 2028). The sharp increase in the salience of environmental issues from 2020 to 2023 is attributed mainly to the change of government, with the Biden presidency emphasising the environment and climate protection more than its predecessor (R5; R10; R21), which could change again with the re-election of Donald Trump. However, several respondents in the qualitative interviews argued that the invasion itself lowered the focus on the environment as security issues became more important (R4; R5).

When it comes to multinational governance, the United States does not prioritise this dimension of Arctic politics over other issues. However, here too an increase in salience can be observed for 2023 and the next five years – compared with the other countries, the US interest in the multinational governance of Arctic issues is expected to increase the most (Table 3). However, this is due mainly to increased cooperation with Western allies, as some qualitative interviews suggest. One senior government official from the Arctic Council argued that the US has very little interest in bringing Russia back to the negotiating table in Arctic governance (R23). Whether this will still be the case with the new Trump administration remains to be seen.

In sum, the relative importance of security is rising sharply in the United States, even as other policy issues are becoming less important. The gap between security and all other Arctic issues has widened in the United States since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Coupled with the expected increase in economic interests in the Arctic, the US appears to view the region primarily as a matter of national (and international) security, with Russia as the principal threat.

The Euro-Atlantic Arctic: The Fennoscandian States

Although there are of course national specificities, many trends and absolute figures are comparable between Norway, Finland and Sweden. Taken together, our quantitative and qualitative findings seem to confirm the conventional wisdom that Sweden places (slightly) less emphasis on specific Arctic issues than the other two states, even if Finland scores lower in some dimensions in terms of the absolute numbers of the quantitative survey. Although Sweden is also increasing its focus on the Arctic, on average even more than Finland and Norway (see Table 3), it has seen itself mainly as a Baltic state, while Norway and Finland have turned their political perspectives more towards the North. In general, all three Nordic countries are expected to increase their overall emphasis on Arctic issues in 2028 compared with 2020, due mainly to an increased focus on security and economic issues (Table 3).

In terms of military security in the Arctic, the experts see Norway and Finland as having the highest absolute priority on security among the Western Arctic actors. While Sweden scores lower on average, it is, together with the EU, the actor that is expected to increase its emphasis on security issues the most between 2020 and 2028 (Table 3). For Sweden and Finland, the most frequently mentioned change and reason for the increased salience of security (at the time of the interviews) is the application for NATO membership (R1; R2; R3; R5; R7; R8; R9; R11; R12; R13; R15; R20; R22). All three countries are expected to increase their military cooperation (R3; R21), some argue because of their NATO membership (R3). Others argue that military cooperation between Norway and Finland is increasing because of the war itself (R19).

For all three countries, military activity in their High North is increasing. These activities differ according to the respective defence needs. In northern Norway, for example, NATO training missions have become more frequent and extensive as a result of the war, and border surveillance has also increased (R10). Finland, with its 1300 km border with Russia, has established a strict border management regime (R19, R20). As in Norway, the government is reported to be spending more money on border surveillance and defence, and preparing to better defend against hybrid attacks (R7; R20). Sweden is reported to be reviving new regiments that have been inactive for decades (R2). In practice, this also means that Sweden is putting more money into the military budget, to the detriment of other policy areas (R4).

In addition to increased military activity, the qualitative results also show that discourses are changing. Not only is the rhetoric becoming more aggressive, for example, in Finland (R4; R22), and Russia is more clearly identified as a threat in Norway, after a long period in which it avoided such talk after the Cold War (R3; R22), but the security justification is also taking precedence in some civilian investments and policies. To quote R4, in Finland 'everyone shifted from talking about some common challenges around environmental issues to the military narrative' (similar: R11). As in Sweden, this also relates to investment in the green transition, as argued by R7. Some interviewees reported that infrastructure projects in northern Norway were being stepped up in accordance with the logic of 'total defence'.

So-called 'total defence' is a concept applied in the Nordic states, referring to the integrated efforts of the armed forces, relevant civilian agencies and a range of societal contributors, including the business sector, in response to external military threats. For example, investment in housing, social services and transport infrastructure has increased since the start of the war, as these investments serve the security objective of keeping the North populated and maintaining infrastructure for the armed forces (R19). The demographic problem of the northern regions, namely the movement south of young, educated people, especially women, is thus seen as a security problem, because the military needs supporting infrastructure and workforce – schools, hospitals and so on – to function (R3). As one respondent (R19) reported:

> *"Kindergarten was made free in Finnmark and northern parts of Troms county. And the reasoning was that we have to have people living there and this is a way to make the families stay or move to Finnmark and northern parts of Troms as a security policy. So it also influences all other parts of policy. [...] It is often said in Norway that's the most important part of our security policy [namely] people living in the north and not the military itself, not the weapons."*

While this is not new, this 'securitisation' of multiple political dimensions seems to have become even more important since the Russian invasion (R19).

Also, as a result of security investments, economic activity in the Arctic has become slightly more important for all three countries. For Norway, respondents mention 'record new investments in new oil fields' (R2; similar: R8) and an increased willingness to undertake deep-sea mining as a way of becoming independent of Russia (and China). For the same reasons, Norway has become much more important as an energy supplier in the wider European context since the war began (R3). For northern Sweden, respondents have seen a significant increase in economic activity. Here, too, the state supports development and, since the Russian invasion, has taken a greater interest in the exploitation of rare minerals (R2; R22). As one local politician reported

for both Sweden and Finland, 'industries that need a lot of energy are looking north, and those that need minerals are also looking north' (R15). Given such interest, one interviewee argued that the importance of the Arctic Railway project in Finland had increased since the start of the war (R20). In addition, industries that previously produced in Asia are moving back to northern Norway, Sweden and Finland for reasons of security, availability of resources and short supply lines: 'So we are very, very much affected by big, big investments in our cities' (R15).

The question is whether the increased focus on economic development reported by respondents in our qualitative interviews leads to a diminution of emphasis on environmental protection and Indigenous rights. In general, the Nordic countries attach considerable importance to climate and environmental issues – also compared with other countries (Figure 3) – but based on the quantitative data, there has been no particular change since the Russian invasion. However, the qualitative interviews give some indication that the changing priorities are at the expense of the environment and Indigenous peoples. In Norway, for example, some experts mentioned that the budget for climate and environmental issues has been cut because of the war in favour of military security (R2; R7). For Sweden, too, the qualitative interviews revealed that climate and environmental protection have recently become less salient in Sweden, for example, due to budget cuts and a discursive shift towards military security (R2; R21; R4). These in turn are a consequence of the war (emphasis on military issues) and the change to a centre-right government supported by the radical right Sweden Democrats (R2; R21). Much the same applies to Finland. The qualitative interviews suggest that both the war in Ukraine and the right-wing government have led to an emphasis on military security and less interest in environmental protection (R2). As in Sweden, this shift is also slightly visible in the quantitative data (Figure 3).

As already noted, environmental priorities are also under pressure from transition conflicts and the environmental paradox of the green transition. With the war and rising tensions between the West and China, investment has increased in energy and resource substitution and independence. However, oil and gas exploration, green energy projects and deep-sea mining potentially threaten the fragile environment of the High North. For example, while the latter could provide rare minerals, such as lithium, scandium and cobalt, which are needed for the green transition, it could have a dramatic negative impact on the marine environment (R3).

The three countries differ only slightly in terms of Indigenous rights. In absolute terms, Norway and Finland place the greatest emphasis on this dimension, followed by Greenland and Canada. According to the expert survey, Sweden is seen to be doing this to a slightly lesser extent. While the war has led to a small increase in the absolute score in Norway and Finland, it has slightly decreased in Sweden. The qualitative interviews report similar trends for Sweden and Finland. In both cases, the right-wing governments' attention to traditional security and energy issues has come at the expense of Indigenous interests, as a former member of the Sámi parliament noted. For example, it took more than a year for the new Sámi Minister of Culture to meet with the Swedish Sámi National Association, and the budget for national minorities has remained the same despite high inflation (R2).

In Finland, a planned law to give more power to the Sámi Parliament was rejected by the governing parties, and Indigenous interests appear to be less taken into account in infrastructure projects (R2). In Norway, respondents argued that there is potential for increased conflict with Sámi reindeer herders due to increased demand for energy production: 'It's a conflict over land, and you can't produce energy without land' (R3). The increase in economic activity and demand

for energy from Norway, as well as the war in Ukraine, may therefore come at the expense of Indigenous communities. Furthermore, in Norway, issues such as inflation, energy and food costs, as well as interest rates have become more important than climate and the environment since the start of the war (R19).

When it comes to multinational governance, all three countries score similarly in our quantitative data. However, when it comes to dealing with Russia in Arctic governance, Norway and Finland in particular seem to have different preferences. A senior government official mentioned that, similar to the US, Finland – both under Sanna Marin and her centre-left government and under the right-wing government – has little interest in leaving the door open for future cooperation with Russia on Arctic issues and has also adopted a tougher rhetoric, while Norway, also for historical reasons, does not want to cut all ties with Russia.

The Amero-Atlantic Arctic: Iceland, Denmark/Greenland and Canada

Our expert survey and interviews reveal two key differences between the Euro-Atlantic and the American-Atlantic Arctic. One is the former's proximity to Russia, which seems to put security concerns higher on the agenda of the respective states. The other is the lower weight and attention given by Amero-Atlantic states to transitional conflicts, especially those between the centres of settler societies and Indigenous peoples in the Arctic peripheries. However, the reasons for this lower weight differ between the four actors. In Iceland, there are simply no Indigenous peoples, so transitional conflicts take the form of the usual political struggles. Greenland has the opposite situation. Here we have an almost exclusively Indigenous population, and with Greenland's self-government since 2009, the centre of political decision-making is mostly part of the Arctic periphery itself. As mentioned above, in the extremely sparsely populated Canadian Arctic periphery, in contrast to the Fennoscandian North, investments in infrastructure projects are often welcomed by Indigenous groups because infrastructure, such as health care, is less developed there and development is less likely to conflict with traditional land use (R14; R21). Nevertheless, the emphasis on Indigenous issues in Canada is increasing over time.

Given that Russia is further away and that, for various reasons, transitional conflicts are less salient in the American-Atlantic Arctic, it is to be expected that not only will priorities on Arctic agendas change to a lesser extent in response to the war, but also that the consequences in terms of environmental protection and Indigenous rights and welfare will be less significant (except in Canada according to our quantitative data). This is not to say that priorities will not change. In fact, Canada is expected to increase its emphasis on Arctic issues in general (including economic and Indigenous issues) significantly between 2020 and 2028, but still to a lesser extent than Sweden or Finland, mainly due to the latter's focus on security issues, as shown in Table 3.

According to the experts, all four actors have adapted their security policies in the face of Russian aggression, and political discourses have become more favourable and attentive to military security in the face of a potential Russian threat. However, only in the case of Denmark has this led to a prioritisation of military issues – such as coastal security in Greenland – at the expense of climate protection, according to one respondent (R4). However, in contrast to the Euro-Atlantic Arctic, the focus here is mainly on surveillance and increased domain awareness. For Denmark, which still has responsibility for Greenlandic security (R4; R5), experts mention

investments in new radar (R6) and in coastal security in Greenland (R4). Despite limited legal competence and a lack of corresponding capabilities, Greenland is also seen as increasingly taking security aspects into account by cutting economic and political ties with Russia (R18; R20). In Canada, as one interviewee put it, 'there has been an increased amount of money put into the surveillance system to increase their security protocols and links with the US to watch out for Russia. It's a constant concern' (R16). More specifically, this has meant a strengthening of the civilian Canadian Coast Guard (R8), investment in the modernisation of military equipment, and increased cooperation with the US on military issues, particularly in the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD, R21; R16).

Although Iceland has no military of its own and is therefore dependent on NATO, it is also attracting a great deal of US interest in military security cooperation following Russia's invasion of Ukraine (R9). Like Greenland, experts see the country becoming more aware of threats from Russia (R18). Although historically Iceland had more economic relations with Russia/the Soviet Union than many other NATO countries (R22), the critical discourse on Russia is now seen as not much different from the other Nordic countries.

For all four actors, our expert survey indicates an increasing salience of economic issues, although less so for Iceland, which shows the lowest increase between 2020 and 2028 (Table 3). However, this is somewhat qualified in the qualitative interviews. For Denmark, for example, the qualitative interviewees did not identify very concrete actions, except for the fact that the country is more aware of the need to exploit Arctic minerals in order to become energy independent from Russia (R5). In Greenland itself, the salience of economic issues did not change significantly after the Russian invasion. While Greenland has terminated the fishing agreement with Russia, 'you still have Russian fishing vessels docking on the coast of Greenland for repairs, and you also have Russian research vessels going to Greenland' (R6). It was also reported that there is currently no mining activity in Greenland and that there is no indication that this will change in the near future (R6). For Iceland, respondents did not see any changes in economic preferences as a result of the war with Russia (R4), except for the fact that trade relations with Russia have now been cut (R21). Similarly, in Canada, although shipping activity in parts of the Canadian Arctic was expected to increase significantly, partly as a result of melting ice and new shipping technology (R1), respondents did not mention any economic developments clearly linked to Russia's war in Ukraine.

With fewer significant changes in the economic dimension related to Russia's war in Ukraine, challenges in the environmental dimension and for Indigenous rights and welfare may also be less significant. Regarding the latter, we ignore both Iceland and Greenland. As Iceland has no Indigenous population, the experts did not address this issue. However, it should be noted that, for example, as chair of the Arctic Council, it has also formulated policies in this area. In Greenland, most policy issues simply concern the rights and welfare of Indigenous peoples.

As expected, for all four actors, the experts do not see any significant changes in the environmental dimension and on Indigenous rights and welfare. For both Denmark and Greenland, the quantitative survey indicates an increase in the salience of environmental policies, but the qualitative interviews hardly confirm this. For Denmark, one respondent reported that funding for environmental and climate research had not changed significantly since the war (R11). Indeed, compared with the rest of our cases, in terms of our absolute quantitative scores, Greenland puts the most emphasis on the environment (Figure 5), but the issue was not raised by respondents

in the qualitative interviews. The same is true for Iceland. It scores high on environmental and climate protection, but there is no concrete trend towards more or less protection since the outbreak of the war (Figures 3/6/7), and in the qualitative interviews there was no significant change related to the war in Ukraine (R4). While there was a small dip in the salience of environmental issues for Canada after the war began, there is no clear trend. One interviewee suggested that there may be a shift away from the previous 'boom and bust' economy, with severe environmental consequences, such as abandoned mines and waste sites (R1).

On Indigenous issues, Denmark shows a slightly increasing interest and is not seen as de-emphasising the issue since the war began or in the near future. As one interviewee argued, this may be due mainly to a desire to maintain its Arctic position. And since 'without Greenland, Denmark is not an Arctic state' (R5), it has to take into account the interests of Greenland and its Indigenous society for its own security and military interests (R9). Yet, as some experts pointed out, Greenland's political interests are often enough ignored (R5; R9; R22). However, it was not mentioned that the war in Ukraine has had any impact on Denmark's treatment of the Greenlandic population. Compared with other actors – except for Greenland – Canada puts the most emphasis on Indigenous issues, although it scores an average of only 3.6 on a scale of 0–5, again showing that Indigenous issues are not a top priority for most countries (Figure 4). Comparing 2020 with the outlook for 2028 (Table 3), Canada is one of the countries with the largest increases in emphasis on Indigenous issues, although the increase is still moderate, at 0.5. However, the qualitative interviews did not reveal any link with the war in Ukraine. The increase in the emphasis on Indigenous issues in Canada can be explained by the perception of a respondent from the Inuit Circumpolar Council that there has been a slight positive trend in Canada's Indigenous policy in recent years because of the legal rights of Indigenous peoples, which prevent military and government action in these territories without consultation (R21). On the other hand, the interviewee also observed an increase in the frequency with which right-wing actors outside the government challenge the rights of Indigenous peoples.

Observers in the Arctic: The EU and Germany

The EU and Germany are linked to the Arctic via the Euro-Atlantic High North. We therefore expect similar changes in priorities to those of the Fennoscandian countries, albeit to a lesser extent.

According to our quantitative data, the EU and Germany have significantly increased their attention to security since Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Interestingly, the EU has shown the biggest increase in security interests between 2020 and 2028, as shown in Table 3, as it had very few security interests in the Arctic before the invasion. For both actors, however, the qualitative interviews did not reveal any specific Arctic activities. Rather, the experts observe a general change in political discourse and sanctions against Russia in the EU (R4; R9; R22), and of course there was the fanfare that accompanied the so-called '*Zeitenwende*' in Germany, which includes a one billion euro extra budget for the military and support for Ukraine, but has no explicit Arctic focus.

While in the Fennoscandian countries the change in economic priorities seems to be linked to the EU's Green Transition and Critical Raw Materials Act, experts also see a noticeable, though not very remarkable, increase in economic priorities on the EU's Arctic agenda between 2020 and 2028 (Table 3 shows that the EU has had the third largest increase among all actors in this dimen-

sion). Thus, the EU seems to be somewhat more interested in economic ventures in the Arctic (see also Figure 6/7), and the qualitative interviews point in the same direction as previously identified for the Euro-Atlantic Arctic. According to our experts, the EU is increasingly interested in resources (energy, minerals) from the European High North in order to become independent of Russian energy (R3; R12; R20).

Germany's score in the economic dimension came as a surprise. In contrast to all other countries, the experts judged its economic interests and activities in the Arctic to have decreased slightly – although not very significantly – after Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Accordingly, one interviewee mentioned that the Arctic is simply not a priority for Germany at the moment (R10). However, the qualitative interviews also revealed that there is an economic interest, for the same reasons as for the EU in general: energy cooperation with Norway has increased since the Russian war began, as Germany in particular needs to replace its former gas imports from Russia (R6; R8). Therefore, and indirectly, Germany has an increased interest in obtaining resources from the Arctic regions due to the war. As one expert (R9) put it:

> *"On the one hand, Germany is in a dilemma. In a very short period of time, it has freed itself from dependence on Russia, but at the same time, by abandoning coal and nuclear energy, it has become extremely dependent on Norway and the United States, and now actually has to reorganize itself to some extent."*

It is precisely in this process of reorganisation that energy issues have become increasingly securitised in Germany, and by 2028 the importance of economic issues in the Arctic is expected to increase again, slightly.

Interestingly, the EU has the second highest absolute score on the environmental dimension. This may be due to respective regulatory competences rather than active policies or programmes. Despite the high scores in the quantitative survey, experts in our qualitative interviews did not talk about concrete EU environmental and climate protection initiatives in the Arctic. The German government has not significantly shifted its focus on Arctic environmental and climate issues, although it increased slightly between 2020 and 2023. Although scientific cooperation with Russia has largely been suspended, this does not indicate a general decline in interest in protecting the Arctic climate and environment (R8). The same seems to apply to Indigenous rights and welfare on the German agenda: there has been no decline, but interest is at a relatively low level. In the EU, on the other hand, there is a slightly positive trend in the priority given to Indigenous issues. However, while prior to the war the EU emphasised Indigenous issues more than security issues in the Arctic, this has changed with the dramatic increase in the salience of military issues (Figure 6/7). Moreover, respondents in the qualitative interviews did not talk about the EU in the context of Arctic Indigenous issues. It therefore seems unlikely that the EU is significantly shifting towards Indigenous issues in its approach to the Arctic.

X/TWITTER ANALYSIS OF MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMUNICATIONS

In order to counter the results of the expert survey, we looked at the official communications of ministries of foreign affairs (MFA) on Twitter/X from 2020 to 2024 and analysed their content in terms of our five dimensions – which turned out to be six for the Twitter/X analysis because of the distinction between 'military security' and 'peace and security' in our category system – of priorities on states' Arctic agendas. While our experts' estimates suggest that the Arctic will increase in importance on states' agendas across all dimensions, ministry of foreign affairs communications do not seem to reflect this. In general, the Arctic does not seem to be a very important issue for most states. On average, foreign ministries published 0.64 tweets per month about the Arctic before Russia's full-scale invasion and 0.32 afterwards. Almost all foreign ministries talked less about the Arctic after the start of the war in February 2022 (Figure 8). The only exception is Canada. [15] So we are faced with somewhat contradictory results.

We believe that this discrepancy between the frequency of communication by ministries of foreign affairs and the experts can be explained by three developments. First, it seems plausible that with the war in Ukraine and other crises looming elsewhere, regions and issues other than the Arctic may have become more important for public communications. The political focus has shifted to Central and Eastern Europe, or to general geopolitical tensions between Russia and the West, which often imply the Arctic, without explicitly mentioning it. Moreover, as some of our experts pointed out, despite the increased tensions and focus on security in the Arctic, there was no expectation of an outbreak of war in the region.

Second, as mentioned in our introduction, the seven Western Arctic states paused cooperation with Russia in the Arctic Council, as well as in other regionally relevant forums, immediately after the attack. As a result, most of the day-to-day activities of ministries of foreign affairs in the Arctic, which are usually communicated to the public, were no longer relevant. The diplomatic activities that brought the Arctic Council back to life were conducted largely behind closed doors and with little public comment.

Finally, because both our Twitter/X analysis (which we will discuss in more detail below) and the expert survey and interviews showed that there has been a clear shift in attention to security, and this shift is also a general one in the respective countries (such as NATO membership in Sweden and Finland) and not just related to the Arctic, the Arctic may have simply been implied or implicit in this shift in ministry of foreign affairs communications.

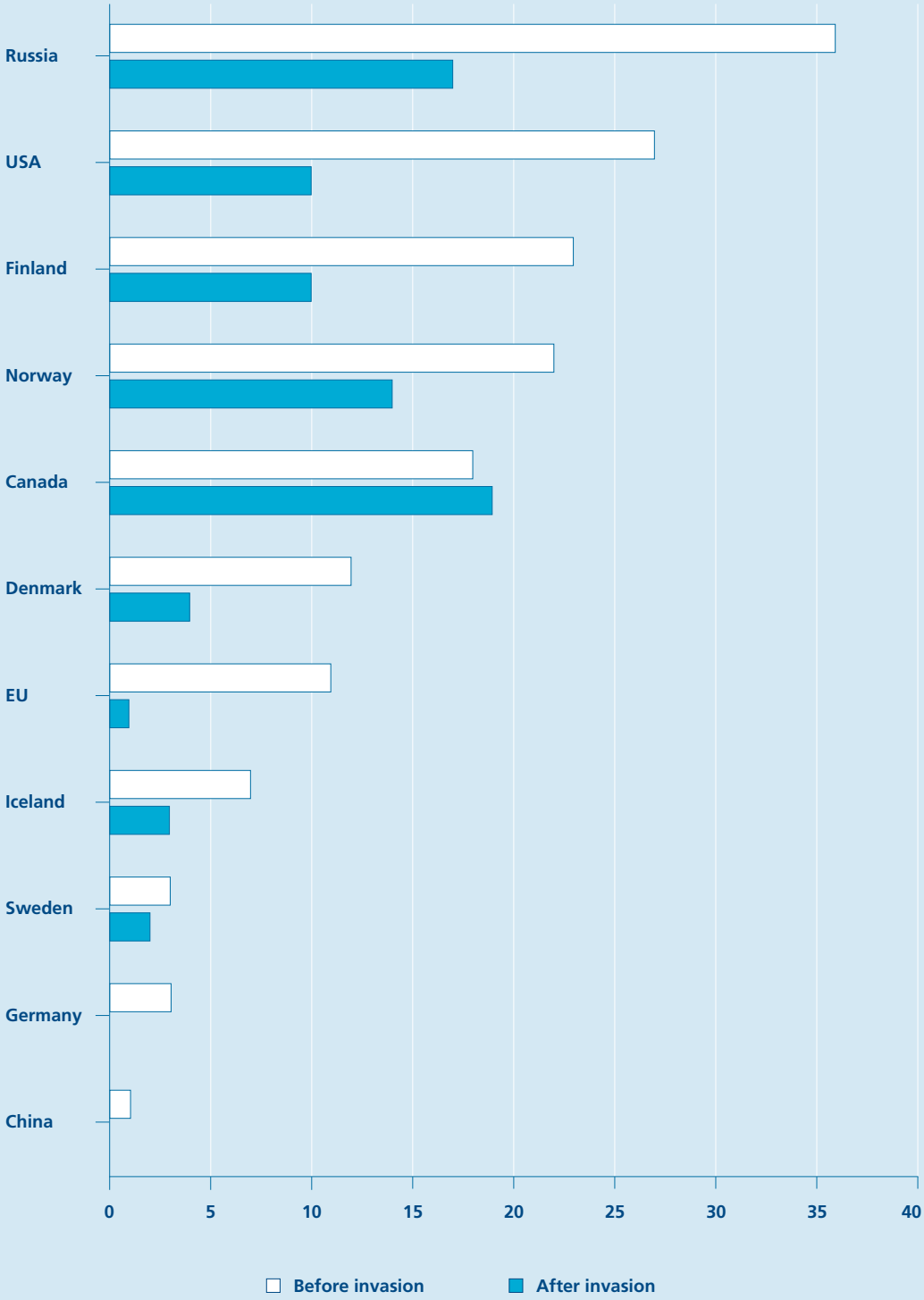
Because the shift is very much about building up military capabilities, Arctic security issues may also have moved from ministries of foreign affairs to defence ministries. This hypothesis is also supported by the fact that at the time of writing only the United States has updated its Arctic policy documents since 2022,[16] but all Arctic countries have new security and defence strategies,[17] covering general national defence, but with an increased Arctic focus. Moreover, Indigenous rights and welfare, as well as economic development, may have been discussed more at the national level anyway. The

15 However, Canada mostly mentions bilateral meetings with other Arctic states after the start of the invasion, without referring to concrete policy dimensions, as illustrated in Figure 9.

16 The drafting process most likely was set in motion before the Russian attack on Ukraine.

17 Both Denmark and Greenland have new general foreign policy and defence strategies. The latter largely replaced the previous Danish Arctic policy document.

Figure 8 *Salience of Arctic Issues for Foreign Ministries on Twitter/X*



Source: Data from the Expert Survey

latter argument is supported by our radar charts of Twitter/X communications, which show an emphasis on the governance-security-environment triangle, that is, on those issues that are prominent in the two popular images of the Arctic: the 'region of conflict' and the 'region of environmental cooperation'. The notable exceptions are Denmark and the EU, where economic issues are more salient. Interestingly, the European External Action Service almost stopped talking about the Arctic after the war started (only one tweet contains one of our Arctic keywords).

As already mentioned, a key finding of the Twitter/X analysis is that within this triangle, security issues are relatively more important. While environmental and Indigenous issues are not necessarily ignored in ministry of foreign affairs communications, the gap between their importance and that of security issues is widening. Compared with environmental issues, states are much less likely to reduce their emphasis on security issues.

Our Twitter/X analysis also reveals differences between Arctic states. However, it seems somewhat difficult to correlate these with the experts' findings. Yet it is interesting to note that the Fennoscandian states and Canada, that is, the middle powers within NATO, did not reduce their emphasis on governance in their tweets, while the other actors did.

Russia's massive communications may also be due to its chairmanship of the Arctic Council from 2021 to 2023, succeeded by Norway. Finland chaired the Barents Euro-Arctic Council during the same period. The relatively high level of communication by the US may be explained by the revision of Arctic policy and a renewed emphasis on climate change issues by the Biden administration, with John Kerry, who held the position of Secretary of State during the US chairmanship from 2015 to 2017, becoming the President's Special Envoy on Climate.

As mentioned in the Methodology section, we can rule out the possibility that the frequency of references to the Arctic is due primarily to different levels of activity on Twitter before and after 2022 (perhaps with the exception of the United States). However, cross-country comparisons may be more difficult as the foreign ministries of Iceland, Norway and Sweden tend to publish less on Twitter than those of Russia or the United States.

Even considering that some states are less active on Twitter/X than others, it is noteworthy that the foreign ministries of Germany and China hardly mention Arctic issues on the platform. China and Germany are not mentioned in Figure 8 because they do not talk about the Arctic. In 46 months, China mentioned the Arctic only once, which seems to support our experts' observation that China's interest and role in the Arctic may be overestimated. The German Foreign ministry mentions the Arctic three times, and only before the war started. However, the fact that the respective ministries of foreign affairs talked about the Arctic only before February 2022 is somewhat consistent with the findings from the other countries. The fact that Sweden communicates so little in relation to the Arctic may indicate that the country sees itself more as a Baltic Sea state.

In terms of the relative salience of the issues, Russian ministry of foreign affairs communications confirm the clear focus on security and economic development, which has developed most pronouncedly in the direction of security. Prior to the full-scale war, perhaps because of its chairmanship, Russia emphasised multinational governance and cooperation when talking about the Arctic. In fact, no other country has talked more about governance than Russia before the invasion. Since the invasion, Russia has hardly mentioned governance. Instead, it has put even more emphasis on security issues, including accusing Western states of escalating the situation in the Arctic. Even before the war, Russia regularly talked about security – including military security – in the Arctic. However, while Russia did so in about 25 per centof its tweets during this period, it significantly increased its emphasis. Following the coun-

try's full-scale attack on Ukraine almost 60 per cent of all references to the Arctic contain references to military security and defence issues. Russia is the only country in our sample that emphasises defence and military security issues in the Arctic. Most of the other countries do not talk explicitly about military threats and defence issues, but about peace and security in a very vague sense. As for the other dimensions, Russia mostly ignores Indigenous and environmental issues, both before and after the invasion of Ukraine. Economic aspects are somewhat more important, but still secondary to security issues.

In contrast, the US did not decrease its emphasis on any specific dimension after the start of the full-scale war, but in general it talked much less about the Arctic, as shown in the radar chart in Figure 9. Although the US generally published more before the war than during the invasion, as shown in the supplementary material, the decline in references to the Arctic appears to be much steeper than the decline in tweets in general. The decline in statements on environmental issues is particularly striking. Before the invasion, 52 per cent of all references to the Arctic included the environmental dimension. After the start of the war, it is only 30 per cent. Security, on the other hand, accounts for 33 per cent of tweets about the Arctic before the invasion and 50 per cent after. Thus, compared with the other dimensions, it is the environmental dimension in particular that is declining, while security has become the dominant issue (though not explicitly military/defence issues, but general references to peace and security).

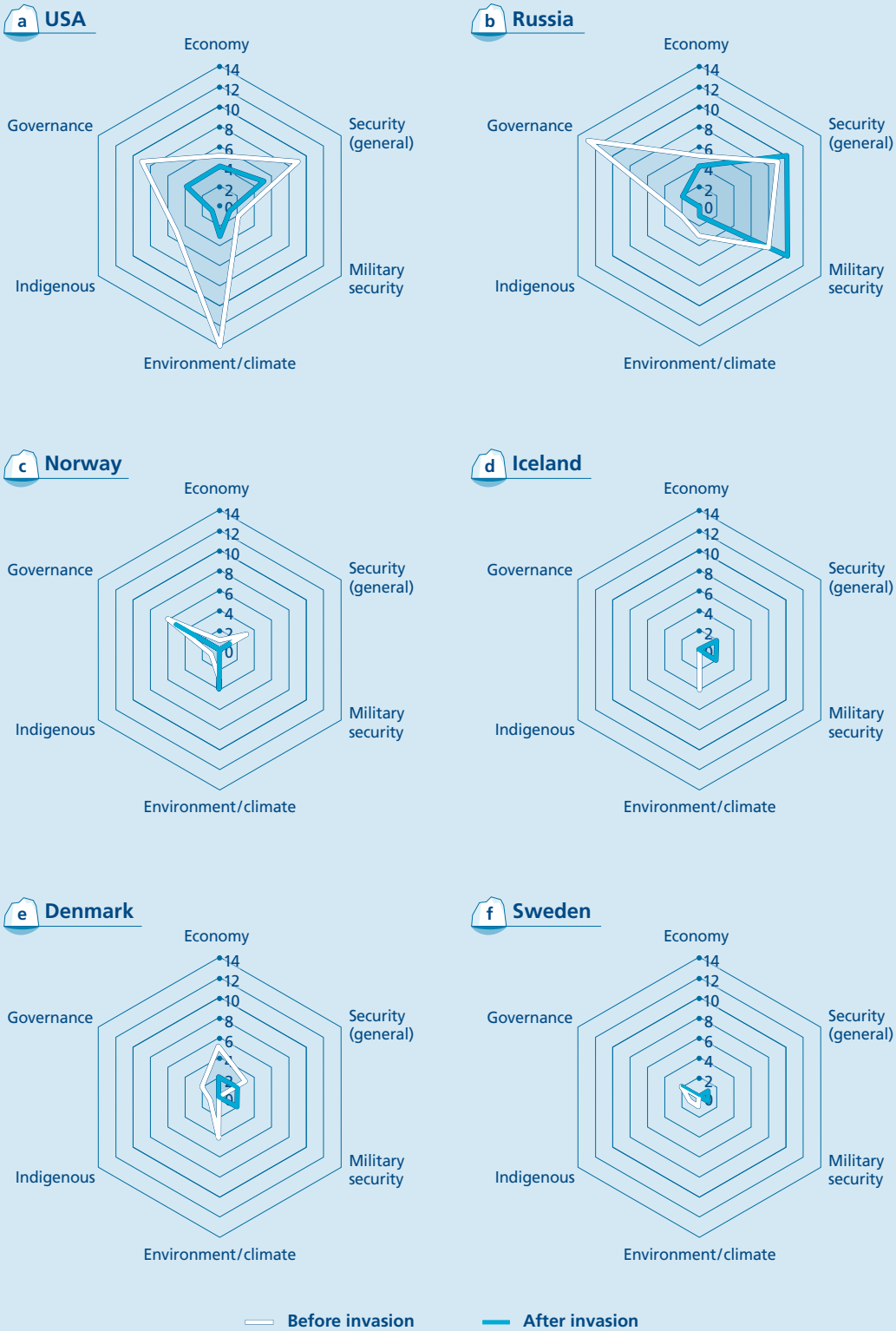
Norway mentions the Arctic on Twitter/X more often than many other countries in the official communications of the ministry of foreign affairs. However, it often does not link the Arctic to specific policy dimensions. Figure 9 suggests that there has been no shift in priorities, but that all dimensions – except environmental protection – are addressed slightly less frequently, although the Twitter/X analysis also shows that Norway has ignored Indigenous issues since the war started. However, this could also be due to the negative international press that the Fosen windmill case received at the time.

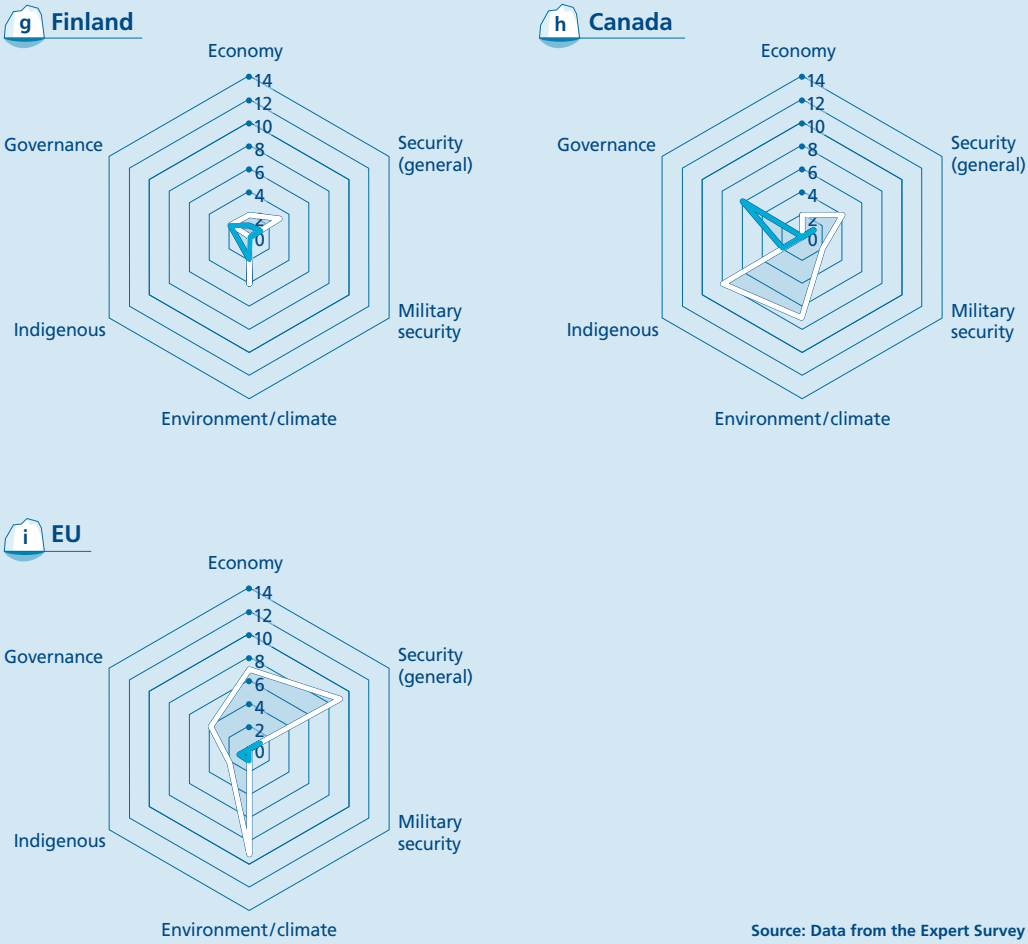
Finland is also one of the countries that mentions the Arctic most often on Twitter/X, but hardly addresses concrete policy dimensions, which explains the low numbers in Figure 9. It is therefore difficult to identify a concrete shift in priorities after the start of the war. It's even more difficult in the case of Sweden, as their ministry of foreign affairs almost ignores the Arctic both before and after Russia's invasion.

Denmark stopped talking about most dimensions of Arctic policy after Russia's self-styled 'special military operation'. This is especially true for the environmental dimension, which was addressed at least occasionally before the full-scale war, and for economic issues. Interestingly, it was only after February 2022 that Denmark began to address military security and defence issues in the Arctic. Thus, in addition to a decline in the salience of Arctic issues as such, there is also a small shift from environmental issues to military security, which was also observed by experts in the qualitative interviews.

Very similar observations can be made for Iceland. While the ministry of foreign affairs does not talk much about the Arctic in general, it did emphasise the environmental dimension before the war started. In fact, there are no references to any political dimension other than the environment before February 2022. Since the start of the invasion, Iceland only talks about military security when referring to Arctic issues. Canada is the only country that has tweeted more about the Arctic since February 2022 than before, even more than the United States and Russia. However, since the start of Russia's full-scale war, Canada has hardly mentioned any concrete policy dimensions when talking about the Arctic, which explains the very small 'net' in the radar chart (Figure 9). Nevertheless, there is a significant shift between the two periods. While Canada focused heavily on environmental (39 per cent of all tweets) and Indigenous issues (45 per cent of all tweets) before the war, these issues are almost absent after February 2022. Instead, the ministry of foreign affairs emphasises multinational governance (with Western states) when talking about the Arctic, while completely ignoring this dimension before the war.

Figure 9 *Salience of Arctic Issues for Foreign Ministries on Twitter/X*





Source: Data from the Expert Survey

Overall, almost all ministries of foreign affairs have talked less about the Arctic since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, but this does not necessarily mean that the Arctic has become less important for states, as some Arctic discourses may have shifted to other communication arenas after February 2022. However, some policy dimensions are more affected than others. While security and governance in the Arctic are also mentioned less frequently after the start of the war, environmental and climate issues are particularly affected. Compared with the other dimensions of Arctic policy, security actually becomes slightly more important for several states after the start of the invasion. Indigenous issues are generally poorly addressed by states both before and since the war. Russia's shift from governance to exclusively military security issues is particularly striking. The United States has shifted its priorities towards security (relative to the importance of the other policy dimensions) without explicitly addressing military defence. The results also suggest that China's role in the Arctic may be overestimated, at least based on the emphasis on the Arctic in official foreign ministry communications on Twitter/X.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Before summarizing our findings, a reminder is in order that we report expert estimates and opinions based on qualitative interviews and a quantitative survey. We use them mostly in a descriptive way, but references to correlations or causal relationships are based on the experts' judgements. We have confronted the experts' responses with our own analysis of the ministry of foreign affairs communications of the Arctic actors.

We believe we can derive seven general insights as a result of our study on changing Arctic priorities.

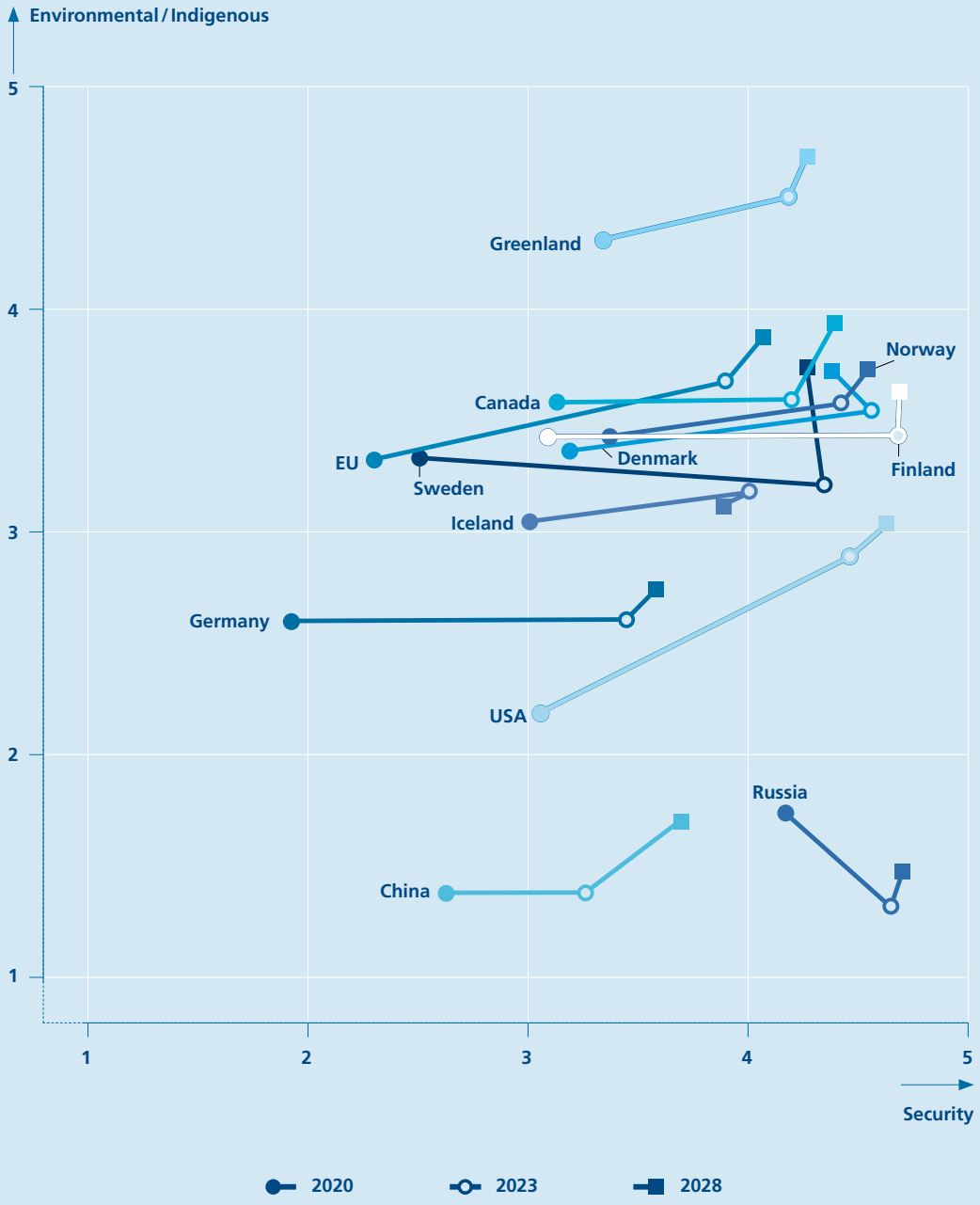
(1) Overall, the Arctic seems to have been gaining in absolute importance since 2020. This did not change after Russia's attack on Ukraine in 2022. We believe that this finding holds despite the decline in Arctic-related messages in the communications of ministries of foreign affairs. It is in the nature of the changes identified by the experts that Arctic issues are moving away from the purview of ministries of foreign affairs and becoming both more domestic issues and matters for ministries of defence (MoD).

(2) Not surprisingly, the common public and political observation that security has become more important in the Arctic since Russia launched its full-scale war against Ukraine is supported by the results of our expert survey and the analysis of ministry of foreign affairs communications.

(3) From the quantitative expert survey we can see that economic development is also growing in importance to some extent. The dichotomous representation of the Arctic as either a region of conflict or a region of environmental cooperation and governance thus misses a very important point: the Arctic is also a region of (domestic) economic development. There are clear indications from experts that this development is linked to both: to environmental cooperation because of the green transition, and to security concerns because of the attempt to become more independent of Russia and China in terms of energy and critical raw materials. Moreover, especially in the Euro-Atlantic Arctic, this development seems to play an increasing role in domestic transition conflicts. However, the fact that economic issues do not figure prominently in ministry of foreign affairs communications shows that despite the interests of international actors this is seen primarily as a domestic issue. This underlines the need not to lose sight of the fact that, in contrast to the Antarctic, in the Arctic issues are also, or even primarily, a matter of domestic jurisdiction, despite the region's globalization.

(4) From the expert survey and interviews we can see that environmental and Indigenous peoples' rights are becoming slightly more prominent on the Arctic agendas of states, if we look at the absolute numbers. We see evidence that, on one hand, this may be due to what might be called climate change 'revenge', the fact that climate change will continue to rapidly transform the region and require policy responses. On the other hand, issues of Indigenous rights and welfare may be becoming more prominent in the respective transition conflicts. However, as Figure 10 (and our next point) shows, the 'soft policy indicators' of the environment and Indigenous peoples are rising much less sharply than security.

Figure 10 ***Shifts of Countries' Priorities in Arctic Politics*** *(Environment/Indigenous vs Security)*



Note: Based on the quantitative expert survey. We therefore constructed a ‚soft policy' indicator consisting of the salience of environmental and Indigenous issues (mean for each country and year) and on the other hand the security indicator.

(5) Building on the previous point, many of the experts in the qualitative interviews gave clear indications that the increasing salience of security and economic development may be at the expense of the environment and the rights and welfare of Indigenous peoples. This seems to be the case particularly in Russia, but also in a different form in the Euro-Atlantic High North. In the latter, the political discourse is seen to be changing to the detriment of the environment and the rights of Indigenous peoples. This is not only because security and the economy are taking precedence, but also because right-wing parties and governments are gaining influence in the discourse or even governmental power. As some experts have noted, the vulnerability of Arctic Indigenous peoples stems not only from current security and economic developments, but also from histories of colonization, land dispossession, and marginalization.

(6) Both the quantitative survey and the analysis of ministry of foreign affairs communications suggest that multinational governance is still considered relevant in the region, but mainly between the Western states. The decline in official communications from ministries of foreign affairs suggests a period of diplomatic recalibration rather than disengagement. The Arctic governance landscape is undergoing a significant transformation, with traditional multilateral mechanisms facing huge challenges while retaining relevance. The Arctic Council continues to operate without the political level, and alternative forms of cooperation have not yet taken shape. This situation reflects the complex interplay between regional cooperation imperatives and broader geopolitical tensions, highlighting the need for innovative approaches to Arctic governance that can balance national interests with shared regional concerns.

(7) Finally, the geopolitical landscape of the Arctic is characterized by a complex web of alignments and divergences among key actors. Our analysis reveals a pronounced East-West divide, with Russia and China forming a distinct bloc in contrast to Western Arctic nations. While China's Arctic engagement may be less extensive than is often portrayed in public discourse, experts concur that Beijing's strategic interests in the region largely align with Moscow's, potentially amplifying the geopolitical cleavage. Within the Western Arctic, our findings suggest a more nuanced tripartite division between what we have termed the Amero-Atlantic Arctic (CAN, DEN/GRE, ICE), the USA, and the Euro-Atlantic High North. The Euro-Atlantic High North, including Norway, Sweden, and Finland, demonstrates policy priorities that closely align with those of the European Union and Germany. The fragmentation within the 'Western bloc' suggests potential challenges in formulating a unified Western Arctic strategy, while also offering opportunities for more tailored regional cooperation.

In the introduction, we expressed our concern that security will increasingly dominate agendas and that economic activity will also be securitised in the sense that it will be justified as necessary to protect against existential threats and thus removed from ordinary political discourse. There are signs that this is happening. At and shortly after the end of the Cold War, the Arctic was seen as a symbol of a new political age. Characterised not only by cooperation between former arch-enemies, but also by a strong commitment to environmental protection and proactive implementation of sustainable development, as well as new and unique forms of Indigenous participation

in the relevant political processes. While the enthusiasm of the 1990s had long since given way to more sober assessments and more realistic expectations, it was renewed as the Arctic became increasingly threatened by climate change and as tensions between the West and Russia rose. Despite serious disagreements elsewhere, cooperation prevailed in the region, giving rise to the notion of Arctic exceptionalism. While it is debatable whether the Arctic was ever that exceptional, it is clear that since February 2022 it is not.

But it is equally clear that cooperation since the 1990s has brought about significant achievements. It is these achievements that are now under threat, and with them the possibility of progressive change. As indicated in the introduction, we define progressiveness as increasing learning capacity, and the removal of barriers to learning and scientific coordination in the Arctic Council has been an important contribution to learning more about the severity of climate change and its consequences. The various forums that Arctic states and other actors have created for governance have provided opportunities to learn how to work together to address the impacts of climate change and other challenges, to regulate more effectively, and to manage the Arctic region in a peaceful manner. But it is not only learning about the changing environment or practical learning about good governance that is needed. There is also a need to build a new collective commitment and broad political and social will to achieve the ambitious goals of sustainable development, to realize the rights of Indigenous peoples and to maintain a safe, secure and stable Arctic for all.

If our experts are right, there is reason to be concerned that these necessary learning processes may increasingly be hampered. Scientific cooperation with Russia has come to a standstill in many countries as a result of sanctions. Russia, in turn, appears to have stopped sharing important data. As a result, important information from half of the Arctic is missing. The Arctic Council is no longer functioning at a high political level, Russia has left the Barents Euro-Arctic Council, and several other forums are inoperative, especially but not only those related to security issues. Region-wide exchanges are thus limited. Particularly in the Euro-Atlantic High North, military activity and economic development are often seen by experts as trumping environmental protection and Indigenous rights, while their securitization removes issues from normal political processes, undermines participation and contributes to polarization in transition conflicts. This undermines the possibility of renewing ambitious collective commitments to sustainable development, Indigenous rights and well-being, and a secure and stable Arctic for all.

In order to work against these barriers, and thus be at the core of a progressive Arctic policy, we believe that a re-politicisation, as well as a massive increase in participatory approaches to governance is necessary. This, together with our findings, leads us to three final recommendations.

1. Coordinated research efforts in the Western Arctic should be intensified in order to maintain the respective academic networks and to find good ways of replacing the missing climate data from Russia. However, related to our other two recommendations, there also needs to be a massive increase in efforts to understand the political, societal and economic impacts on the Arctic, especially those of the Ukraine war but also the other transformations the Arctic region is undergoing. In other words, more emphasis should be placed on research beyond the STEM disciplines.

2. The securitisation of the Arctic region must be kept in check. There are undeniable security risks and threats from Russia to the territorial integrity and social security of its western

neighbours. But countering the Russian threat becomes ironic or even futile in the long run if militarisation and economic development come at the expense of the environment or the rights and welfare of local communities and especially of Indigenous people. It is therefore important to define security threats as precisely as possible and to identify what is and what is not needed to cope with them. We believe that this involves recognising the 'different Arctics' and their respective security needs, including the human security of Indigenous and local people. To avoid exacerbating the security dilemma and accelerating militarisation, responses to Russian hybrid threats should rely as much as possible on civilian forces and resources, such as coast guards and police.

3. Finally, to achieve a more progressive Arctic political stance, debates and deliberations on Arctic policy need to be increasingly participatory and inclusive at the earliest stages of policymaking in order to counter polarisation and avoid jeopardising the green transition by exacerbating transition conflicts. To mitigate the latter, it must be clear that the Arctic cannot become a sacrifice zone. Only if the green transition is experienced as a transformation to which the whole of society, including relevant non-Arctic actors, contributes, will there be sufficient justification and acceptance for the necessary changes and extraction in the Arctic.

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SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL: APPENDIX

A Questionnaire for the Qualitative Interviews

Russia's War and Consequences for the Arctic: Changing Priorities of States in the Arctic

Thank you for sharing your expertise and perspective. We have prepared some open and scaled (quantitative) questions on states' priorities in the Arctic before and after Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The interview is part of a research project funded by the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung. Director of the study is Dr. Jakob Schwörer. We will treat your responses anonymously and will not mention the names of the respondents in our study or in the supplementary material.

Please only answer questions about which you think you have knowledge. For example, we'll ask you about the agendas of individual countries, but feel free to skip it if it's not within your area of expertise. We would rather you answer a few questions than not take part in the survey at all.

The whole interview will take approximately 60 minutes if you respond to all questions (although this will depend on how much you want to go into each question). If the interview is taking too long and your time is limited, please let us know during the interview.

By taking part in the interview, you are giving your consent for us to use your anonymized responses and to record the interview for the purposes of the study. We assure you that no one will gain access to the audio file, and we will delete the audio file after the transcription is completed.

Open questions

1. Which countries do you think are the most important actors in the Arctic?
2. Have the individual countries changed their priorities in the Arctic after Russia's invasion? Please give your answer for each of the countries about which you have knowledge: USA; RU; CHINA; NW; IS; DK/Greenland; SW; FIN; GER; CAN; EU (**Information for interviewer: Ask for each single country!**)
3. What do you personally think are the most important issues facing the Arctic in 2023?
4. What are the most important security issues in the Arctic in 2023? Did Russia's invasion of Ukraine change the salience of specific security issues?
5. What are the most important economic issues in the Arctic in 2023 (e.g. exploitation of resources; infrastructure etc.)? Did Russia's invasion of Ukraine change the salience of specific economic issues?
6. What are the most important environmental issues (including scientific cooperation) in the Arctic in 2023? Did Russia's invasion of Ukraine change the salience of specific environmental issues?
7. What are the most important issues for local and Indigenous communities in the Arctic in 2023? Did Russia's invasion of Ukraine change the salience of specific issues?
8. What are the most important transformational conflicts (conflicts driven by climate change and increased human activity) in the Arctic in 2023? Did Russia's invasion of Ukraine change the salience of specific conflicts?

B Questionnaire for the Quantitative Interview

Thank you for sharing your expertise and perspective. We have prepared a quantitative survey on states' priorities in the Arctic before and after Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The survey is part of a research project from the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Nordic Countries (nordics.fes.de). Director of the study is Dr. Jakob Schwörer. We will treat your responses anonymously and will not mention the names of the respondents in our study or in the supplementary material.
Please only answer questions about which you think you have knowledge. We'll ask you about the priorities of individual countries, but feel free to skip questions that are not within your area of expertise. We would rather you answer a few questions for a few countries than not take part in the survey at all.
The entire survey will take between 15 and 25 minutes to complete, depending on how many questions you answer.
By taking part in the survey, you are giving your consent for us to use your (anonymised) responses for the purposes of the study.

Thank you very much for participating,
Jakob Schwörer and the FES Nordics Team

We ask you about the salience of specific issues for Arctic (and some non-Arctic) states before and after Russia's invasion of Ukraine. If you have no knowledge about the country's priorities, skip the question. If you do not wish to answer a single question, leave the number blank (...).

USA / Russia / China / Norway / Iceland / Denmark (not including Greenland) / Greenland / Sweden / Finland / Germany / Canada / European Union

On a scale of 0 (not important) to 5 (very important), how important are the following issues in 2020, 2023 and in five years for [country]?

- Economic issues, exploitation of resources and access to shipping routes
- *Fair* access to and *fair* distribution of resources and technology in the Arctic
- Action against global warming and environmental pollution in the Arctic
- Security and defence issues in the Arctic
- Interests and participation of Indigenous peoples and local communities
- Multinational governance in the Arctic

Which institutions are appropriate to address the mentioned challenges (resources and economy, climate change and the environment, security and defence, and issues affecting local communities)?

Please enter your answer in the text box below.

C List of Anonymized Respondents (Qualitative Interview)

Number	Information on respondent
R1	Works for the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC) in Canada
R2	Formerly worked for the Swedish Sámi Parliament
R3	Researcher/affiliate at a non-partisan political think tank in Oslo
R4	Researcher/affiliate at a university in Iceland
R5	Researcher/affiliate at the Fridtjof Nansen Institute
R6	Researcher/affiliate at the Arctic Economic Council
R7	Local politician from northern Sweden
R8	Researcher/affiliate at the Alfred Wegener Institute
R9	Researcher/affiliate at a non-partisan think tank in Germany
R10	Researcher/affiliate at a university in the United Kingdom
R11	Researcher/affiliate at a university in Denmark
R12	Researcher/affiliate at the Fridtjof Nansen Institute
R13	Researcher/affiliate at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy
R14	Researcher/affiliate at a university in Iceland
R15	Local politician from northern Sweden
R16	Researcher/affiliate in the North American Arctic Defence and Security Network
R17	Researcher/affiliate with the government of Iceland
R18	Politician from Iceland
R19	Local politician from northern Norway
R20	Researcher/affiliate at the University of Lapland
R21	Researcher/affiliate at a university in Iceland
R22	Researcher/affiliate at a university in Norway
R23	Senior government official from an Arctic state

D Further Explanations on Reliability of Expert Interviews and Survey

For 127 of the 216 expert interview questions, the standard deviation is less than 1, indicating a very high degree of consensus among the experts. Some 81 cases fall between 1 and 1.5, indicating a moderate degree of disagreement and still a sufficient degree of consensus. Only eight cases have a higher standard deviation than 1.5, indicating a lack of consensus among the experts. Interestingly, this applies only to questions about the United States, China and Russia, and only to the issue of fair access to resources (except for one question about the importance of multinational governance for China in five years). We therefore avoided the fair access category in our analysis and only mention it in Figure 7.[18]

E Further Explanations on Tweet Analysis and Reliability

Unfortunately, Twitter/X's Advanced Search tool does not provide information about the total number of tweets published in a given time period. It could be argued that the level of activity of individual profiles (for example, profiles that are more active before/during the war) could influence the number of tweets about the Arctic.[19] Therefore, we compared the number of published tweets in three randomly selected intervals before Russia's full-scale war against three periods (matching in months and days) during the invasion. Our analysis revealed no discernible pattern indicating that foreign ministries were considerably more active on Twitter in one of these periods, as detailed in Table F provided in the supplementary materials. In 13 cases the profiles published more in the pre-invasion period, in 17 cases in the invasion period, and in three cases the numbers were almost equal. The only exception is the United States, which published more tweets before Russia's full-scale war.

The unit of measurement was the individual tweet. Tweets can be coded according to several categories. To test the reliability of our measure, we instructed a second coder, who was not previously involved in the project. This coder was tasked with coding a randomly selected sample of statements from each category, all drawn from tweets about the Arctic. The coder analysed an equal number of tweets that had been previously assigned a specific category (such as 'Environment'), as well as tweets that had been categorized under different codes (for example, 'Security'). We calculated Cohen's Kappa for each category. That the reliability score turned out to be quite high is not too surprising, given the fact that the different political dimensions are quite easy to detect in the tweets.

18 USA: Fair access resources (in five years): 1.85; China: Fair access resources (in five years: 1.81; Russia: Fair access resources (in five years): 1.77; China: Fair access resources (2023): 1.75; China: Fair access resources (2020): 1.62; Russia: Fair access resources (2023): 1.57; USA: Fair access resources (2023): 1.56; China: Multinational Governance (in five years): 1.52.

19 One might wonder whether Elon Musk's acquisition of Twitter might have had an impact on the activity of the profiles analysed for this study. For example, the shifts between the two time periods could simply be due to the reduced activity by state actors on the platform. However, in addition to our comparative test of the number of tweets in randomly selected time periods, there are further reasons to believe that this is not the main explanation for our findings. There is currently (beginning of 2024) little evidence that Twitter/X is becoming less relevant to users and observers. In terms of new downloads, Twitter installs have never declined and have been increasing since February 2023. In fact, analysts argue that 'Twitter has benefited from increased attention' and that there are no signs of the platform's decline, at least in the periods of analysis (Perez 2023).

F *Number of Tweets Published Before and During the Invasion*
(Randomly Selected Periods)

Actor	2021 Feb. 1–24	2023 Feb. 1–24	2020 July 1–24	2022 July 1–24	2021 Oct. 1–24	2023 Oct. 1–24
@mfa_russia	150	195	222	171	181	238
@StateDept	175	138	210	162	204	94
@Ulkominister io	122	173	65	93	140	134
@NorwayMFA	68	52	22	11	30	33
@CanadaFP	69	68	26	60	15	77
@DanishMFA	97	59	34	19	45	57
@eu_eeas	85	104	54	58	93	73
@MFAIceland	12	1	3	15	4	3
@SweMFA	10	47	16	25	23	35
@GermanyDiplo	75	83	109	32	28	64
@MFA_China	57	76	91	92	57	61

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