

DISINFORMATION

IN THE TRANSATLANTIC ARCTIC

Indigenous partnership
and national readiness
in Canada and Sweden

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Executive summary

Canada and Sweden will need to shore up their approaches to information security in the Arctic. Tackling hybrid warfare, of which information warfare is an integral part, is a whole-of-society and whole-of-governments – plural intended – effort. That entails knowledge of regional specifics and how to mobilize at local, regional, national and international levels. They and their populations can learn from one another.

The Arctic is a distinct information setting in the digital age. Populations are often small, rural and dispersed, governed under distinct institutions, characterized by tight-knit communities often speaking minority languages, and are frequently marginalized in access to media platforms, political influence and socio-economic opportunity. They occupy what Danish and Greenlandic researchers call “micro media systems”. One of their defining characteristics is a large percentage of Indigenous population. In Canada, they are the Inuit, First Nations and Métis. In Sweden, they are the Sámi people. While they differ in their languages, history and politics, face different economic and infrastructure challenges and relate to the environment in distinct ways, the threats of foreign malign influence and of political interference are common ones.

The potential for greater inclusion in formulating and operationalizing national security policy is clear. Canada has stated that Indigenous collaboration is a part of its concepts and strategies for defence and security. At the same time, Indigenous governments and organizations are asserting their desired role in being a part of Canada’s defence and security. Indigenous peoples through their governance institutions are part of the constitutional order in Canada, and federal agencies charged with defence and security are reaching out to include Indigenous Canadians in operations, policy development and, in some cases, decision-making. Canada’s northern-based, predominantly Indigenous Rangers, for example, are a critical component of the Canadian Armed Forces. However,

integrating Indigenous knowledge and decision-making into national security policy and operations like combating disinformation is only in its early phases. Moreover, Canadian civilian-readiness strategy and design at a national level has atrophied since the end of the Cold War.

On the other side of the Atlantic, Sweden exemplifies an urgent and articulated understanding of civilian preparedness for times of crisis and war, and is putting in place the governance needed to implement its concepts of total defence and psychological defence. Specific agencies have mandates to carry out tasks to support civilian readiness goals, with the information space recognized as an integral component of antagonistic threats. It is implementing these concepts quickly through large infusions of investment. However, the role the Sámi, Europe's only Indigenous people, could play in strengthening these initiatives has been largely overlooked, both conceptually and in practice, and Sámi inclusion has been minimal to virtually nonexistent.

The Canada-Sweden examples, therefore, identify potential starting points to productive pathways for building security in the Arctic through fostering civilian readiness and resilience of northern populations through activating the unique attributes of Indigenous and northern governance, society and knowledge in national security policy. These lessons and directions will have application to other Arctic countries and will be important for non-regional countries in NATO and elsewhere so that they better understand how to engage their Arctic allies better on issues related to the region.

In an era of hostile state activities carried out below the threshold of open, conventional warfare – what many analysts are calling “hybrid” or “grey-zone” warfare – the detection of activities, such as disinformation, cyber intrusions, sabotage and espionage, getting the multiple levels of government and all sectors of society working together is essential. Knowledge and information sharing among all of them decides the effectiveness of national security and defence. Even more importantly, crafting responses to hostile threats and

In an era of hostile state activities carried out below the threshold of open, conventional warfare, the detection of activities, such as disinformation (...), is essential.

actions demands involvement and input from all those affected, locally, regionally, nationally and internationally. Such efforts underpin the resilience of communities and critical infrastructure. That demands policy development and implementation that cannot reside at the national level alone. Other levels of government and elements of society need to be involved.

When it comes to one aspect of contemporary security – ensuring information integrity – the whole-of-society, all-levels-of-government effort is of equal importance. Identifying and countering disinformation protects the reliability of information flows – digital, governmental and societal – and the accuracy and fidelity of the content they carry. In the Arctic, these factors are even more acute, given that societies are hyper-remote, often marginalized and in ecologically sensitive regions. In that case, Indigenous peoples and their representative bodies, their northern fellow citizens, and their governments, cannot be overlooked in building effective security.

Arctic Indigenous peoples are active in the full spectrum of contemporary security interests, from health and infrastructure to data access and sovereignty, to emergency preparedness, defence and security. In Canada, for example, Indigenous, territorial and municipal governments in the north have been leaders in identifying the threats and framing responses to a harsher geopolitical climate. Achieving the national defence and security outcomes that Canada and Sweden aspire to in the Arctic will be advanced by enhancing mechanisms for interaction among levels of government through Indigenous partnership.

Expert and academic literature shows how Russia and China have made influence operations, that target digital and media systems and that contain false and purposely misleading information, a core part of their approach to the pursuit of their regimes' goals abroad. Russian sources describe it as “information confrontation”; China's Communist Party sees it as a component of the “confrontation of systems” on the international stage. Moreover, the Arctic is a central part of Russia's geopolitics, and China is directing more attention and resources to building an Arctic dimension to its geopolitics. Both want to portray themselves as exemplary Arctic actors – and Arctic countries as less so. And the dissonance of the US under the second Trump administration, concentrated in its language about annexing Greenland, has added complexity to the region. The intensity of their influence campaigns is likely to only grow in the Arctic. Canada and Sweden have not been exempt.

Indigenous and northern communities in Canada's and Sweden's north have detailed knowledge of the prevalent problem of *misinformation*, which is affecting their lives in palpable ways, like scams, racism and falsehoods. Identifying where this is *disinformation*, however, is a greater challenge. National governments, academic institutions and civil society institutions have knowledge and networks that could be fused with Indigenous and northern knowledge to deal with the threat of disinformation in Arctic conditions. Further whole-of-society work is thus required to determine the scope and character of disinformation in the Canadian and Swedish Arctics and to detect instances of it. In-depth and highly localized work, co-developed with Indigenous and northern governments, will be necessary to build informational resilience. 🍁

1. Introduction: Information Integrity in the Arctic

Alexander Dalziel and Henrik Haggström

How societies prepare for conflict and how they act in cases of crisis is a central policy question in a world facing intensified geopolitical competition, climate change and technological disruption. Reliable information flows are central in formulating good policy, operating effectively and responding to emergencies. Thus, information warfare presents a particular threat to the whole of society. And from a transatlantic perspective, given the shared values of Canada and Europe, it is an all-in effort for societies on both side of the Atlantic to prepare and respond, drawing on their unique experiences and comparative advantages. In the Arctic, that means those who live in the region have a particularly important role in shaping security. Among them are significant populations of Indigenous peoples and their governments and institutions, whose contributions will determine the success of security policy there.

To build information security in Arctic settings, this paper looks at the disinformation threat to the Canadian and Swedish Arctics, their points of vulnerability and sources of resilience. Through examining recent literature and looking at the views of northern inhabitants, this work explores concepts for meeting the particular conditions for dealing with hybrid threats in the north, of which disinformation is one element. That involves looking at northern and northern Indigenous governance, sub-national strategic thinking and frameworks for management of civil preparedness, such as Sweden's concept of "total defence."

The following chapters propose potentially useful avenues for practical policy-making built on multi-directional exchanges of knowledge and recommendations, to co-develop policies for northern, national and transatlantic resilience. It aims to contribute to the basis for future local, national and international discussions to strengthen the knowledge base and policy framework to address this complex, multifaceted issue. The operative assumption in the chapters that follow is that northerners have an essential role in developing a more complete understanding of Arctic information spaces, a process that can be advanced through collaboration with academic and civil society institutions in other parts of the countries they share.

Methodology and scope of results

The paper is based on a review of recent literature, policy statements and a set of engagements with Indigenous and northern inhabitants of Canada's north and Swedish Sápmi. The contexts in northern Canada and northern Sweden differ considerably, not least in the nature of Indigenous governance, institutions and geography, human and physical. That has led the authors of each chapter to adopt different approaches in engaging with their respective regions' inhabitants. While a common survey was developed for both regions, it garnered more responses in Swedish Sápmi, and that chapter concentrates in its results exclusively on Sámi perspectives. In the Canadian north, an approach based on online and telephone interviews and gathering views at conferences and in-person, either through listening to panels or sideline discussions, proved more effective. The interlocutors include representatives of Inuit and First Nations governments and institutions and businesses, as well as northerners from regional governments and academia who are Canadian citizens that do not hold Indigenous rights holders.

The findings and recommendations in the paper are **preliminary** due to the small sample sizes. They are best seen as an early step in advancing the conversation about information integrity, civilian readiness and security in the north, bringing together the knowledge sets of institutions outside of the region and that of the inhabitants of these parts of the Arctic, including different sets of Indigenous knowledge. The authors see them as points to launch subsequent conversations about future information-integrity oriented research and policy co-development.

The paper first presents a snapshot of how geopolitics are shaping information security and moves that discussion to the Arctic in general and the northernmost regions of Canada and Sweden in particular. It then has chapters, first about the Canadian north and then of Swedish Sápmi, containing literature reviews and the findings of the interlocutor outreach. A concluding chapter looks at some of the high-level themes and recommendations for next steps.

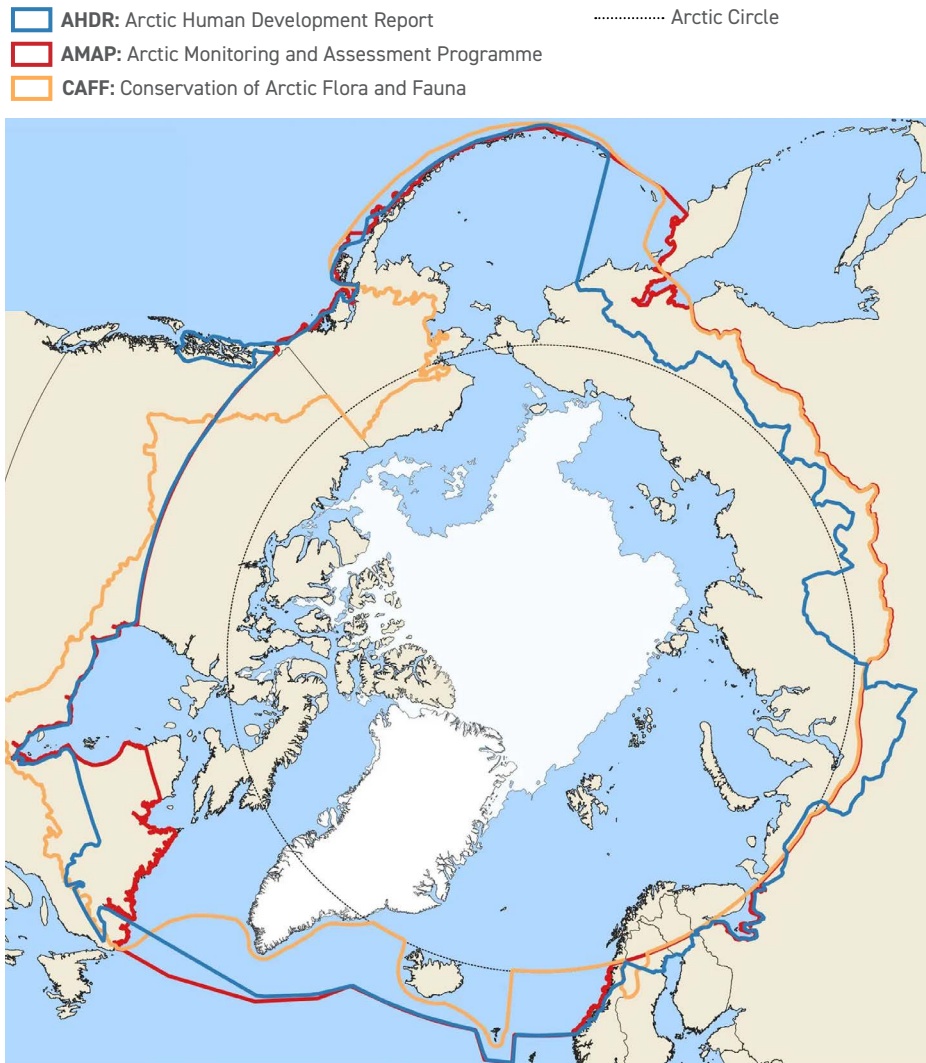
Key definitions and concepts

To start, it is worth saying a few words to specify and define some of the terminology the contributors use in this paper. **Disinformation** intentionally deceives and covertly advances the objectives of a state, entity - such as a corporation or a non-governmental organization - or an individual at the expense of another state, entity or individual, generally with the aim to cause the recipient audience harm or to disadvantage them in some way. **Misinformation** is unintentionally incorrect or misleading information disseminated in error or ignorance. Both of these may contain elements of truth and sometimes may even be mostly true. **Malinformation** is a type of misleading but veracious information that, while strictly speaking true, is spread with ill intentions or shorn of context. **Information integrity** consists of the defences, remediations and counters against these phenomena, with the onus on reliable, veracious, and sincere information and secure systems and platforms to transmit and retain it (Rutherford 2023).

Disinformation often forms a component of **hybrid warfare**. The European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats (Hybrid CoE) identifies key components of hybrid threats as operations with “malign intent,” that use a variety of means to target an individual or institution. Influence operations and interference in a foreign state are part of a spectrum that extends to sabotage and economic coercion (Hybrid CoE 2025).

Another useful concept that gives a broader definition of informational threats is that of **FIMI**, or foreign interference and manipulation of information. The European Commission’s External Action Service defines FIMI as “a mostly non-illegal pattern of behaviour that threatens or has the potential to negatively impact values, procedures and political processes. Such activity is manipulative in character and is conducted in an intentional and coordinated manner, by

MAP 1 – Differing definitions: perspective of Arctic Council working groups



Map: Arto Vitikka, Arctic Centre, University of Lapland;
Border data: Runfola, D. et al. (2020).

state or non-state actors, including their proxies inside and outside of their own territory” (European External Action Service 2025).

FIMI is a more expansive concept than disinformation alone and draws attention to the strategic and coordinated functions and objectives of various informational items and platforms. Disinformation is a more specific term, speaking to a false epistemic item or set of items that seeks to persuade on

false grounds. As the paper will show, one of the main challenges of sorting actual disinformation from misinformation is the challenge of attribution and of identifying mechanisms that indicate malign foreign-state intent behind fallacious claims. In practice, the two have similar minimal effects of disorienting a society or institution and making agreement on basic items of discussion more difficult.

The Arctic itself can be defined in numerous ways: in terms of flora, fauna, human population, temperatures, seasonal light variations, and so on (see Map 1 for Arctic Council geographies). In this paper, the Arctic will encompass Indigenous and national political geography. In the Canadian case, that means the three territories, Inuit Nunangat (see Map 4) and the Indigenous governments across them. In Sweden, this covers Sápmi's territories located in Sweden (see Map 5) and the Swedish district of Norrbotten. Geopolitically, however, the entirety of Canada and Sweden are Arctic countries, in that the strategies and resources of the entire countries have a bearing on their positions in the Arctic vis-à-vis interstate competition.

Micro-media systems

The paper also makes use of key insights about the Arctic's "micro media systems." This concept has been articulated in the work of Signe Ravn-Højgaard (2024). Using her insights about Greenland in other parts of the Arctic has been fruitful and delivers an immediate conclusion: more detailed and localized studies in Sápmi and northern Canada will need to be developed to understand the varying conditions in which information moves in those areas.

The setting of very small societies is the setting for Ravn-Højgaard's work. She points to "closely knit communities with highly personalized relationships" having a "special ecology" that distinguishes micro-media systems from those of larger societies and countries. Moreover, she points to differences in physical geography, levels of infrastructure development, minority languages, ethnic diversity and history, specifically in relation to colonialism, as elements in shaping dynamics of media supply and consumer demand in micro societies and states. "Greenland", she observes, "because of scattered settlements, large distances and mountainous topography" has proven a costlier place to develop media institutions than in Iceland and the Faroe Islands, which share similar

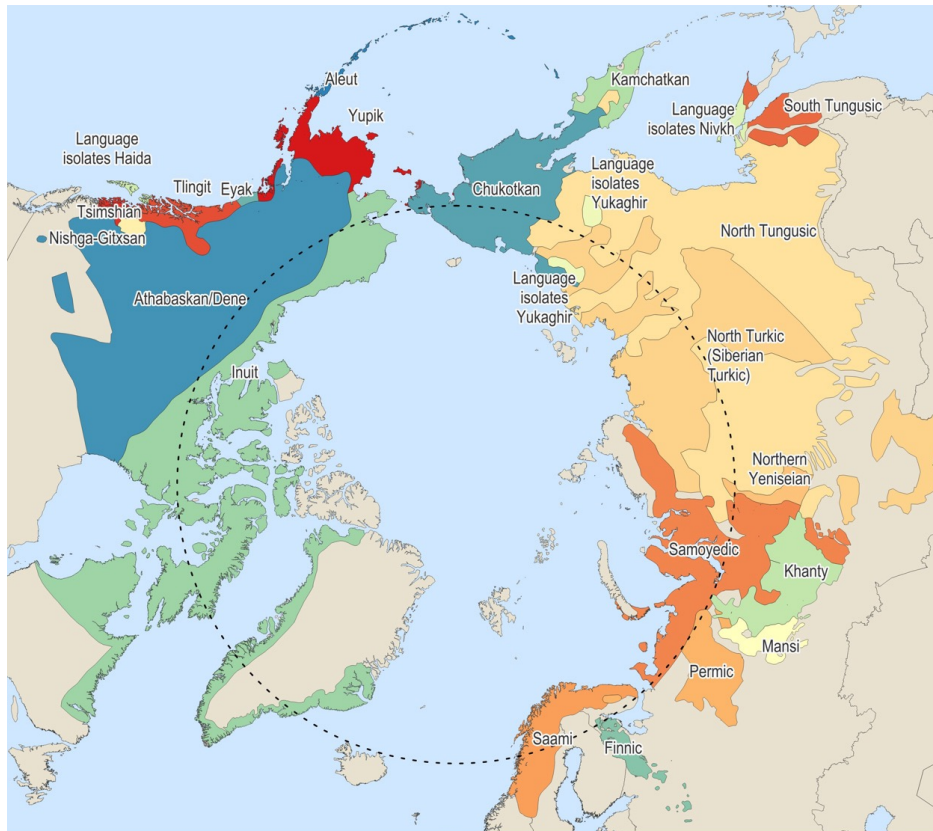
backstories of Danish colonial history. While variations in these factors will alter the characteristics of any given micro-media system, Ravn-Højgaard contends that these micro systems will have similarities (Ravn-Højgaard 2024).

The similarities among small northern and Indigenous polities and societies that affect information production, availability and consumption are distinct social and economic factors that intensify in significance the smaller the community becomes. As identified by Ravn-Højgaard, “high social integration” and “overlapping role-relationships” among journalists and their fellow citizens in small societies are two factors which affect and condition media. These factors make it socially costlier for journalists to take stands that may alienate them from other community members, members who may not only be, for example, your neighbour but also your daughter’s hockey coach. Moreover, such social proximity means that “mistakes and inaccuracies can have large personal consequences.” In addition, small polities and communities also are likely to face a “lack of resources and diseconomies of scale” in funding journalists to specialize and having the requisite knowledge to pursue investigative reporting. Social media further complicates the situation in small media spaces: by promoting “citizen-to-citizen” and two-way government-citizen communication, it can further erode investigative capacity and room for critical journalism (Ravn-Højgaard 2024).

In this paper, micro-media settings are particularly relevant to understand the impacts of geopolitical competition and FIMI. The populations in question are dispersed, have histories of traumas inflicted by colonialism, often speak minority languages (see Map 2), face challenging geographic conditions on land, sea and ice, and often experience economic and social inequalities that constrain access to reliable media. By looking at northern Canada and northern Sweden, the concept of micro-media settings will provide a fruitful comparison of the two regions from an informational perspective.

One general commonality will be the nature of the threats faced in the region, even if they differ in design and intensity. The next chapter will therefore look at the geopolitics of informational strategies of Russia, China and the USA and how they affect the Canadian and Swedish Arctics, based on a sampling of recent literature.

MAP 2 – Indigenous languages: scope and diversity in the Arctic



ARCTIC LANGUAGE BRANCHES

■ Aleut	■ Language isolates Haida	■ Permic
■ Athabaskan/Dene	■ Language isolates Nivkh	■ Saami
■ Chukotkan	■ Language isolates Yukaghir	■ Samoyedic
■ Eyak	■ Mansi	■ South Tungusic
■ Finnic	■ Nishga-Gitxsan	■ Tlingit
■ Inuit	■ North Tungusic	■ Tsimshian
■ Kamchatkan	■ North Turkic (Siberian Turkic)	■ Yupik
■ Khanty	■ Northern Yeniseian	

Map: Arto Vitikka / Arctic Centre, University of Lapland; Data source: Arctic Indigenous languages and revitalization: an online educational resource. 2023.

Sweden's total defence concept and information resilience

Finally, the paper aims to contribute to discussion in Canada, Sweden, their democratic Arctic neighbours and peoples, NATO allies and other international partners on defence readiness and civilian security. To that end, it looks at information security as a part of the Swedish concept of “total defence” (*totalförsvaret*) and considers how it might apply to regions with significant Indigenous and rural populations, such as the northern parts of Canada and Sweden.

Total defence, broadly speaking, looks at the relationship between the military (*militärt försvar* - military defence), on one side, and the rest of government and society (*civilt försvar* - civil defence), on the other, in generating security. Deterrence is central to the concept, built around the idea that civilian readiness to support the military and government in hybrid and conventional war scenarios tilts a potential aggressor's calculations towards other, non-violent means of dispute resolution. Should deterrence fail, civilian mobilization and the continuity of “vital societal functions” (*viktiga samhällsfunktioner*) aid the military in defending the country and protect the civilian population (Försvarmakten and MSB 2025). In 2024 budget announcements, Sweden radically boosted funding for these functions, growing them by 2028 to seven times their 2022 levels (Government Offices of Sweden 2024a and b and 2025).

Information integrity and security are central to the total defence concept, expressed in the concepts of “psychological defence” (*psykologiskt försvar*) and its key objective, maintaining and enabling the “will to defend” (*försvarsvilja*) Sweden. Disinformation and the disruption of decision-making will be part of most scenarios Sweden may face (Försvarmakten and MSB 2025). Three components underpin psychological defence. First, building societal resilience to maintain the will to defend the country; second, maintaining timely, reliable information flow during a crisis; and third, detecting and responding to malign influence campaigns (Government Offices of Sweden 2024 a and b). Advancing these agendas are civilian agencies, the Swedish Civil Defence and Resilience Agency (known by its Swedish acronym, MCF), which until 1 January 2026, was known as the Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB); and the Psychological Defence Agency (MPF) created in 2022 (Swedish Civil Defence

and Resilience Agency 2025). How Sweden's Arctic territory and its Sámi Indigenous population fit into the total and psychological defence concepts has not been a focus of Sweden's public strategic documents.

To some extent, Canada is the inverse of Sweden, having a more developed and evolving national discussion about Indigenous involvement in national defence and security, but having paid little public attention to civilian readiness against hostile human threats (beyond the cyber domain). Inuit, First Nations, and

The Canadian Rangers, a mostly Indigenous reserve force of the Canadian Army, are a notable institution enabling the operations and situational awareness of the Canadian Armed Forces in northern regions.

Métis figure frequently in government strategies on defence and security. The Department of National Defence (2024), the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (2025) and the Canadian Centre for Cyber Security (2025) integrate collaboration with Indigenous Canadians as part of achieving their mandates. The Canadian Rangers, a mostly Indigenous reserve force of the Canadian Army, are a notable institution enabling the operations and situational awareness of the Canadian Armed Forces in northern regions and connecting Indigenous populations to a federal

institution. In addition, as we will see later, Canadian Indigenous governments and representative groups have also been active, headlining their interests and contributions to any successful national defence and security strategy for the country's north (also see Dalziel 2025d).

Where Canada lags Sweden is on integrative concepts analogous to total defence and the agencies to advance them. Canada has no equivalents to Sweden's civil and psychological defence agencies. Most of the related functions, typically focused on natural disaster and non-conflict emergencies (such as pandemics), are spread among federal, provincial, territorial and municipal governments. Public Safety Canada holds many of the related responsibilities at the federal level. No great attention has been paid to preparing civilians for national security or armed conflict, although detecting and exposing malign foreign influence has been a priority area. For example, the 2024 *Federal-Provincial-*

Territorial Emergency Management Strategy makes no reference to conflict situations, national security threats or war (Public Safety Canada 2024b), while documents on national risks (Public Safety Canada 2024a) and on protecting critical infrastructure (Public Safety Canada 2022 and 2023) have negligible content on these topics, at best pointing to the need for more work on “human-induced hazards”, citing terrorism and cyber threats (and not interstate war or sabotage). For its part, the Canadian Armed Forces play a crucial role in dealing with forest fires, floods and other non-conflict emergencies, for example through Operation Lentus, its ongoing disaster relief operation (National Defence 2025).

Progress on raising public awareness and readiness to deal with the current geopolitical situation has been made in some legal and institutional cases. Canada has strengthened its laws to deal with the components of hybrid warfare in Bill C-70, which became law in 2024. There, sabotage of “essential infrastructure” and engaging in “surreptitious or deceptive conduct” to influence Canadian politics, became criminal offences (Canada 2024). Institutionally, adjustments such as moving the Canadian Coast Guard to report to the Minister of Defence in September 2025 (formerly it was part of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans), reflects a shift to combine civilian (the CCG remains a civilian “Special Operating Agency”) and military capabilities in the maritime domain, with much of the motive being to enhance Canadian capabilities in the Arctic. Moreover, the extensive work of the Public Inquiry into Foreign Interference has resulted in an advanced understanding of the pervasiveness of hostile foreign influence in Canada, although remedying the situation presents a large set of challenging policy obstacles, such as using intelligence in criminal prosecutions (Public Inquiry into Foreign Interference 2025).

Canada and Sweden therefore have comparative advantages: Sweden in the strategy and implementation of civilian readiness and Canada in seeking to involve Indigenous populations and institutions in national defence and security. Detecting foreign information manipulation and interference calls for the fusion of national and local level capacities, knowledge and awareness. That requires understanding information settings, including rural and micro contexts, in the Arctic. The next chapter examines the current international context of informational hybrid warfare, and the following two chapters analyze these dynamics in the Arctics of Canada and Sweden. ❖

2. Global Information Warfare and the Canadian and Swedish Arctics

Alexander Dalziel

The current global context is rife with information warfare. The contest for the information space is intense, fought by democracies and authoritarian states. The most aggressive actors seek to maximize space for their narratives, positions and arguments and deny it to those who would counter their arguments.

Two of the main global disinformation operators are Russia and China. The case is no different in the Arctic. In fact, it may be more so, as the interests of other notorious information manipulators, such as North Korea and Iran, are not focused on the region. In particular, mounting geopolitical tensions in recent years between the United States and the People’s Republic of China and Russia’s war in Ukraine have increased a wide range of hybrid warfare activities against the US, Canada, Sweden, Ukraine and their allies and partners. The prevalence of hybrid warfare, strategic signalling, espionage and economic competition will all weigh on the north’s ability to protect its information and domestic decision-making. The picture has been further complicated by the US presidential administration’s pressure strategies on its allies, with the Arctic and Greenland recurrent themes. The fact that the United States and Russia both possess Arctic territory and that China sees itself as a “near-Arctic” polar power accentuates the relevance of the region as a theatre for information manipulation with strategic intent.

Russia: information confrontation

Recent scholarship and analysis is revealing more about Russian disinformation. This section will look at three themes emerging from that literature. These are 1) the centrality of “information confrontation” to Russian strategy; 2) Russia’s highly integrated approach to melding government and non-government assets to employ it in a hybrid warfare strategy; and 3) Russia’s aims to erode social cohesion and aggravate social and political divisions in countries that it sees as pursuing policies contrary to the Putin regime’s goals and interests. In a final section, the paper will look at where these intersect with Canada and Sweden in the Arctic. It shows a sophisticated operative strategic campaign that involves Canada’s and Sweden’s Arctics.

Russia is waging an extensive hybrid warfare campaign against the United States, Canada, Sweden and Europe. With regional variations in techniques and tempo, that campaign remains below the threshold of open, conventional hostilities, in effect making it harder to determine if it is peacetime or wartime (Edwards and Seidenstein 2025), presenting an immediate conundrum to decision-makers. In part through exploiting weaknesses in cyber security and cleaving social cohesion, Russia is “blurring the boundaries between peace and war to achieve political objectives below the threshold of conventional conflict” (Voo and Singh 2025). It views the information front of this campaign as a constant, reciprocal contest with the US and its allies where it must deny its adversaries “information superiority” on strategic matters (Grisé et al. 2022; also, Eggen 2025). The International Institute for Strategic Studies assesses that Russia is using a package “psychological warfare” against Europe (Voo and Singh 2025), while others describe how Russia’s information confrontation with Europe and NATO has gained intensity since 2022 (Kleczkowska et al. 2025). Analysts ascribe this intensification to Russia’s assessment that it is caught in a “great power rivalry” and is accordingly targeting “unfriendly” states (Myklebost, Bones and Nilsen 2025). As we will see, information is an integral part of “psychological warfare”.

Russia’s disinformation campaigns have strategic intent. Authors point to the “direct strategic gain” Russia believes it can acquire through hybrid warfare (Edwards and Seidenstein 2025). Recent studies frame this as “information confrontation.” According to one study, Russia sees information confrontation

as “a central feature of modern conflict” and a key part of grand strategy, aiming to “achieve political objectives without using military force” through destabilizing and influencing adversaries (Eggen 2025). It is “integral” to Russia’s struggle against Europe and NATO (Edwards and Seidenstein 2025), an element in an “integrated multi-domain strategy” melding cyber and technological tools with sabotage and informational content within “a unified strategic framework” (Voo and Singh 2025).

Integrated assets and operations characterize Russia’s deployment of disinformation. As hybrid operations have increased in frequency, they have also become “more professional, unified, and tightly controlled by the Kremlin” (Kleczkowska et al. 2025). Recent studies emphasize the high level of synchronization that Russia employs in multi-faceted hybrid campaigns in areas of strategic interest. Eggen (2025) describes the integrated, institutionalized structure of information confrontation, extending across civilian government, intelligence agencies, the military, media and the education system. Integrated information operations are complemented by tailored tools and narratives, including right-wing messaging, fake websites, videos. Recent studies concur that Russia does not distinguish cyber as a different realm of activity from that of disinformation, blending “cyber technical and psychological influence effects” in its concept of “information confrontation” (Eggen 2025) in what is “one of the world’s most advanced offensive cyber ecosystems” (Kleczkowska et al. 2025), more than “simply a toolkit of technical and psychological measures” (Voo and Singh 2025; see also Edwards and Seidenstein 2025). That ecosystem is resulting in an “adaptive and evolving capability” that is growing in flexibility, “scale and complexity” (Voo and Singh 2025).

Among the innovations are the use of cybercriminals, outsourcing campaigns to private public-relations (PR) firms and IT companies, deploying disinformative media such as deepfakes, and using cutting-edge tools such as generative AI. Non-state actors are becoming the “backbone” of Russian information confrontation, such as recruiting youth to conduct sabotage operations against critical infrastructure, which makes attribution back to Russia more difficult (Kleczkowska et al. 2025; Voo and Singh 2025). Social media is outpacing traditional media outlets in terms of importance to these operations. Frequent targets include digital supply chains and critical infrastructure, with ransomware becoming a favoured tool (Edwards and Seidenstein 2025).

Exploiting pre-existing social and political divisions is a primary aim of Russia, in the name of weakening adversaries and protecting its own information space. “Western destabilisation”, through undermining democratic institutions and social cohesion, is an overarching goal; as Voo and Singh (2025) continue, “[b]y flooding the information space with competing truths, conspiracies and emotionally charged content, Russia seeks to paralyse democratic discourse, institutions and decision-making.” Others concur on the aim of disrupting decision-making: Kleczkowska and co-authors (2025) contend that Russia wants to “manipulate, influence and fragment foreign decision-making” and “to shape foreign legislative processes” to Russia’s advantage. Russia’s leaders also believe that non-military information confrontation campaigns can cause adversaries to give in or fall into line (Eggen 2024). Russia has high expectations of its information confrontation techniques – a confidence that some Chinese analysts now question, given Russia’s failures in Ukraine (Wang and Zakheim 2025).

The Arctic is arguably Russia’s second most important geopolitical priority after Ukraine. One can therefore anticipate that Russia’s information strategy for the region will have a similar priority and commensurate intensity. As Voo and Singh (2025) put it, information confrontation is “a multi-dimensional strategy aimed at reversing post-Soviet geopolitical losses and re-establishing itself as a central pole in a multipolar world.” The Arctic is to be a defining part of the Russian position. They continue that regime stability, national sovereignty and global influence are “core sub-objectives” of Russia’s informational campaigns (Voo and Singh 2025). Russia’s strategic narratives in the Arctic are centred around the claim that Russia is historically an Arctic nation, its Arctic is a distinct sovereign space where it has distinct Arctic sovereign rights, and that it behaves in an environmentally sustainable manner (Bouffard et al. 2024; Kaye 2025). Russia’s Arctic narratives attempt to confer legitimacy upon its actions among domestic and foreign audiences – a “grand legitimizing strategy,” according to Lackenbauer and his co-authors (2022).

Two examples illustrate Russia’s behavior. The Northern Sea Route plays a pivotal role in Russia’s Arctic strategy and associated geopolitics (Dalziel 2025e). It thus forms a key part of Russia’s shaping of the information space. As Bouffard and Lackenbauer (2025) argue, Russia wants dominance over the Arctic “and above all, the NSR.” They cite militarization, infrastructure

and natural resource exploitation as accompanying Russian strategic communications about the NSR, to affect a “strategic fait accompli” that grants Moscow “full, unchallenged control over the NSR” (Bouffard and Lackenbauer 2025). Many of Russia’s claims for control of the Arctic exclusive economic zone (EEZ) are not in line with the international law of the sea. Russia is therefore likely pursuing a legitimization strategy through smearing the international law credentials of its adversaries and the valorizing of its own supposed commitment to international law.

The other example comes from Norway’s archipelago of Svalbard. There, a multilayered, whole of society, state aligned information campaign with distinct disinformation and geopolitical elements is unfolding. Russia is pushing very hard to arrogate rights it claims it holds under the 1920 Svalbard Treaty – like the NSR, based on a suspect reading of international law to force Norway to fall into line through threatening actions and to minimize the likelihood of NATO’s presence on the (demilitarized) island chain (Myklebost, Bones and Nilsen 2025). Svalbard is a coveted bit of geography for Russia, because it sits on the edge of the Barents Sea, a crucial space for the defence of Russia’s Kola Peninsula and a crucial access point to the Atlantic Ocean for Russian exports, including oil and gas.

One facet of the information campaign there is reflected in the Russian Geographical Society. Russian President Vladimir Putin has declared that 2027 will be the “Year of Geography,” and will focus on the illegally occupied territories of Ukraine and on the Arctic (Staalesen 2025a). Putin uses revisionist history to spuriously advance Russian geopolitical claims through military aggression in Ukraine, is setting geography-centred narratives alongside history as a tool for Russian statecraft. Svalbard looks to be a theme of that effort, as it has given top cover for the opening of an office of the Russian Geographical Society in Barentsburg, the Russian mining hamlet there. Its manager has published revisionist histories falsely claiming the archipelago was once part of the Russian Empire (Staalesen 2025b; Myklebost, Bones and Nilsen 2025). The office is a way to create facts on the ground – ideologically and physically. The Russian Geographic Society is also to be the operator of a newly announced tourist island at the North Pole (Staalesen 2025c) – where presumably visitors will receive a Russia-centric interpretation of the region.

These are only two examples of Russian information confrontation in the Arctic. They provide templates for campaigns and operations around other strategic questions for Russia, such as the delineation of the extended continental shelf in the Arctic Ocean, suggesting how they might unfold in circumstances of low trust with the other Arctic countries. Informational readiness will thus be key. Myklebost, Bones and Nilsen (2025), in their description of the Russian posture on Svalbard, state what will be the challenge for all the other countries, especially smaller democracies like Canada's and Sweden's: "Russian Arctic militarization has been accompanied by an increasingly articulate position on Svalbard, including a growing number of hybrid threats applied to exert pressure on Norway". These "attempts to distress and provoke" (Myklebost, Bones and Nilsen 2025) are likely to be features, to a greater or lesser extent depending on the nature of the strategic questions at play, of Russia's disinformation activities in the Arctic.

China: the confrontation of systems

Another aspect of Russia's information confrontation strategy in the Arctic is to draw in China on its side. Russian media in recent years has been legitimizing China as an Arctic player (Dalziel 2025b), in what is perhaps an informational quid pro quo for China's legitimizing the narratives Russia propagates about its Ukraine war (Matura 2025).

This is a welcome development for China, as it has geopolitical objectives at the North Pole. Its growing Arctic interest has been expressed through a range of activities with Russia: growing use of the NSR as a shipping lane and coast guard exercises in the Bering Strait with Russia in 2024. It has also been pursuing its own set of suspected dual-use scientific research expeditions, which in the summer of 2025 reached the highest presence to date, of five vessels. China's interest in having a presence and influence in Canada's and Sweden's north is likely only to increase for the rest of the decade. The strategy, operations and objectives of the informational component of China's behaviour will have effects for the Arctic and its inhabitants.

Like Russia's, China's informational campaigns are centrally coordinated at the top levels of the Chinese Communist Party and the state (Teitelbaum 2025). They form a part of China's thinking about hybrid warfare as a part of the

“confrontation of systems,” each pitting their “comprehensive national strength” against one another, short of open conflict (Peterson 2023). From carefully watching Russia’s shortcomings in its war against Ukraine, Chinese analysts are developing a new hybrid warfare concept where non-military tools prepare the “battlespace,” granting the “cognitive domain” new importance (Wang and Zakheim 2025). To “maintain a firm grip on information flows,” China’s disinformation is a part of deceptive sharp power where China is developing its “discourse power” aggressively in an “information realm that has been fully securitized” in Chinese grand strategy, making it a core element of China’s toolkit abroad (Bouffard and Lanteigne 2025).

The “confrontation of systems” is primarily, in Beijing’s view, between China and the United States. China’s goals are undermining the image and processes of democracy, reducing foreign audiences’ trust in their media outlets and sources, and fracturing multinational structures like NATO and the EU (Matura 2025). The CCP believes US alliances are vulnerable and based on US manipulation, and therefore susceptible to Chinese influence and disinformation. To weaken them, China’s approach follows two approaches: first, emphasize China’s responsible behaviour on the international stage in its own strategic communications, while second, use disinformation to discredit the US among its allies as an irresponsible (Peterson 2023). Notably, Russia shares many of these goals, and there is evidence of formal and informal cooperation between it and China, where they amplify each other’s narratives and campaigns (Matura 2025).

China deploys sophisticated techniques in its informational operations. A recent study (Teitelbaum 2025) notes that its networks use “multiple relays” to generate and promote “false, conspiratorial, deliberately biased, or unverifiable content.” The networks consist of an array of actors, for instance state-affiliated news sites, social media platforms, state officials and diplomats, non-state actors and local media proxies. The networks are currently less sophisticated than Russia’s but are learning fast, demonstrating innovation, for instance, through increasing use of AI. Non-state actors and “informal channels”, including business networks, are also key elements, extending China’s authoritarian governance into other sovereign spaces (Huang 2025). The strong position of Chinese media platforms, digital and traditional, in global information flows is an important factor in advancing

and disseminating its informational campaigns, platforms over which the CCP and state exercise influence and control (Bouffard and Lanteigne 2025; Teitelbaum 2025).

Chinese military information operations manuals explicitly cite breaking an adversary's "political and ethnic cohesion" as a goal (Wang and Zakheim 2025). While mostly focused on diaspora and ethnic Chinese communities abroad, transnational repression is a core activity of Chinese state agencies abroad, where Chinese state and affiliated actors, among other and sometimes more aggressive actions, spread disinformation to discredit critics. Digital surveillance technologies enhance targeting and adaptability (Huang 2025), an inference infrastructure that China's United Front Work Department can also use to target other individuals and communities. More broadly, suppression of information the CCP deems prejudicial is also a part of transnational repression (European External Action Service 2025).

Currently, China seeks to overwhelm parts of the information space, opting for "quantity over quality," according to one report (Teitelbaum 2025). The report continues, however, that China presents a "real risk for the future", given its "significant financial and human resources" and "growing investments in traditional media." Further evidence of China's developing sophistication is in the concept of "deep bench diplomacy," articulated by Bouffard and Lanteigne (2025). The concept is applicable to the broad informational goals of China, which is likely to refine its foreign interference and manipulation campaigns in niche areas. The authors describe China's diplomacy as being built around "high-functioning, mission-specific delegations" with skilled and topic-trained personnel that have the necessary strategic attributes of expertise, linguistic skills, country and regional knowledge sets who are briefed up to compete against the specific composition of other delegations. It is a "form of modular diplomacy" featuring teams designed "to the terrain" (Bouffard and Lanteigne 2025). While diplomatic teams are not the same as disinformation operators, one should expect a comparable approach to China's information manipulation operations.

As mentioned, Chinese interference activities have as one of their goals the active weakening and polarization of social links and public trust and the disruption and influencing of domestic political decision-making in a target country, including around issues such as environmental stewardship

(Teitelbaum 2025; Matura 2025; Dalziel and Nikoula 2025). Information confrontation sits among a group of hybrid warfare activities that extend to espionage, cyber network exploitation and attacks, and disinformation aiming to “sway political and public discourse” (Bridgman et al. 2024). Fake content in social media like TikTok, according to Teitelbaum (2025), attempts “to simulate a spontaneous popular movement around false information.” Free expression and civil society in democratic countries are conceived of as vulnerabilities. Chinese disinformation is targeting more distant countries more frequently, concentrating on the peripheries of “great powers,” to promote its authoritarian development model and tarnish democratic systems, in part through exacerbating social and political divides, as well as to support its own specific policy goals and to hamper foreign decision-making (Teitelbaum 2025; Peterson 2023). The potential for the Arctic as one such target “periphery” is clear.

To turn to the Arctic, China’s goals are to legitimize its say in the region’s governance, have access to resources and shipping routes there, and to open a northern flank on North America to pressure the United States (Dalziel 2024; Dalziel and Nikoula 2025). In support of these, China has crafted a set of strategic narratives to portray itself as a responsible polar power pursuing “win-win” cooperation with Arctic and other states. The associated inverse messaging – in line with Russian preoccupations and increasingly piggybacking on Russian narratives – is that NATO’s agenda destabilizes the Arctic (Bouffard et al. 2024; Teitelbaum 2025). China has a tailored bilateral approach in its Arctic official and public diplomacy (Pezard et al. 2025). However, in line with Sørensen’s (2024) assessment of China adopting a “wait and see” approach in terms of reinvigorating its engagement in the North American and Nordic Arctics, China will seize opportunities to showcase itself in the Arctic when and where opportunities emerge.

Because China lacks key tools of Arctic hard power projection, most particularly icebreakers and submarines, and for the time being has largely been thwarted in its attempts to build on-the-ground influence through infrastructure and economic development in the Arctic democracies (Edstrøm et al. 2025), malign information campaigns are more probable. China also has downstream economic levers in key regional markets and supply chains such as minerals processing and fisheries (Dalziel 2025c) and undertakes dual-use

oceanic science as other available “hybrid” activities (Brewster 2025). Strategic signalling to the US (and Canada) in the North Pacific through coast guard cooperation and naval exercises with Russia in the North Pacific, are a good measure of the fact that China is communicating it sees the Arctic as a place where it has interests.

US: Arctic information dissonance

Analysts of China make a fundamental point: disinformation alone will not break US alliances, but it can disrupt them in consequential and serious ways (Wang and Zakheim 2025). In that light, the United States under the administration of President Donald Trump is complicating the information setting in the Arctic, particularly in relation to Greenland, with wider disruptive effects on North American and transatlantic security.

Recurring comments from the first and second Trump administrations and their officials about the US acquiring Greenland, through a purchase or even force (Salama et al 2019; Smith 2019; Holland et al 2026; Maher and Atwood 2026), in themselves contain disinformation, by misdiagnosing the character of Chinese and Russian threats and by attempting to discredit Denmark as a defence and security actor. It has become an open attempt to break off a part of the Kingdom of Denmark. These statements have included claims that Greenland is “surrounded” by Russian and Chinese vessels and that Denmark has only made limited investments in Greenland’s defence. And Russian disinformation actors have pounced on these statements, feeding in further disinformation to fuel a potential Denmark-US rupture (Dalziel and Nikoula 2025). Beyond its negative effects on trust in the transatlantic relationship, attempts in Beijing and Moscow to discredit the US as a reliable partner will only grow should the current line from the US administration about having “to have” Greenland continue.

Canada, Sweden and many of their NATO allies have openly expressed solidarity with Denmark and Greenland. While at the time of writing the outcome of US intentions and rhetoric was still unclear, the power of US media outlets and the limited reach of Greenlandic and Danish media have been indicators of the relative vulnerability of the region when it comes to expressing its views and having them heard in public fora internationally (Ravn-Højgaard 2024).

Canada, Sweden and the information manipulation threat in the Arctic

The above trends in Russian and Chinese behaviour contain a series of threats to Canada, Sweden and their Arctic territories, complicated in some cases by US activities in the information space. Intersecting with developments in their national defence and security policies, it is likely Canada and Sweden will attract more and more negative attention as targets for disinformation and malign narratives. Both these Arctic countries have faced Russian and Chinese chagrin for different actions, such as unearthing interference activities, decrying human rights abuses or supporting Ukraine.

Sweden, Canada and Russia

Because of the centrality of the Arctic to its geopolitical ambitions, Russia will likely be Canada and Sweden's main source of region-specific informational interference. In addition to their status as Arctic countries, Russia's hostility is rooted in their deep-set support for Ukraine, membership in NATO and growing defence expenditures in part dedicated to strengthening Arctic capability. And because the prominence of the Putin regime's Arctic plans – and the large government expenditures they entail – demand informational campaigns to justify them, Russia's quest for regime stability and national sovereignty will almost certainly have “spillover effects” (see Voo and Singh 2025) on the Canadian and Swedish Arctics, in order to tarnish their reputations in an attempt to improve the image of the Russian regime in the eyes of Russian citizens.

Geopolitically, Russia generally sees other Arctic countries like Canada and Sweden as US “pawns” and lacking independent decision-making, given a maximalist interpretation of sovereignty that circumscribes true independence of action to a handful of countries (Lackenbauer et al. 2022; Dalziel 2025b; Eggen 2024). Claims and institutions of Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination would have negligible standing in this worldview. Eggen (2024) has identified three goals of Russian information confrontation strategy relevant to this present case, where Russia seeks to intimidate neighbouring countries over defence postures, undermine cohesion across society, and reduce support for Ukraine. As tensions with the US increased in recent years, attention to other Arctic countries as individual actors diminished, and the coming months

will test whether the inverse is true: if Russia-US relations improve – a far from certain prospect – Russia’s focus on smaller Canada and Sweden will increase, to try to isolate them. The characterization of Canadian north as a military “bridgehead” against Russia will be a likely narrative, one that will almost certainly be applied to Sweden as well (Dalziel 2025b).

Russia has long singled out Sweden among the Nordic and European countries in its disinformation campaigns. These intensified as Russia tried to thwart Sweden’s accession to NATO, for instance by depicting Sweden as an “Islamophobic” country and promoting violence in Sweden. According to Eggen (2024), that campaign has “turned qualitatively more aggressive” since Sweden formally entered NATO. In addition to Sweden’s membership in NATO, Sweden’s expanding remit in the Barents Sea, expanding cooperation with Norway (in tandem with Finland) in northern Fenno-Scandia, and its ability to project power in the Baltic Sea, in part through its contribution to the Canada-led NATO forward presence in Latvia, will likely motivate Russia to make more attempts to delegitimize the country. The threat to information is physical as well as cognitive and psychological, as Sweden has suspected sabotage of over two dozen telecommunications towers (Edwards and Seidenstein 2025).

For some of the same reasons – support for Ukraine, a military presence in the Baltic and growing defence spending with a strong Arctic concentration – Canada is also likely to face more hostile Russian information operations. As Russia has already labelled it a “Russophobic country” (Dalziel 2024), Canada’s strategic shifts to almost triple defence spending; bolster its Arctic military and civilian capabilities through submarines, new radars and icebreakers; and efforts to collaborate more closely with Sweden and the other Nordic countries and involve NATO partners in North American Arctic defence and security are all activities likely to draw Russian ire. Canada’s commitment to maintain and enhance its mission in Latvia in the sensitive Baltic region further adds to this dynamic. Moreover, Canada’s plans to promote economic development in its sector of the Arctic will be seen as a threat by Russia, given that the term “dual-use” is being used as something of a slur by Russian officials (despite its appearance in Russia’s own documents) (Dalziel 2024 and 2025e).

Canada and Sweden: China and the Arctic

While the studies above have accurately portrayed China as a rising actor in the Arctic whose ambitions currently outpace its region-specific capabilities, the breadth of its global capabilities and heft in the international economy, science and political influence already make it a significant area of concern and attention for Canada and Sweden. Both have already faced the full brunt of hostile information campaigns on their politics and societies. Sweden has been a particular target of aggressive Chinese “wolf warrior” diplomacy (Pezard et al. 2025) and Canadian analysts describe China as “one of the most persistent and sophisticated” countries interfering in the country (Bridgman et al. 2024). Canada’s Hogue Inquiry into foreign interference, investigating serious allegations of foreign electoral interference, placed China at the head of its list of countries seeking to influence and compromise Canadian political processes in its own interests (Hogue 2025).

Two factors are likely to intensify Chinese informational meddling in Canada and Sweden. First, Beijing’s aligning with Russia’s anti-NATO line will almost certainly include ongoing criticism of Canada and Sweden as catalysts for NATO’s Arctic agenda, by expanding their defence budgets, adding regional capabilities and conducting regional exercises and, in Sweden’s case, by making the Arctic more NATO by having joined the Alliance. Second, building on Peterson’s assessment (2023) of China’s targeting of the peripheries of the US alliance system, the current positions of the US presidential administration on North American trade and defence and on European politics will likely incentivize Beijing’s doubling down on Arctic-related information manipulation targeting Canada and Sweden. The Arctic would not be one of the “leading interests” (Bridgman et al. 2024), but Bouffard and Lanteigne’s concept (2025) of “deep bench” capabilities suggests a concentrated high-calibre, high-octane approach to foreign influence and interference that from the perspectives of much smaller countries like Canada and Sweden will render the relative status of the Arctic among Chinese priorities moot.

That Russia and China wish to target Arctic social cohesion and political decision-making will make Indigenous and northern governments and peoples targets of interest to Russia and China. Hints of China’s approach have already been visible in its infrastructure promotion of Huawei 5G technologies (Dalziel and Nikoula 2025) and in its deflection of criticisms about its treatment of

Uighurs towards failures in Canada's colonial Indigenous policies. Russia's propagandized "fears" of alleged separatist-inspiring activities by Canadian, US and Norwegian intelligence agencies among Russian northern Indigenous peoples almost certainly are designed to pave the way for "reciprocal" initiatives by Russia (Dalziel 2025b). While such allegations are unfounded, Russia almost certainly wants to "protect" its authoritarian political space against ideas like "Sápmi" and "Inuit Nunaat." That will be the focus of the next two chapters. ♣

3.

Information Integrity and Disinformation in the Canadian North

Alexander Dalziel

Introduction: Tackling disinformation in Canada's Arctic

Disinformation is a strategic threat and Canada's north is gaining renewed geopolitical attention. It is a complex multi-jurisdictional space where different levels of government all play a role in building security. Indigenous and territorial governments and institutions are central elements in that endeavour, generating a distinct set of assets and vulnerabilities for Canada's national security. It is difficult to generalize about this space. No one-size-fits-all approach will work to tackle threats like disinformation, because the modern treaties upon which the relationship of federal and Indigenous governments is based in the Canadian Arctic vary distinctly one from the other. The local knowledge held by Indigenous peoples and northerners is a crucial resource in deterring and responding to the hybrid threats of which disinformation is part. Comprehensive but treaty-specific policy and operational approaches are a must.

That nuanced governance setting faces an intersecting set of disinformation narratives built around geopolitical competition and climate change (Dalziel and Nikoula 2025). The federal government has indicated its awareness of Arctic specific threats and challenges and the need to engage with those that inhabit the region to address them. Working closely with Arctic Indigenous peoples and northerners is put forward in Canada's most recent defence strategy as a foundational element of the Canadian military's "most urgent and important task" of defending the northern North American continent

and demonstrating Canada's sovereignty (National Defence 2024). Both the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) and the Canadian Centre for Cyber Security (CCCS) identify threats from the People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation and are enhancing their engagement activities with northern Indigenous and territorial governments to improve the ability to detect and counter disinformation and other national security threats (CSIS 2025; CCCS 2024). At the same time, the US presidential administration's fixation on Greenland has damaged the deep trust among the Arctic democracies and the world's Inuit in the US's commitment to mutual security. The information environment affecting Canada's Arctic is as complex as the governance model that shapes it.

As this suggests, Canada and the Nordic countries – small and middle powers – are caught in the geopolitical currents of the time. That adds another dimension to the equation: the Canadian Arctic is also transatlantic in significance, part of the defence and security of North America and Europe. Again, collaboration with Indigenous peoples and northerners will strengthen security and defence across that space. There is momentum in that direction. Canada has signed strategic partnerships with Sweden and Finland, agreements that both feature Indigenous cooperation as a pillar. In the Canada-Sweden partnership, Indigenous peoples are identified as key elements in the pillar for Arctic cooperation and “north-north” connectivity (Government of Canada 2025a), while in the Canada-Finland foreign and security partnership, the countries commit to ensuring that their Indigenous peoples in the Arctic will retain a voice in “all relevant regional and international efforts” (Global Affairs Canada 2025). Canada's Arctic Foreign Policy puts geostrategic challenges up front, and ensuring “inclusive diplomacy” centred on Indigenous peoples is part of the framework for addressing that security and defence context (Global Affairs Canada 2024).

Northern demographics

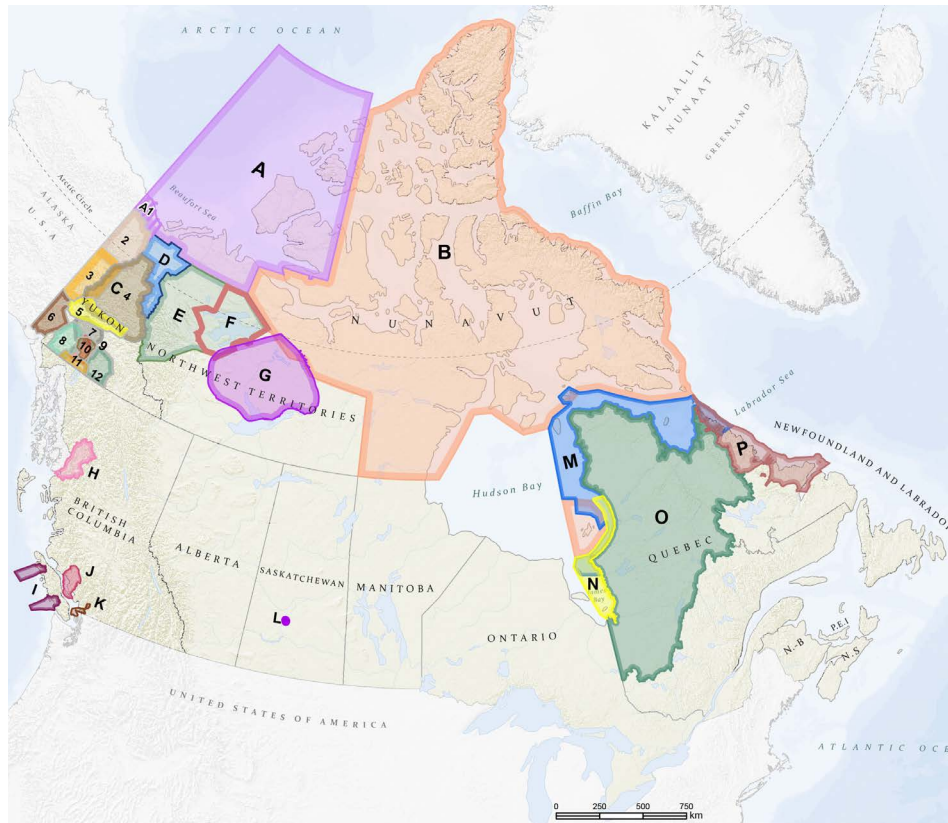
The populations of the Canadian north are rural, widely dispersed and frequently Indigenous – consistent with the conditions for micro-media settings described in the Introduction. The total population ranges between 150,000 and 200,000. The 2021 Canadian census placed 118,260 people living in the three territories (Canadian Press 2022). About half of their population

was Indigenous (Indigenous Services Canada 2023). A portion of the region's population is highly mobile, involving short-term work in government or natural resource projects. In the provinces, Indigenous Canadians are minority populations. For instance, Inuit in northern Québec (Nunavik) and in northern coastal Labrador (Nunatsiavut) form only 2.5 percent and 9.3 percent of Québec and Newfoundland and Labrador, respectively (Indigenous Services Canada 2023).

Inuit Nunangat, as an example, consists of some 51 towns and hamlets (Statistics Canada 2024b). That makes for a predominantly rural population, a feature shared by First Nations in Yukon and the Northwest Territories (NWT) (Statistics Canada 2023a and c). The population of Inuit Nunangat numbers between 60,000 and 70,000. In Nunavut, 84.3 percent are Inuit – the only majority Indigenous territory or province in the country, although Inuit in Nunavik (population: 13,985), Nunatsiavut (2,320) and the Inuvialuit Settlement Region (5,315) are the regional majorities (Statistics Canada 2023a, b, c and d; Indigenous Services Canada 2023). Yukon and NWT also have significant Métis populations at 14.6 percent and 14.4 percent, respectively, of their populations (Statistics Canada 2022a and c).

Indigenous demographics also are young. In the two most populous parts of Inuit Nunangat, Nunavik and Nunavut, over a quarter of the population is under 28 years of age (Statistics Canada 2023a and c). Language is also a distinctive factor: in these two regions, large majorities of young children learn Inuktitut (Inuit language, which has five main dialects in Canada) (Statistics Canada 2024; Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami 2025c). The average age of members of First Nations in Yukon and NWT is older, but still on average younger than the non-Indigenous populations, with almost a quarter of the population in each 14 years of age or under (Statistics Canada 2022a and c). This suggests that the uptake of social media, already high as will be seen below, will grow among Indigenous Canadians in the north – especially if telecommunication and digital infrastructure gaps are bridged in the region, a fundamental and persistent problem.

MAP 3 – Modern Indigenous governance, modern treaties in the Canadian North



MODERN TREATIES OF CANADA

- | | |
|---|--|
| A Inuvialuit Final Agreement (1984) | O James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement and Northeastern Quebec Agreement (1977-1978) |
| AA Inuvialuit Final Agreement/Western Arctic Claim - Yukon (1984) | P Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement (2005) |
| B Nunavut Agreement (1993) | C Yukon Umbrella Final Agreement |
| D Gwich'in Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement (1992) | 2 Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation Final and Self-Government Agreements (1995) |
| E Sahtu Dene and Métis Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement (1994) | 3 Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Final and Self-Government Agreements (1998) |
| F Déjıne Final Self-Government Agreement (2016) | 4 First Nation of Nacho Nyak Dun Final and Self-Government Agreements (1995) |
| G Tłı̄ch̄ Agreement (2005) | 5 Selkirk First Nation Final and Self-Government Agreements (1997) |
| H Nisga'a Final Agreement (2000) | 6 Kluane First Nation Final and Self-Government Agreements (2004) |
| I Maa-nulth First Nations Final Agreement (2011) | 7 Little Salmon/Carmacks First Nation Final and Self-Government Agreements (1997) |
| J Tla'am in Final Agreement (2016) | 8 Champagne and Aishihik First Nation Final and Self-Government Agreements (1995) |
| K Tsawwassen First Nation Final Agreement (2009) | 9 Ta'an Kwäch'än Council Final and Self-Government Agreements (2002) |
| L Nunavik Inuit Land Claims Agreement (2008) | 10 Kwanlin Dün First Nation Final and Self-Government Agreements (2005) |
| M Self-Government Treaty Recognizing the Whitecap Dakota Nation/Wapaha Ska Dakota Oyate (2023) | 11 Carcross/Tagish First Nation Final and Self-Government Agreements (2006) |
| N Eeyou Marine Region Land Claims Agreement (2012) | 12 Teslin Tlingit Council Final and Self-Government Agreements (1995) |

Credit: Government of Canada

Political geography, diverse governance: the multi-jurisdictional Canadian Arctic

Geography and multi-jurisdictional governance shape the flow of information in Canada's north. The constitutional order in northern Canada is built around territories and Indigenous governments, putting a premium on multi-way information flow among these institutions and the federal government, as well as among different Indigenous governments and levels of municipal, territorial and provincial government. Indigenous governments are therefore at the core of any successful national security strategy that aims to build resilience and address today's complex picture of geopolitical pressures and hybrid threats.

The Canadian Arctic can be defined in various ways, in terms of latitude (the 60th parallel or the Arctic Circle) or by ecological criteria such as flora associated with Arctic and sub-Arctic conditions. There is also an Indigenous geography. First Nations and Inuit homelands fall within a wide space, across North America in the case of the former, and from northeastern Russia to eastern Greenland in the case of the latter. In Canada, the focus here will be on those that are in the Canadian territories of Yukon, NWT and Nunavut, as well as the northern parts of the provinces of Québec and Newfoundland and Labrador, and the coasts of Manitoba and Ontario on Hudson Bay.

This is the setting for a multi-jurisdictional system in which Indigenous peoples' government and institutional representatives are core elements of decision-making. However, it is also worth keeping in mind that these homelands are transborder, extending into Alaska and Greenland. They are therefore geopolitically relevant concepts. Indigenous governance and geography are essential for understanding the Canadian Arctic's information environment. This chapter will look at the two largest examples here, Inuit Nunangat and the lands of the Dene First Nations, but these do not include all the Indigenous peoples of Canada's north, which also include other First Nations and Métis.

Inuit Nunangat is the Canadian Inuit homeland, extending across the three territories and northern Québec and Labrador. More than land, Inuit Nunangat includes ice and water as part of the territorial homeland (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami 2025b), these being essential to contemporary transportation, hunting and harvesting, having filled those roles throughout Inuit history.

However, Inuit Nunangat is more than a spatial or intellectual concept. It is embedded in Canada's constitutional order and thus a matter of law. That order applies to all Canadian Indigenous peoples, Inuit, First Nations and Métis and frames how information moves in the region, how decision-making takes place and how legitimacy is built among the peoples that the governments in Inuit Nunangat represent. It consists of four regions – Nunavut, Nunavik, Nunatsiavut and the Inuvialuit Settlement Region – each governed by a modern treaty defining its rights and authorities and the nature of its relationship with other levels of government. Modern treaties are part of Canada's 1982 *Constitution Act*. In Section 25, two types of treaties or rights-holding are identified that apply to “aboriginal peoples”: those that go back to the Royal Proclamation of 1763, and those that are under land claims agreements, current or future. Section 35 goes on to affirm “existing aboriginal and treaty rights”, and Section 35(3) clarifies that “treaty rights” are embodied in land claims agreements (Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada 2021). It is these “land claims agreements” that are the basis for “modern treaties” in Canada's north. The first was the Inuvialuit Settlement Agreement in 1984; there are now over 20. In some cases, negotiations remain ongoing; in others, efforts concentrate on having the federal government follow through on its obligations.

In Inuit Nunangat, these governing institutions are Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated (NTI), which oversees all of Nunavut; Nunatsiavut Government, in northern Labrador; Makivvik, for Nunavik in the north of Québec; and the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation in Yukon and NWT (see Map 3). Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK) represents all four of these governments at the national level in a consensus-based organization (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami 2026). These domestic foundations make Inuit governments and ITK core strategic actors – including in Arctic information security.

These institutions have elaborated mechanisms with the federal government to make and implement policy that implicates their interests and authorities as

Inuit Nunangat is more than a spatial or intellectual concept. It is embedded in Canada's constitutional order and thus a matter of law.

delineated in the modern treaties. The co-development of policy is a central feature of these mechanisms. National security policy is not an exception. The Inuit Nunangat Policy is a framework that recognizes the region and the constitutional rights that attach to its constituent governments. Federal departments are to adopt an “Inuit Nunangat approach” on matters that apply to the region, whereby they will develop policy in line with mutually agreed principles, for instance that “Inuit are the most knowledgeable about the issues affecting their communities, regions, and society and must, therefore, maintain an integral role and progressive responsibility in decision-making over matters that apply” to them and the region. Increasing the use of Inuktitut in the delivery of public services is a goal. Inuit governments and representatives have a say in most policy that affects their regions. The Inuit Nunangat approach seeks to have Canada support Inuit goals for self-determination through the “exercise of jurisdiction,” and where Inuit do not seek such jurisdiction, Canada-Inuit cooperation will determine how to go about administering “federally-funded programs, policies, services, and initiatives where Inuit have an interest, need or right” (Government of Canada 2022 and 2024). These mechanisms aspire to foster trust among the parties, an aspect that is crucial when it comes to national and information security.

The Inuit Nunangat Policy is not silent on knowledge, information and national security. *Inuit Qaujimagajatuqangit* – Inuit Indigenous knowledge – is seen as a critical component of informing “evidence-based policy development and decision-making.” The Inuit Nunangat Policy has the goal of ensuring “Inuit access, ownership and control over data and information,” including for decision-making when it comes to “geopolitical” challenges (Government of Canada 2022). The local dimension, governed under the modern treaties, is thus essential to tackling malign information activities, including those by foreign states.

The Inuit-Crown Partnership Committee (ICPC) is the forum where the federal government, the four treaty governments and ITK meet to deliberate on and decide policy and oversee implementation. Here, too, information integrity is crucial. For strategic communications and public engagement, the participants at the ICPC commit to share “timely information” with “a variety of internal and external audiences.” Among the agenda items the ICPC has addressed are defence and security (Government of Canada 2023).

As one interlocutor stated to the author, “Inuit perspectives materially shape Arctic policy . . . and aspects of Canada’s sovereignty and security posture.” For instance, the Canadian Coast Guard developed its Arctic Region, established in 2018, to embrace the entirety of Inuit Nunangat (Fisheries and Oceans Canada 2021).

Canada hereby recognizes Inuit Nunangat as a distinct geographic, cultural (including with its own distinct language), and political region and will therefore use the term ‘Inuit Nunangat’ to describe the region, as this can support the development, application and implementation of federal policies, programs, services and initiatives affecting Inuit Nunangat.

- Inuit Nunangat Policy

That is also apparent in international relations. ITK President Natan Obed has emphasized Inuit Nunangat is a geopolitical concept (Institute for Research on Public Policy 2025). Moreover, ITK’s Arctic strategy describes Inuit Nunangat as a “geopolitically coveted space,” containing mineral and energy resources and shipping routes of international interest and relevance (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami 2025a). Inuit Nunangat is itself embedded in a wider concept of the Inuit world, Inuit Nunaat, which includes homelands in three other countries: Kalaallit Nunaat (Greenland) in the Kingdom of Denmark; parts of Alaska, in the United States; and a part of Chukotka in the Russian Federation (Inuit Circumpolar Council 2021).

ICC-Canada is thus an important part of the international and foreign policy aspects of Canadian Arctic governance. Here the damage done to the ethos, spirit and operations of the Arctic Council by Russia’s aggression in Ukraine is particularly acute. In addition to the eight nation states in the AC, it has six Permanent Participants who are part of its consensus-based decision-making model and working groups. The ICC is integral to this international governance framework (Arctic Council 2020). It also gained stature and influence when it gained permanent consultative status at the International Maritime Organization (IMO) in 2025, where it will now sit alongside nation states as the first Indigenous organization to enter the organization (Quinn 2025). Canada’s north sits in an international context where Inuit institutions are active and increasingly recognized players.

MAP 4 – Inuit Nunangat: the Canadian Inuit homeland and its regions



Source: Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK) 2025

Similarly, northern First Nations and Métis and their representatives are a core element of strengthening national security. For example, the homelands of Dene First Nations in the North constitute a large part of the Arctic geography of Canada and its governance. The *Denendeh* – the Dene homeland – covers most of NWT and much of Yukon. Dene peoples, as part of the Athapaskan group, extend into other provinces and across the Canada-US border, a “transborder” dimension that, for instance in the case of the Gwich’in First Nation, consists of social networks and knowledge exchange across national and territorial boundaries from the northwest of the NWT through northern Yukon into northeastern Alaska (Gwich’in Social and Cultural Institute 2025).

In NWT, Dene governance consists of institutions in five regions, Gwich’in, Sahtu, Dehcho, Tlicho, and Akaitcho,¹ that collectively work together in the Dene Nation organization, which coordinates and supports Dene rights and

1 The author is grateful to Dene Nation for insight on this matter, in correspondence of December 2025.

interests (Dene Nation 2026). Within Canada's borders, a number of modern treaties have been signed with Dene First Nations. Yukon has 14 First Nation governments (Council of Yukon First Nations 2025), while NWT has five Dene regional governments and four community-based governments (Government of the Northwest Territories 2025). To give some sense of the ongoing nature of these political processes, in the case of the NWT, there are four Final Agreements, with the Gwich'in (1992), Sahtu (1993), Tlicho (2003) and Délı̄nę (2015); negotiations continue with the Akaitcho Territory Government and the Dehcho First Nations on Agreements-in-Principal, and negotiations on "Framework Agreements" – the first step in reaching a land claim settlement – are underway with nine others (Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs 2026; Government of the Northwest Territories 2025). Another element is the Denendeh Development Corporation, which acts as a Dene-owned non-profit organization to collectively advance economic, social and cultural development initiatives, under the leadership of the Chiefs of Denendeh First Nations (Denendeh Development Corporation 2024).

Canada's Arctic First Nations have international governance institutions as well. At the Arctic Council, for example, of the six Indigenous Permanent Participants, two – the Arctic Athabaskan Council and Gwich'in Council International – represent Canadian First Nations. Reflecting the transborder character of the people it represents, the Gwich'in Council International is made up of the Gwich'in Tribal Council and Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation in Canada, and the Council of Athabaskan Tribal Governments in Alaska (Gwich'in Council International 2026). For its part, the Arctic Athabaskan Council is an independent institution, independent of other First Nations entities (Arctic Athabaskan Council 2026), working with Athabaskan First Nations in Canada and Alaska.

The diversity of institutions representing northern First Nations in Canada and internationally shows yet another layer of the complexity of multi-jurisdictional governance. In particular, the ongoing nature of land claims

The diversity of institutions representing northern First Nations in Canada and internationally shows yet another layer of the complexity of multi-jurisdictional governance.

agreements makes them sensitive matters in the fulfilment of constitutional rights and obligations of Indigenous peoples, the federal government and territorial governments. Information integrity is thus crucial to their progress, and a distinct element in Canadian national security – advancing practically the policy of reconciliation between Indigenous peoples and Canadian governing institutions and society as a whole.

Multi-jurisdictional governance – security implications

Northern Canadian information integrity resides in a multi-government and multi-jurisdictional framework, where coordination among policy actors is critical for success. Negotiating and developing Crown-Indigenous relations is an information-intensive process. First Nations, Inuit and Métis governments are essential elements in developing, maintaining and optimizing national defence and security in a context of hybrid threats like disinformation, where security depends on “bottom-up” as well as “top-down” exchange, and local understanding is crucial to operations and strategy. This fact is unlikely to go unnoticed by foreign actors pursuing their own goals. Initiatives like Canada’s proposal for an Arctic Security Dialogue would thus usefully replicate the advances made in the AC in integrating a full Indigenous governance component to help identify issues and set priorities in the national and collective defence and security of the Arctic. In terms of information security, Indigenous geographies and institutions like those of the Gwich’in and Inuit create distinct information flows and trust networks. These networks have an intimate relationship to creating security in their territories and thus in Canada as a whole and among its closest allies in that endeavour, the United States and the Kingdom of Denmark.

This underscores the importance of policy co-development in national security, whereby there is a continuous interface between the federal and Indigenous governments on identifying and defining the problem set and jointly crafting responses, bringing to bear their own capabilities, capacities and knowledge. Deterring and countering hybrid warfare campaigns that use disinformation cannot be the sole responsibility of one level of government, Indigenous or federal. Ideally, such interfaces would also include academia, civil society and the private sector. Tackling disinformation and building information integrity will require this sort of issue-specific engagement, possibly in the context of dealing with the range of hybrid threats to political security and critical infrastructure.

*Information integrity:
Strategic perspectives in Northern Canada*

Misinformation presents a clear problem in Canada's north, with implications for human health and safety when it occurs in cases of environmental disasters and emergency response. Media reported that misinformation complicated emergency response in Yukon during wildfires in 2023; according to residents, false and inaccurate information on social media caused confusion and panic (Tran and Semple 2023). Advanced information technology is figuring into the problem. Malignly used artificial intelligence was the source of deepfakes, again during wildfires, this time in the NWT, according to press (Shepel 2025).

In addition, cyber threats have affected northern institutions. Hackers breached the Government of Nunavut's systems in 2019, seizing data and disrupting the delivery of health and other public services in what proved to be a ransomware attack; the government avoided paying the ransom and had its systems largely operating again in two weeks (George 2019; Canadian Press 2019). Another attack on Nunavut's Qulliq Energy Corporation in 2023 gained unauthorized access to its financial and email systems, leading to the Government of Nunavut taking over the company's IT section (Howitt 2023). A cyberattack targeted the City of Yellowknife in September 2025, forcing the municipality to take its services offline for a week (CBC News 2025).

National security concerns that touch on disinformation are on the rise. Annual reports from Canada's intelligence services reinforce the threat to the Canadian Arctic's information integrity. Identifying it as one of a number of foreign interference tools, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) describes disinformation as a persistent threat from the People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation. Similarly, the Canadian Centre for Cyber Security (CCCS) assesses that Russia combines traditional espionage and subversion techniques with cyber espionage and network attacks to advance a set of goals that includes spreading pro-Russian narratives and "psychologically weaken[ing]" opponents (CSIS 2025; CCCS 2024).

Arctic security analysts concur that disinformation is among a package of "hybrid threats" that present the most probable threats to Arctic security. Landriault and Oreschnikoff (2025), basing their analysis on the results of a polling of experts in the first quarter of 2025, concluded that "the significance

of networked traffic,” both digital and physical, elevated consideration of threats to “logistical and infrastructure spaces” to a “central” role in assessing Arctic security. In protecting these infrastructures, the authors noted that “[u]ncertainties, misunderstandings and disinformation” about infrastructure affect the nature of the threat. In another analysis (Landriault 2025), this time of public opinion about security among inhabitants of the Canadian Arctic, pointed out that First Nations, Métis and Inuit there are part of a trend visible across Canada voicing support for the country to take a “more muscular or assertive security line.” It also noted regional variations in attitudes, with Inuit in Nunavut, for instance, being more supportive of military support or sanctions should the US follow through on President Trump’s statements about annexing neighbouring Greenland. That this survey was the first of its kind in the Canadian north is an indicator of the paucity of data and the need for more frequent, more diverse and more in-depth engagement with northern governments.

Northern Canada has a dynamic public space in discussing the consequences of contemporary Arctic geopolitics and debating approaches to address them. Governments and Indigenous organizations are articulating their positions on national security, defence and sovereignty. Windows into these discussions can be found in strategic documents published by the Government of Yukon (Yukon Arctic Security Advisory Council 2024), the Government of Nunavut-NTI (2025), the ITK (2025) and the Council of Yukon First Nations (Calvo et al. 2025). These documents make three important points from the perspective of information integrity: the relationship of having access to physical infrastructure and defence and national security outcomes for Canada; acknowledgement of a geopolitical environment with information and influence threats and systemic vulnerabilities; and the central importance of assured information flows to governance in Canada’s Arctic.

First, information integrity starts with having physical infrastructure, including the hardware to support digitization and telecommunications. As Nunavut’s territorial and Inuit leadership put it, northern Canada’s lack of infrastructure is a “barrier to security.” To overcome that barrier, one of the priority calls is for redundant fibre-optic connectivity to weave Nunavut into Canada as an essential part of “nation building” (Government of Nunavut and Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. 2025). ITK directly connects the shortage of infrastructure to security

vulnerability in Inuit Nunangat. In its policy, it promotes an infrastructure-to-integrate strategy for the region (ITK 2025). The Council of Yukon First Nations (CYFN) situates “multi-use” infrastructure in a “holistic understanding of northern security” that embraces climate change resilience and food security, among others. “Reliable infrastructure” includes telecommunications and connectivity (Calvo et al. 2025). The Government of Yukon’s Arctic Security Advisory Council identified “critical physical infrastructure” as a “core security and public safety need,” with Internet access, cellular networks and “dual-use” telecommunications infrastructure key among them – all physical components of the information ecosystem (Yukon Arctic Security Advisory Council 2024).

Canadian federal government efforts aim to bridge infrastructure gaps. These efforts will also add new targets for malign actors to exploit informational vulnerabilities if security is not a basic element of their planning and execution. Most notably, the Canadian federal Budget 2025 allocates CAN\$1 billion over four years for an Arctic Infrastructure Fund, which will provide support for the construction of dual-use transportation infrastructures like airports, seaports and roads (Finance Canada 2025; Transport Canada 2025). Canada’s need for an information integrity strategy will be all the more acute to build resilient data systems and counter misinformation and disinformation – and that will call for co-development with northern and Indigenous governments.

Second, geopolitics is threatening the information environment in Canada’s north. According to ITK, Inuit Nunangat is “vulnerable and neglected.” It identifies information security as a leading threat, placing “foreign influence/interference” at the top of its most “tangible threats” list; other informational threats follow it, namely the threat of cyberattacks and the potential uses of research and investments to “gain influence and intelligence” (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami 2025a). Similarly, Nunavut’s territorial and Inuit governments see foreign interference “intensifying” (Government of Nunavut and Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. 2025). In Yukon, “aggressive misinformation” and political interference were on the rise,

Canada’s need for an information integrity strategy will be all the more acute to build resilient data systems and counter misinformation and disinformation.

according to the government (Yukon Arctic Security Advisory Council 2024); and the CYFN saw foreign influence “cloaked in ‘goodwill’” as a distinctive pathway for foreign powers to cultivate long-term influence and control in their territories, and that foreign interference, including through misinformation, was already taking place (Calvo et al. 2025).

A geopolitical assessment underpins the perception of the informational threat environment. Calling Inuit Nunangat a “geopolitically coveted space,” ITK points to US statements about Greenland, Russia’s large-scale Arctic infrastructure development and China’s attempts to use “infrastructure deficits” to gain “strategic footholds” in the Arctic as worrying phenomena. Here again it cites informational threats, such as Inuit Nunangat’s reliance on foreign-owned communications networks like Starlink (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami 2025a). The Government of Nunavut and NTI stated that the Arctic is “a zone of competition and risk,” in a world of “volatility and unpredictability” where foreign countries are taking “unilateral” actions and non-state entities are active (Government of Nunavut and Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. 2025). China and Russia are paying more “geopolitical interest” in the Arctic, the former calling itself a “near-Arctic state” and Russia’s aggression in Ukraine having “spillover” potential in the Arctic, observed the CYFN, and the US was pressuring Canada to do more to protect the region (Calvo et al. 2025). The “geopolitical stakes” are up in Canada’s north, comments the Yukon Advisory Council, and the territory is not “immune” to their implications, including that Russia-China cooperation is a factor for the region and that the US’s sizeable military presence in Alaska ultimately protects US territory and interests, not Canada’s and Yukon’s (Yukon Arctic Security Advisory Council 2024).

Third, assured information flows are elemental to managing geopolitical threats and risks. The episode of Chinese “meteorological” balloons entering Canadian airspace in 2023 was a catalyst. As the CYFN report points out, it revealed the breakdowns in communications that can occur in national defence matters, where information is not shared among jurisdictions, which in turn undermines mutual trust. There are persistent gaps in “communication, coordination and inclusion” which inhibit Canada’s security and defence. Incisively, the report points out that these are predicated on a one-way communication model, which conceives of the valuable information being held in the federal government, and neglects the important role that northern and Indigenous information,

gathered locally and regionally, can have for national defence and security (Calvo et al. 2025). Inuit-led documents also point to the informational possibilities of inclusion of Indigenous knowledge and perspectives in national “decision-making” when it comes to the international stage, as the Inuit can provide a “bridge” to exchange information across the Arctic (Government of Nunavut and Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. 2025).

Northern perceptions of the information environment

As mentioned in the introduction, data was collected through interviews, surveys and attendance at subject-relevant conferences and events in fall 2025. In total, the data collection involved conducting seven interviews; attendance at four relevant conferences and one workshop; one survey response; and one round table. These resulted in fifteen distinct data points. All the interviews were under the Chatham House Rule, which allows the information to be used but without attribution. The interlocutors in the Canadian north came from First Nations and Inuit and from Canadian-citizen “northerners,” which covers residents of the region who are not rights-holders; a gap is a lack of Métis interlocutors. The interviews with Indigenous interlocutors concentrated among individuals from Yukon and Nunavut; a portion of the northerners came from NWT. More details can be found in Annex 1.

The analysis, given the nature of the data, is therefore preliminary and useful as examples of attitudes and insights from those who inhabit the Canadian north. The approach is therefore to group and analyze sub-themes of interlocutors’ observations and insights. These are not generalizable, to either the Canadian north, the territories or Indigenous rights-holders. In fact, a key point was that localized treatments of the issues of information integrity are necessary. The themes identified reflect an initial effort to identify issues for further discussion, rather than lay out a conclusive set of findings. These are pathways to future structured discussion and to evolve analytical and operational frameworks.

The comments break into five clusters: Canada’s northern information space; the relationship between access to infrastructure and security; threats to human and national security; intensified foreign interest in the region; and techniques of resilience (see Chart 1).

CHART 1: The Canadian Arctic: preliminary themes and observations

CLUSTER	SUB-THEMES
1. Northern Information Space	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• An active misinformation environment• Disproportionate information effects• Multi-jurisdictional governance context• Rooted resilience and local innovation• Despite improving public awareness, institutions faced gaps in countering mis- and disinformation
2. Infrastructure and Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Infrastructure–security interconnection• Digital and physical access disparities• Human security implications
3. Threats to Arctic Information Integrity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Domestic and continental threats• A high-volume of toxic social media• Threats to businesses• Risks to land and natural resource governance
4. Intensifying External Information Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Growing external strategic interest• Polarizing U.S. information effects• China and natural resource sovereignty• Russia’s provocative behaviour
5. Northern Sources of Resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Indigenous self-determination• Government and private sector are strengthening defences• Advanced understanding of digital sovereignty• Indigenous Community-level self-protection

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Cluster 1. The northern information space: politically interconnected micro-information environments

In the first category, one framing remark was about the very high use of Facebook and other social media, due to their usefulness in connecting communities locally, regionally and nationally, as well as around the circumpolar north and globally. Observations about the information space pointed to an active misinformation environment, with disinformation a suspected problem, although attribution was lacking – a definite gap for future cooperation to address. Many of these observations elaborate the concept of Arctic “micro-media systems” described by Ravn-Højgaard in her work on Greenland (2024).

Key observations include:

- **Active misinformation environment:** Northern Indigenous peoples and governments face an active environment, as do territorial and municipal governments, with multiple actors, including non-state corporate and non-governmental entities. Biased social media was a repeatedly mentioned concern. Misinformation can have a high level of influence.
- **Disproportionate effects:** Observers mentioned the high level of vulnerability in the mainly rural Canadian north, where both good and bad information have disproportionate effects on public opinion. Information spreads very quickly on social media. There were particular barriers to access to reliable “mainstream” media for Indigenous northern Canadians: large income inequalities in comparison to other parts of Canada, one interlocutor noted, made paywalls limiting access to reliable media sources a more acute issue, a situation worsened by the ongoing legal struggle between Meta (the owner of Facebook) and the Canadian federal government over online regulation, in which Meta has removed all news outlets from its platforms in Canada to comply with the 2023 Online News Act, in lieu of paying outlets for the content. While the lack of local print media was noted as a deficiency, radio was cited as a generally reliable and widely accessed source of local news.
- **A multi-jurisdictional Canadian north:** The complexity and sometimes delicacy of intergovernmental relations in the north, involving multiple jurisdictions and authorities, put an onus on developing reliable information flows for policy coordination and incident response. There was a lack of knowledge about the Canadian political system among Indigenous and Canadians. Indigenous governments struggle to get their perspectives included in strategic messaging from other levels of government.
- **Rooted resilience and innovation:** While some felt Indigenous and northern governments and communities were vulnerable to disinformation, other comments pointed to resilience. Some Indigenous interlocutors felt that their nations were perhaps better prepared to deal with misinformation and disinformation than other parts of Canada,

because of tight-knit communities, self-governance and land ownership. One conference presenter was of the view that northern Indigenous had more rigorous frameworks through their modern treaties for dealing with political interference than southern First Nations, citing domestic examples. Community-rooted civil society institutions and grassroots activity were other sources of information resilience. Youth empowerment was seen as a source of foundational, long-term way to strengthen Indigenous in the civic space.

- **Gaps and an improving awareness:** Awareness of information threats has broadened in the north, but efforts were needed to continue to refine and disseminate understandings to ensure local governments and populations' ability to think critically about it and respond accordingly. Nonetheless, one interlocutor noted that it is likely such threats are currently “below the radar” of Indigenous governments and leaderships; another interlocutor mentioned that territorial and Indigenous governments, as well as representative organizations, are often not optimally positioned for countering misinformation, disinformation and malinformation in the public space.

Cluster 2. Access to infrastructure shapes potential for information integrity

The second cluster centred around access to digital infrastructure and resources in the north – in particular the lack thereof. These were about the fundamentals of information integrity – that is, having reliable access to digital connectivity. Given the sensitive politics surrounding many of these issues, reliable information is an essential resource in managing public discussions and establishing societal buy-in. Among the comments were:

- **Intimate infrastructure-security interconnection:** Security is built from the ground up in part through infrastructure accessible to civilians; infrastructure gaps have mutually reinforcing detrimental effects. Digital connectivity is a priority alongside housing, health care and security of supply chains. Some connected these efforts to the current federal government's policies of “nation-building”. Infrastructure deficiencies affect civilian readiness in the north.
- **Inclusive physical infrastructure, comprehensive human security:** Infrastructure is strongly connected to the security of the people of

the north, including their ability to pursue their chosen ways of life and to have a comparable level of access to informational options to Canadians in the country's south. Inclusive processes will build infrastructure compatible with Indigenous and northern ways of life, address the concerns and build upon the knowledge of Indigenous, territorial and municipal governments. Inclusive policy-making is especially pertinent to complex, delicate issues like adjusting laws on natural resources.

Cluster 3. Threats to Canada's Arctic Information Integrity

The third cluster centred around the multiple threats to human and national security that have an information security dimension. Among the comments, the key points were:

- **Domestic and North American info threats:** The main information threats include those that originate within Canada, and most originate in North America. Political parties at the territorial, provincial and federal levels, as well as in the US, were a source of misinformation, due to inadequately consulted strategic communications and political spin.
- **Disruptive, toxic, high-volume social media:** social media was the main source of information problem. The volume of misinformation in particular was very large, some of it appearing to be AI-generated. Online scams and frauds were common and impacted issues like food security. Racism and hate were regularly encountered on social media.
- **Business world:** Companies with unclear ownership structures were portraying themselves as "Indigenous," potentially masking foreign ownership; security imperatives are a driver for Nunavut's private sector, which has resulted in large volumes of unsolicited outreach for joint ventures. There is a very high level of awareness of the cyber threat, after repeated ransomware attacks.
- **Protecting land and natural resources:** According to interlocutors, natural resource development was a focus point of foreign interest. The information environment faced heightened rhetoric in the context of Canada-US tensions.

Cluster 4. Intensifying external information context

Fourthly, the discussions indicated foreign actors were a concern, particularly in relation to China and the United States, which commentators mentioned as the most likely sources of misinformation and disinformation. These had effects on Indigenous society and governments. Data sovereignty was a one frame for discussion raised by First Nations and Inuit interlocutors. Among the comments were:

- **Intensifying external Interest:** There is intensifying external interest in the north. External interest has positive dimensions, with outreach from the (Nordic countries and Japan cited as building trust; presence in the north could build trust. First Nations and Inuit had important trans-border bonds to Greenland, Alaska and Russia and were subject to misinformation and disinformation. Negative dimensions of foreign interest included unsolicited outreach to Indigenous businesses, suspect sources of foreign capital as an influence pathway and a suspicion that foreign powers were systematically targeting Indigenous northerners at foreign events. The US, China and Russia were most frequently mentioned as sources of information and influence threats and challenges.
- In relation to the **United States**, noted issues were the polarizing effects of US information environment on Canada's north, the power of US tech giants and their effects on Indigenous digital sovereignty (i.e., information integrity), and the particular consequences of trends in US social media on culture, language and youth. Dependencies on US-owned satellite communications were noted as vulnerabilities. One interlocutor noted that if Canada did not build infrastructure in the Arctic, the US would.
- Concerns about **China** concentrated on sovereignty over natural resources; China's was seen to have an interest in scoping out natural resource projects and telecommunications infrastructure.
- **Russia's** provocative behaviour in Ukraine and hybrid warfare in Europe were also cited.

Cluster 5. Northern sources of resilience

In the final cluster, interviewees discussed counteractions to misinformation and disinformation. While the environment was active, many of the responses were proactive and self-starting. Observations included:

- **Indigenous self-determination** and the governance structures it creates are a counter to external disinformation, a view repeated in various ways in the interviews and at conferences.
- **Digital sovereignty:** The struggle for sovereignty among Canada's northern Indigenous peoples has led to a strong emphasis on data ownership and protection, and for data to be used to benefit the community and to advance Canada-wide security. Issues such as transparency on AI-produced texts were noted as areas that needed addressing. Private-sector and government entities were active in strengthening their defences against loss of data through cyber activity; self-directed strategies in the absence of government direction were also mentioned.
- **Self-protection:** Grassroots solutions and activities are important to protecting information. Grassroots response to online scams included sharing screenshots to spread awareness. Municipalities were consolidating common positions on defence, security and economic issues. There was increased caution about purchasing from certain foreign sources. To counter disinformation and fact-check, interlocutors cited using libraries and information centres where available and consultation with elders.

Conclusions

A context of advancing Indigenous rights, land-recognition and modern sovereignty agreements, along with increased federal defence expenditures, infrastructure development initiatives and increased geopolitical relevant set the parameters of developing information security in the Canadian Arctic.

A major challenge resides in detecting disinformation. Arguably, the tools are there: territorial and Indigenous governments see the threats and

vulnerabilities; Canadian academic and think tank institutions have the requisite regional and international and thematic knowledge to contribute; and the federal government is enhancing its engagement to draw in inputs from all the levels of government in the north, including Indigenous, to improve its ability to use intelligence to determine threats. Where more work, then, is to be done, is to develop more deliberate and structured civilian readiness in the north, potentially taking inspiration from Sweden’s “total defence” or Finland’s “comprehensive security” models. Other work will be to improve NATO’s and the EU’s understanding of governance and society in the Canadian north, if they want to be contributors to its security.

The observations and pathways identified above are tentative and provisional. Further research on disinformation and the process by which it might be identified and defeated requires more localized and co-developed inputs. The threats to information security in the Canadian Arctic are real – as is the potential to counter it. 🍁

4.

Sápmi and Sámi Rights Amid Heightened Security Risks and Information Conflict in the Swedish Arctic

Henrik Haggström and Camilla Unsgaard

Introduction

Across the Nordic Arctic, the political, legal, and cultural position of the Sámi has become increasingly entangled with a rapidly evolving information environment. Debates over land, water, grazing rights, resource extraction, national security, and environmental governance no longer take place primarily within administrative arenas or local communities. Instead, they unfold across digital platforms, algorithmically mediated ecosystems, and transnational media spaces where misinformation and disinformation circulate at speed and scale. These environments both reflect and intensify longstanding structural tensions between Sámi communities and majority populations in Norway, Sweden, and Finland.

The Sámi are the only Indigenous people of the European Arctic. Their status is anchored in international law—most notably the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, or UNDRIP (UN General Assembly 2007) and International Labour Organization Convention No. 169—as well as evolving jurisprudence and national legislation in the Nordic states (Allard 2015; Åhrén 2016; Kuokkanen 2019). Political recognition, however, does not insulate Sámi institutions from heightened public scrutiny, nor does it prevent Sámi rights from being framed in distorted, antagonistic, or polarising ways in digital discourse. As the Nordic countries have deepened their engagement

in Arctic geopolitics, NATO integration, and total defence planning, Sámi communities have increasingly found themselves positioned at the intersection of domestic contestation and broader geopolitical competition (Conley and Rohloff 2015; Hoogensen Gjørsv 2024).

Research across the Arctic and other Indigenous contexts demonstrates that digital hostility, hate crimes, misinformation, and disinformation tend to concentrate around legally and politically sensitive issues, particularly where Indigenous land rights intersect with resource development, environmental regulation, or security policy (BRÅ 2024:5, Kuokkanen 2019). In the Nordic Arctic, these dynamics are further shaped by small media ecosystems, strong informal networks, and the rapid circulation of content through social media platforms that are rarely designed or moderated with Indigenous or northern contexts in mind.

This chapter examines how information integrity, misinformation, and security-related dynamics intersect in Swedish Sápmi, situating Sámi experiences of digital information environments within the broader Arctic context of hybrid threats and evolving governance challenges. This chapter also contributes to that objective by combining a review of Nordic security and hybrid threat assessments and research focusing on national security, FIMI activities and hate crimes. This chapter is divided into an introduction, a literature review, a presentation of the empirical material from interviews and survey responses in Swedish Sápmi and a concluding analysis.

Research objectives and methodological approach

The overarching objective of this report is to advance understanding of information integrity, disinformation, and resilience in the Arctic by integrating Indigenous perspectives into analyses of hybrid threats and foreign information manipulation and interference (FIMI). The chapter contributes to this objective by combining a review of Nordic security and hybrid threat assessments with illustrative empirical material drawn from interviews and survey responses in Swedish Sápmi.

The empirical material consists of four semi-structured interviews with Sámi representatives holding senior roles in political institutions, national advocacy

organisations, and community governance structures (all from primarily reindeer herding Sápmi communities), as well as an exploratory questionnaire with four completed responses collected in late 2025. Given the limited scope of the material, the findings should be understood as preliminary and illustrative rather than representative. They are intended to highlight themes, perceptions, and potential hypotheses related to information dynamics in Swedish Sápmi, rather than to support generalizable conclusions, attribution claims, or causal inference.

The interviews addressed experiences of information flows, misinformation and hostile narratives, exposure to threats or harassment, institutional trust, and perceptions of security-related change in the Arctic (see Annex A). The survey responses complement the interviews by providing additional perspectives on online information environments, trust, and perceived vulnerabilities (see Annex B).

Due to the sensitive nature of the topics discussed, the small size of Sámi communities, and the public visibility of many Sámi representatives, all interviewees requested anonymity. Participants are therefore referenced using role-based identifiers, in line with established ethical practices in Indigenous and qualitative research.²

Population and demographic context of Sápmi

Sápmi is home to an estimated 80,000–100,000 Sámi across Norway, Sweden, Finland, and the Russian Federation, with Sweden accounting for approximately 20,000–40,000 individuals, depending on definitions and data sources. Due to historical developments and Swedish legislation, who is considered Sámi—and where Sámi live—remains controversial, sensitive, and not clearly defined. Most Sámi are integrated into mainstream Swedish society and upbringing, yet some may retain their distinct Sámi identity, culture, and heritage; others do not have this possibility or appear more as “Swedes”. The Sámi population is

2 The decision to anonymise all interview and survey participants reflects both ethical considerations and the specific research context. Given the small size of Sámi communities, the public visibility of many representatives, and the potential for social, professional, or personal repercussions, anonymity was considered necessary to ensure participant safety and to encourage candid responses. This approach is consistent with established best practices in qualitative research and Indigenous research methodologies.

geographically dispersed across whole of Sweden and integrated in majority society, but mainly visible in vast and sparsely populated northern territories, with significant variation in settlement patterns, livelihoods, and linguistic affiliation. There are around 2,500–3,500 Sámi in Sweden who depend on reindeer husbandry as a source of income. There are about 4,600 reindeer owners in total, of whom roughly 20 % (around 1,000 individuals) are fulltime professional herders. Hence reindeer herders live closely to government-appointed Sámi villages, but all others are integrated into Swedish society and widespread across the country, mostly in the mid- to northern part of Sweden. This internal diversity complicates representation and communication, as no single institutional or media channel captures the full range of Sámi experiences.

From an information and governance perspective, reindeer-herding Sámi and other Sámi individuals occupy a structural minority position within national populations while maintaining a continuous presence in strategically important Arctic regions. Small population size, geographic remoteness, and linguistic plurality shape distinct information environments characterised by high social proximity, strong interpersonal networks, and limited local media reporting. These demographic conditions contribute to both resilience and vulnerability: information travels quickly within communities, enabling rapid collective sense-making, but misinformation and hostile narratives can also spread efficiently and have disproportionate social impact. Understanding these demographic and spatial characteristics is essential for interpreting the empirical findings presented in this section, particularly with regard to trust, visibility, and the amplification of conflict-driven narratives in digital spaces.

Disinformation, hate, and threats in a Swedish–Sámi historical perspective on the present

The expression “those who win the war control the truth” is well established and affects not only history and education but also today’s information environment in areas such as defence, security, and politics. In the Swedish historical context, power has not only been exercised through weapons or wealth, but also through the ability to define what is considered true. This has also been the case in relations between the majority population and the Sámi, whose history has long been described from the perspective of the majority.

Reflecting on the phrase “history is written by the victors,” raises the question: whose history is being taught, and whose is missing? How does this shape disinformation, antagonistic threats, hate, and other threats directed at the Sámi today? A comprehensive understanding of history in Sweden will create common situational awareness that counters disinformation, hate, and threats. By understanding how “truth” has been shaped, more voices can enter the civic square. Sweden cannot change what has happened, but it can work with its Sámi peoples to listen, learn, and together counter hate, threats, racism, and disinformation.

What general image does the majority population have of the Sámi, and where does this perception originate? Several analyses of Sámi education in schools show that the amount of factual content is limited—confirming earlier research on older textbooks. Historically, Sweden was portrayed as a nation that “civilized” the north. The Sámi were depicted as a people of nature, rather than as an Indigenous people with their own rights and societies. In modern education, Sámi perspectives are often reduced to simplified descriptions of culture and traditional reindeer herding, while historical and contemporary Sámi perspectives on politics, security, defence, and legislation are absent. Sámi history is not included in today’s teacher education programmes.

The Sámi were depicted as a people of nature, rather than as an Indigenous people with their own rights and societies.

Although Sámi organizations have developed educational materials available to teachers, their use depends on individual teachers’ competence, willingness, or opportunity, and as a result, this education is often omitted (as referenced by the Swedish National Agency for Education via samer.se). Schools and research thus become tools for disseminating the state’s version of history. Sámi children were historically placed in separate “nomad schools” and denied access to the same education as others. Racial biology classified Sámi as a “different race,” and this so-called science was used to legitimise policy. Today, coded language, conspiracy theories, stereotypes, hate, threats, and disinformation about the Sámi have become normalised, institutionalising a distorted image across

society. This has continued for generations, leaving the majority population without crucial knowledge of Swedish history and its ongoing effects—particularly on the Sámi and relations between Sámi and the majority society.

“Those who control the narrative of the past shape the strategy of the future.” Political power is partly maintained through control of historical memory. Leaders legitimise authority by presenting themselves as heirs to past “heroes” or national projects. Through education policy, curricula are shaped in ways that influence citizens’ worldviews and political loyalties. When the majority population remains unaware of Sámi historical perspectives, this creates an advantage in contemporary issues such as security, defence, consultation processes, and dialogue. A distorted understanding of history leads to misunderstanding, unfounded claims, disinformation, and hate and threats. Internationally, how a country acknowledges or denies historical events affects diplomatic relations. Sweden promotes human rights and Indigenous rights globally, while domestically it continues to face criticism for its treatment of the Sámi.

Sweden recognises the Sámi as an Indigenous people but has not ratified ILO Convention 169, which centres on Indigenous self-determination and control over traditional lands—primarily due to land rights issues and political reluctance. The UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), the Council of Europe, and several UN rapporteurs have repeatedly criticized Sweden for this failure, noting that without legally binding protection, Sámi rights to land, resources, and self-determination remain weak and dependent on state interpretation.

This demonstrates how history, defence, politics, and the information environment are deeply interconnected. Ultimately, the issue is not only about history, but about identity, justice, belonging, trust, societal resilience, and participation in total defence and crisis preparedness.

Over the past five years, there has been some movement in a more positive direction in how Sámi history and its present-day consequences are acknowledged. This may reflect the spirit of the 21st century—Pride movements, digital access, and generations raised with inherited shame and silence now reclaiming their roots. Sámi voices are increasingly reclaiming their narrative through literature, art, music, and national television. The 2020 Girjas ruling was a symbolic victory, not only about hunting and fishing rights, but about

interpretative authority. The ongoing Truth Commission is also examining state abuses and systemic marginalization.

Brief summary of key historical developments shaping today's information environment and disinformation in Sápmi

The Sámi have lived in Sápmi for approximately 10,600 years. Since the Viking Age, Swedish kings and the Swedish state pursued expansionist policies that gradually colonised Sápmi. Until the national borders were established in the mid-18th century, the Sámi enjoyed a relatively high degree of self-determination, influence, and recognised rights. For example, under King Gustav Vasa, a new Swedish law was enacted that applied equally to Swedes and Sámi, while granting Sámi additional rights to preserve and promote their way of life and culture. The Sámi held exclusive rights to hunting and fishing and were considered to “own all movable and immovable property” in Sápmi.

The colonisation of the north was carried out through so-called “Lapp decrees,” which allowed the majority population to farm northwards and acquire land only with Sámi consent—giving rise to the so-called cultivation boundaries. Lapland was designated exclusively for the Sámi. This degree of Sámi self-determination and influence was not without strategic intent and depended on Sámi cooperation. It was part of a military and political strategy to maintain a geographical advantage over neighbouring states with similar colonial ambitions in the Nordic region. By asserting that the Sámi paid taxes, were integrated into Swedish state administration, and lived on land claimed by Swedish kings, these territories could be presented as Swedish. At the same time, Sámi loyalty to the Crown was cultivated in anticipation of cooperation once national borders were established.

After the end of Sweden’s great-power era and the formal establishment of national borders, the situation changed dramatically. Sweden had secured its territory and began colonising the north with Swedish settlers. Land was declared Crown land, and officials began surveying and allocating it. Legislation and policy increasingly reflected national security and defence interests, prioritising so-called national interests—such as hydropower development, mining, infrastructure, and total defence—over Sámi rights.

MAP 5 – Sápmi: A transborder space



The Swedish Empire (Stormaktstiden) in 1658



The national border of Sweden (Riksgränsen), since 1751



- Mid-1700, "Sámi land border" (Lappmarksgränsen) protects the Sámi people's rights from new establishments from Swedes
- 1873, new "Cultivation border" (Odlingsgränsen)
- 1874, the state takes it away completely

Sources: (1) samer.se/1239; (2) vividmaps.com/swedish-empire; (3) commons.wikimedia.org (modified); (4) levandehistoria.se/fakta/nationella-minoriteter-statens-paverkan/samer-i-sverige

Sámi self-determination and influence were no longer seen as security assets but rather as obstacles to Swedish nation-building. The state viewed land as strategically important and has at times used historical narratives to justify its control. For example, new hunting laws were introduced on the grounds that the land was Crown property, making hunting rights universal rather than Sámi-specific.

A significant deterioration in Sámi status occurred in 1884 with new reindeer herding legislation which abolished the cultivation boundary and led to forced relocations of Sámi from the Kiruna area to Arjeplog. This policy caused internal conflicts within Sámi society due to shortages of food and grazing land, fragmented communities, and divisions between Sámi languages. Further restrictions followed with the 1886 Reindeer Grazing Act, which restructured Sámi villages into the narrow, elongated forms that still exist today, confining reindeer herding to limited areas.

The 1921 decision to establish the State Institute for Racial Biology in Uppsala reflected contemporary ideological trends and had devastating, multigenerational consequences for the Sámi that persist today. Collectively, these policies and the rise of Swedish nationalism after border establishment led to increasing marginalization of the Sámi, widening the gap between the Sámi and the majority population and fostering mistrust and disinformation.

One more recent historical event continues to profoundly shape majority society's understanding of the Sámi and influences politics, security, defence, and the information environment, including hate and threats against the Sámi. The 1928 Reindeer Herding Act—often summarised as “a Sámi shall be a Sámi”—marked a decisive turning point. For the first time, the law defined who was legally considered Sámi, limiting this identity exclusively to reindeer herders. Sámi were required to belong to a specific Sámi village, maintain a nomadic lifestyle, and practise reindeer herding. Other Sámi were no longer recognised as Sámi and were forced to assimilate into Swedish society, becoming permanently settled and unable to maintain or express their culture.

The consequences were profound and remain visible today. Being Sámi became stigmatised and dangerous. Cultural practices were hidden from subsequent generations as a means of survival and acceptance within majority society.

Racial biology measurements, forced sterilisation, mass graves, and the abduction of Sámi children occurred. Between the 1930s and 1940s, Sámi children classified as reindeer herders were sent to nomad schools, while other Sámi children were assimilated through Swedish education. Families were split, with some remaining in Sámi villages while approximately 80 percent were forcibly integrated into majority society. Generations of Sámi were “Swedified,” and feelings of shame and loss persist today, particularly among those born in the 1970s and 1980s who lost their language, culture, and identity—many without knowing they were Sámi. Additionally, since history plays a significant role in understanding the Sámi context—especially regarding the question of who is considered Sámi—the Sámi population in general lacks the resources, structures, and mechanisms to organise, coordinate, and communicate effectively as a unified voice.

Through these policies—implemented via education systems and state authority—the foundations were laid for the hate, threats, and disinformation about the Sámi that continue today. It is against this historical backdrop that the relevance of antagonist threats and disinformation becomes clear.

Nordic Arctic security research and assessments

Hybrid threats

Nordic security and intelligence assessments increasingly conceptualise disinformation and information influence as integral components of a broader hybrid threat spectrum. Within this framework, information operations are not treated as isolated phenomena but as activities that interact with cyber operations, economic leverage, and pressure on strategic infrastructure. Assessments produced by the Finnish Security Intelligence Service (Finnish Security and Intelligence Service), the Norwegian Police Security Service (PST), the Swedish Military Intelligence Service (MUST), the Swedish Signal Intelligence (FRA), the Swedish Security Service (*Säkerhetspolisen*) and the Norwegian Intelligence Service (*Etterretningstjenesten*), consistently identify Russia—and, to a lesser extent, China—as principal state actors employing such methods to polarise societies, erode trust in democratic institutions, and weaken support for Western security arrangements. These dynamics are considered particularly salient in regions of heightened strategic relevance,

including the Arctic and the High North (Finnish Security and intelligence Service 2024; Norwegian Police Security Service 2024; Säkerhetspolisen 2024).

These national assessments are reinforced by both European-level analysis and region-specific research. The EU Hybrid Fusion Cell³ has identified the European Arctic as a space where information manipulation is used to influence perceptions of NATO enlargement, EU engagement, and Arctic resource governance, elevating narratives related to sovereignty, territorial control, and political legitimacy to matters of strategic significance beyond national borders. At the regional level, Hybrid CoE Working Paper 30 provides empirical depth to this assessment by documenting a recent increase in hybrid threat activities in the Norwegian High North, primarily linked to Russia (Hoogensen Gjørsv 2024). The study highlights intelligence and information gathering, influence operations, and acts of sabotage as key instruments used to destabilise society while remaining below the threshold of armed conflict. Importantly, the paper situates these activities within a broader strategic intent to shape the security environment and geopolitical balance in the European Arctic, underscoring the relevance of hybrid threats as a persistent feature of regional security rather than isolated incidents.

Taken together, these findings build on earlier analyses of Arctic geopolitics. Already in 2015, Conley and Rohloff argued in *The New Ice Curtain* that the Arctic was shifting from a region of relative cooperation to one increasingly shaped by geopolitical rivalry, as Russia integrated the High North into its core national security strategy. Their analysis documented the recentralisation of Arctic governance, expansion of military infrastructure, and strengthened control over strategic assets such as the Northern Sea Route, signalling a move beyond purely defensive or economic motivations (Conley and Rohloff 2015). At the same time, Russia's Arctic ambitions were shown to be constrained by economic pressures, Western sanctions, and technological limitations, leading to a pragmatic reliance on international cooperation and partnerships—particularly with China—within existing governance frameworks. The combination of strategic assertiveness, hybrid activity below the threshold of armed conflict, and selective cooperation

3 The EU Hybrid Fusion Cell is a specialised analytical unit established within the European Union's Intelligence and Situation Centre (EU INTCEN), which itself operates under the European External Action Service (EEAS)

reflects a broader pattern in Russian policy and underscores the risk that the Arctic will increasingly mirror global geopolitical tensions rather than remain a distinct zone of low conflict.

Andreas Østhagen (2023), in a paper for the European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats in Finland, suggests that the increased risk of conflict and hybrid threats after Russia's military aggression in Europe has elevated the strategic significance of the Arctic—particularly the European High North—within the international security agenda (Østhagen 2023). NATO member states' presence and engagement in the region are therefore likely to remain substantial in the coming years. Despite this heightened attention, Russia is unlikely to pursue direct military confrontation in the Arctic, and there are no large-scale territorial disputes that pose an immediate risk of open conflict. Instead, the primary risk of escalation lies in unintended incidents or deliberately limited actions conducted below the threshold of overt attribution, commonly associated with hybrid threat operations. In this context, the maritime domain presents particular challenges, given its complexity, critical infrastructure, and operational ambiguity: referring to conditions in which activities occur in environments that make it difficult to determine *what has happened, who is responsible, and whether an action constitutes a hostile act*. Arctic communities are also especially exposed to subversive activities, including intelligence collection and influence operations, which exploit geographic remoteness, societal vulnerabilities, and information asymmetries (Østhagen 2023)

Domestic misinformation and local information dynamics

While foreign influence operations feature prominently in national threat assessments, existing research suggests that many of the most immediate information challenges in Sápmi arise from domestic misinformation rather than coordinated external campaigns. Inaccurate or misleading claims related to for example predator management, hunting regulations, mining projects, and wind power development circulate widely through social media platforms, local online forums, and closed messaging groups. In small, socially dense communities, such narratives can spread rapidly and exert a disproportionate influence on political attitudes and trust relationships (Marwick and Lewis 2017).

Crisis situations further complicate these dynamics. Climate-related events—such as extreme weather, difficult grazing conditions for reindeer herding, or wildfires—place additional strain on local information systems. During such periods, the boundaries between misinformation, misunderstanding, and deliberate disinformation often become blurred, particularly when actors with economic or political interests amplify selective interpretations of events. Comparative studies from northern Canada and Greenland indicate that limited local communication capacity, combined with delayed or ambiguous official messaging, can intensify uncertainty and foster distrust toward public authorities in Arctic contexts.

In 2024, the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (BRÅ) published an in-depth study on hate crimes targeting Sámi individuals in Sweden (BRÅ 2024:5). The report shows that anti-Sámi hate crimes share many characteristics with those directed at other minority groups, while also displaying distinctive features linked to the Sámi people's historical position, cultural practices, and contemporary political conflicts. The offences occur across a range of everyday settings, including schools, workplaces, public spaces, private homes, and digital environments, and include verbal abuse, racist slurs, threats, and, in some cases, physical violence. A notable finding is that hate crimes are not only directed at individuals but also at reindeer and the reindeer herding livelihood, for example through the killing or injury of animals, which distinguishes anti-Sámi hate crimes from many other categories documented in Sweden.

Based on interviews with victims and analyses of police reports, BRÅ finds that hate crimes against the Sámi often occur in small communities where victims and perpetrators are socially or geographically close. This proximity significantly deters reporting, as victims may fear social repercussions or retaliation. The report also notes that hate crimes tend to intensify during periods when Sámi rights are prominent in public debate, such as during legal proceedings or conflicts over land use and natural resource exploitation. The lack of systematic ethnic registration in Swedish crime statistics further complicates measurement, leading BRÅ to conclude that official figures likely underestimate the true extent of anti-Sámi hate crime.

Analytically, the statistical material offers insights beyond incident counts. While the absolute number of reported hate crimes against the Sámi is low,

it is high relative to the population size. BRÅ (2024:5) stresses that reported cases should be understood as an indicative minimum due to underreporting, classification challenges, and the absence of ethnic data. Disaggregated data show that verbal harassment, threats, and intimidation—often occurring in everyday encounters or online—are the most common forms. A significant share of incidents relates to digital hate in connection with debates on reindeer herding and land rights, and the targeting of reindeer is interpreted as both an economic and symbolic attack on Sámi culture.

BRÅ's analysis supports the interpretation of anti-Sámi hate crimes not as isolated incidents, but as part of a broader social and communicative context shaped by media coverage, political debate, and disputes over land and resources.

In a 2023 report, Katarina Kertysova and Gabriella Gricius analyse how hybrid threats manifest in the Arctic, identifying vulnerable sectors, potential targets, key actors, and strategic objectives. Examining the seven Western Arctic states—Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, and the United States—the report maps the regional threat landscape and identifies four overarching trends: increased Russian cyber activity, interference with critical infrastructure, intensified espionage and intelligence operations, and expanding information influence activities, including disinformation. Situating these developments in the context of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, the authors argue that while Russia's military build-up in the Arctic continues, non-military forms of coercion conducted below the threshold of armed conflict are likely to remain Moscow's preferred approach (Kertysova and Gricius 2023).

In the Arctic context, observed hybrid activities include information operations and disinformation, cyber operations, material interference targeting critical infrastructure such as pipelines and undersea cables, GPS jamming, and more traditional practices of espionage and energy coercion. The report further assesses the feasibility of regional joint response mechanisms and advances a set of policy recommendations focused on strengthening situational awareness, transparency, governance, education and media literacy, crisis preparedness, inter-agency coordination, coalition-based cooperation, escalation management, social inclusion, and improved understanding of Russian strategic intent.

Cyber incidents, critical infrastructure, and total defence

Cyber incidents affecting municipalities, hospitals, and critical infrastructure have become a recurrent feature of the Nordic security landscape. Although these incidents are not always geographically concentrated in Sápmi, they shape broader perceptions of institutional vulnerability and digital dependence. Sweden's experience with large-scale IT breaches, Norway's cyber incidents targeting municipal systems, and Finland's concerns regarding telecommunications infrastructure all contribute to national debates on digital security and total defence (MSB 2022; Hoogensen Gjørsv 2024).

The Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB) published in 2024 a report on cyberattacks targeting critical information systems. It analysed the threat landscape facing government authorities and providers of essential services, based on IT incident reports submitted to MSB between April 2019 and September 2023. According to the findings, attempted cyberattacks account for less than one fifth of all reported IT incidents up to 2022. Other reported causes include human error, system failures, and natural hazards. Of the 1,542 incidents recorded during the period, 16 per cent involved attempted cyberattacks. Government agencies account for the majority of reported incidents, although their share has declined over time. In the report, MSB presented 25 recommendations aimed at strengthening protection against cyber threats (MSB 2024).

For Sámi reindeer communities, whose livelihoods depend on reliable access to weather data, communication networks, and functional local administration, such vulnerabilities highlight the fragility of the wider systems within which their information environments are embedded. Disinformation and cyber insecurity intersect technical disruptions, and perceived institutional weakness can amplify mistrust, while contested narratives exploit these vulnerabilities to create a more volatile information landscape.

Cyber incidents affecting municipalities, hospitals, and critical infrastructure have become a recurrent feature of the Nordic security landscape

Influence operations and FIMI

Influence operations in Nordic threat reporting are explicitly mentioned (Finnish Security Intelligence Service 2024; Norwegian Police Security Service 2024; Säkerhetspolisen 2024), although Nordic security agencies rarely use the concept of Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference (FIMI) explicitly. Nevertheless, the phenomenon is present under a range of related terms, including “influencing,” “information influence,” “disinformation,” and efforts to undermine trust and societal cohesion (Finnish Security and Intelligence Service 2025; PST 2024). Finnish assessments are particularly explicit in linking espionage and influencing as complementary tools within broader state strategies, emphasizing how information activities can shape perceptions, legitimize strategic narratives, and exploit social and political cleavages (Finnish Security and Intelligence Service 2025). Norwegian and Swedish reports similarly acknowledge influence operations as part of hybrid threat portfolios, though often with less detailed discussion of mechanisms and platforms. Across the literature, influence operations are primarily assessed in terms of their potential effects—polarization, erosion of trust, and disruption of decision-making—rather than through detailed analyses of digital platform dynamics. This reflects both the mandates of security services and the constraints of public reporting but also points to an analytical gap between national threat assessments and emerging academic research on digital information environments.

The report *Beyond Operation Doppelgänger: A Capability Assessment of the Social Design Agency* provides the most comprehensive open-source analysis to date of contemporary Russian foreign information manipulation and interference (FIMI) capabilities (Pamment and Tsutsumia 2025). Drawing on more than 3,000 leaked internal documents, the study demonstrates that what has commonly been labelled the “Doppelgänger operation” represents only one delivery mechanism within a broader, state-sanctioned information warfare ecosystem centred on the Russian Social Design Agency (SDA).

The Pamment and Tsutsumia (2025) analysis, although focused on lessons learned from Ukraine, shows that SDA operations combine techniques drawn from commercial advertising, political campaigning, intelligence tradecraft,

and psychological operations. Notably, operational success is not measured primarily through persuasion or attitudinal change, but through penetration of the information environment. Visibility, controversy, debunking, and media exposure are treated internally as indicators of effectiveness, reflecting a logic focused on disruption and agenda-setting rather than belief formation (Pamment and Tsutsumia 2025).

Importantly, there is currently limited open-source literature, or empirical evidence that the specific tactics, techniques, and procedures documented in the *Doppelgänger* case are being systematically deployed against the Swedish Sámi population or within Swedish Sápmi. The report does not identify dedicated SDA campaigns targeting Sámi political issues, Indigenous governance in Sweden, or Arctic-specific conflicts. However, the operational logic described—particularly the exploitation of societal fault lines, identity-based grievances, and international norms concerning minority and Indigenous rights—suggests that the Sámi context could constitute a plausible future target environment. This should therefore be treated as a hypothesis grounded in structural vulnerability rather than as evidence of ongoing hostile activity.

Alice Marwick and Rebecca Lewis (2019) describe in their article “Media Manipulation and Disinformation Online” how online actors exploit digital platforms and media logics to manipulate public discourse through coordinated practices such as strategic amplification, harassment, meme warfare, and attention hacking. Marwick and Lewis show that media manipulation is driven less by isolated falsehoods than by networked interactions between fringe online communities, mainstream media, and platform algorithms, resulting in polarisation, misinformation, and erosion of trust in institutions. Although the report focuses primarily on the United States and does not address the Arctic, Indigenous communities, or northern regions, its analytical framework is relevant for understanding information environments characterised by small publics, high visibility, and identity-based conflict, making it conceptually transferable to Arctic and Indigenous contexts

Arctic and High North dimensions in Nordic threat reporting

References to the Arctic and High North appear unevenly across Nordic security assessments. Norwegian and Finnish reports more frequently situate hybrid threats within northern geographies, reflecting both geographical proximity to Russia and the strategic importance of northern territories, infrastructure, and communication systems (Etterretningstjenesten 2024; Finnish Security and Intelligence Service 2025). Swedish assessments tend to absorb its northern and Arctic regions into a general national geographic approach, although their analytical frameworks are applicable to northern contexts.

Where they explicitly addressed the Arctic, it is predominantly framed in strategic and infrastructural terms, including military mobility, energy systems, and critical communications. Societal and informational dimensions specific to northern or Indigenous communities receive comparatively limited attention. This omission reflects the state-centric orientation of national threat assessments and their focus on institutional resilience rather than community-level information dynamics.

Taken together, Nordic security and intelligence assessments and interdisciplinary research on hybrid threats, Indigenous governance, and Arctic information environments present a coherent picture of an evolving threat environment characterised by hybrid activity, cyber-enabled espionage, and information influence. There is a strong convergence regarding Russia as the most immediate threat actor and China as a longer-term strategic challenger. Cyber operations and espionage are consistently treated as interlinked, while influence activities are recognised as integral components of hybrid strategies.

However, publicly available Nordic assessments of influence operations often lack specifics, particularly with regard to the use of digital platform dynamics and the particular characteristics of local information ecosystems. Arctic-specific societal vulnerabilities, including those affecting Sámi and their communities, remain marginal in national threat reporting.

Empirical analysis:

Geography, governance, and the information order in Sápmi

This section presents an exploratory analysis of interview and survey material collected in Swedish Sápmi (primarily only from reindeer-herding Sámi), examining how information flows, misinformation, and perceptions of security are experienced at the community level. Rather than assessing the prevalence or attribution of specific influence operations, the analysis focuses on identifying recurring themes and structural dynamics that shape the Sámi information environment in a context of heightened political, legal, and security-related attention to the Arctic.

The empirical material is organised around four interrelated themes that emerged consistently across the interviews and survey responses. These themes capture how information dynamics intersect with geography, governance, and security in everyday Sámi experience: (1) Sápmi as a transnational information space; (2) governance complexity, land use, and Sámi rights; (3) domestic misinformation, racism, and online hostility; and (4) total defence, resilience, and Indigenous inclusion. Together, they provide a structured account of how long-standing Indigenous–state relations, contemporary digital platforms, and evolving security discourses interact in shaping trust, polarisation, and resilience in the Nordic Arctic.

Cluster 1. Sápmi as a transnational information space

Sápmi constitutes a transnational Indigenous homeland extending across northern Norway, Sweden, Finland, and the Kola Peninsula in Russia. This geography produces a distinctive information order shaped by cross-border kinship networks, seasonal migration, shared livelihoods, and long-standing institutional cooperation. Sámi-language media (noting that there are nine distinct Sámi languages spoken today across Sápmi) and informal digital networks contribute to a shared public sphere that intersects with, but does not replicate, national media ecosystems.

Interviewees consistently described how issues related to Sámi rights, land use, and governance circulate rapidly across national boundaries, often faster than official communication from state authorities. Respondent A, a senior representative of a national Sámi umbrella organisation, noted that court rulings

CHART 2 - Preliminary findings: Swedish Sápmi Indigenous information space

CLUSTER	SUB-THEMES
1. Sápmi as a Transnational Information Space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross-border Sámi-language media ecosystems • Rapid diffusion of rights- and land-use narratives beyond national contexts • Shared sense-making and informational redundancy • Challenges for coordinated crisis communication
2. Governance, Land Use, and Sámi Rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-level and asymmetrical governance arrangements • Fragmented and asynchronous official communication • Judicial rulings as recurring symbolic flashpoints • Persistent land-use conflicts (mining, wind, forestry, infrastructure)
3. Domestic Misinformation, Racism, and Hostility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Predominantly domestic misinformation dynamics • Normalised online racism, hate speech, and harassment • Self-censorship and withdrawal from public debate • Feedback loops between misinformation and enforcement actions
4. Total Defence, Resilience, and Indigenous Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited Sámi inclusion in total defence planning • Impacts of military activity on land and mobility • Sámi capacities relevant to resilience and situational awareness • Domestic polarisation aligning with hostile strategic effects

Generated from Chapter Text with Assistance of ChatGPT

or infrastructure disputes in one country are quickly referenced in debates in neighbouring states, frequently without attention to legal, administrative, or institutional differences. Respondent B, an elected Sámi political representative, similarly emphasised that Sámi-language media and transnational social media networks facilitate rapid cross-border diffusion of narratives that may lose contextual specificity as they travel.

These transnational information flows enhance resilience by creating redundancy, mutual awareness, and opportunities for collective sense-making across Sápmi. At the same time, they complicate crisis communication and the correction of misinformation. Once simplified or distorted narratives circulate across borders, respondents noted that they can be difficult to contextualise or

retract, particularly when national authorities respond slowly or inconsistently. In such cases, the speed of informal information exchange can outpace formal governance communication, creating informational asymmetries that contribute to misunderstanding and mistrust.

Cluster 2. Governance, land use, and Sámi rights: Structural sources of informational strain

Governance in Swedish Sápmi is characterised by multi-level and asymmetrical arrangements involving state authorities, Sámi parliaments, reindeer herding districts Sámi Villages (*samebyar*), municipalities, courts, and transnational Sámi organisations. Interviewees consistently identified that the history and laws in combination of the consequences of this complexity as a structural source of informational vulnerability. Respondent C, a policy officer working with land-use and infrastructure issues, emphasised that overlapping mandates and unclear divisions of responsibility often make it difficult to explain decision-making processes to the public. When state agencies, courts, and Sámi institutions communicate asynchronously or with differing degrees of transparency, gaps emerge that are readily filled by speculation or misinformation.

From an information integrity perspective, governance complexity functions as a structural risk factor rather than a situational failure. Respondents repeatedly stressed that mistrust is rarely generated by a single event; instead, it accumulates over time through repeated experiences of fragmented, delayed, or overly technical communication. Even legally sound decisions may appear arbitrary or illegitimate when their rationale is not communicated in accessible and coordinated ways.

Judicial recognition of Sámi rights emerged as one of the most consistent triggers of hostile digital discourse. Respondents referred in particular to landmark rulings concerning grazing, hunting, and fishing rights, which are frequently cited in online debates long after the legal proceedings have concluded. Respondent A described how complex legal reasoning grounded in immemorial use and collective rights is routinely reframed online as evidence of “special privileges” or unequal treatment. Respondent B similarly noted that legal outcomes are often stripped of context and reinterpreted through moralised narratives that position Indigenous rights in opposition to national or local interests.

Several respondents referred to these rulings as acquiring a “digital afterlife.” They re-emerge repeatedly in subsequent debates over mining, infrastructure, or environmental policy, serving as symbolic reference points rather than legal precedents. This dynamic contributes to polarisation and normalises antagonistic framings of Sámi institutions and representatives.

Conflicts over land use—particularly mining, wind power, forestry, and infrastructure development—were identified by all interviewees as the most persistent drivers of hostile information dynamics. Respondent C highlighted major mining proposals in northern Sweden as illustrative cases in which opposition from reindeer herding districts rapidly escalated into broader public hostility. Respondent D, a Sámi community leader with extensive experience in reindeer herding governance, described how such conflicts often trigger waves of online commentary portraying Sámi livelihoods as incompatible with national economic interests. While respondents did not identify coordinated campaigns, they consistently described the cumulative effect of repeated framing that positions Sámi actors as impediments to progress.

Cluster 3. Domestic misinformation, racism, and normalised hostility

Both interview and survey data indicate that domestically generated misinformation and hostility constitute the most immediate and empirically observable challenge in the Sámi information environment, echoing findings in the broader literature. All survey respondents reported frequent exposure to misleading or false information online, primarily related to Sámi rights, reindeer herding, and land use. Most respondents indicated that such exposure negatively affected their trust in public debate, and several described behavioural adaptation, including disengagement from online discussions to avoid harassment or algorithmic amplification.

Perceptions of foreign influence were more cautious. Only one survey respondent believed they had encountered content likely originating from foreign actors; others were uncertain or sceptical. Interviewees expressed similar restraint. Respondent A and Respondent B both noted that while anonymous accounts and unusual activity patterns occasionally appear, attribution is extremely difficult. None of the interviewees presented verifiable evidence of systematic foreign information manipulation targeting Swedish Sápmi.

The analysis therefore supports a distinction between plausibility and empirical confirmation. While Sámi-related conflicts could theoretically be exploited by foreign actors, current evidence points primarily to domestically generated dynamics. At the same time, Respondent A and Respondent C noted that although they had no evidence of foreign coordination, the cumulative effects of online polarisation, hostility, and erosion of trust surrounding Sámi issues were perceived as consistent with the types of societal fragmentation identified in Nordic security assessments as serving Russian strategic interests.

Experiences of hate and threats directed at Sámi individuals were described as routine rather than exceptional. Respondent D provided examples of symbolic violence and intimidation following high-profile legal and political disputes, while Respondent A characterised online hostility as increasingly normalised. Survey respondents corroborated these accounts, reporting exposure to hate speech, false claims, and hostile commentary. Several indicated that withdrawal from online debate had become a rational strategy for self-protection.

This pattern suggests that self-censorship is emerging as an adaptive response, with implications for democratic participation and representation. Over time, such withdrawal risks skewing public debate by disproportionately silencing those most affected by policy decisions.

Relations with state authorities—particularly police and county administrations—were identified as a sensitive area where misinformation and institutional practice intersect. Respondent B and Respondent D both described situations in which enforcement actions related to hunting or land use were perceived as disproportionate when triggered by public reporting influenced by misleading narratives. These dynamics were described as creating feedback loops: misinformation leads to reports; reports lead to enforcement; enforcement reinforces narratives of Sámi criminality. Over time, this erodes trust not only in individual agencies but in the broader governance system.

Cluster 4. Total defence, resilience, and Indigenous inclusion

All interviewees addressed the expansion of military activity and total defence planning in northern Sweden following 2022. While recognising security imperatives, respondents expressed concern about restrictions affecting grazing land and mobility, as well as the limited incorporation of Sámi perspectives into planning processes.

At the same time, several respondents emphasised that Sámi communities possess assets of direct relevance to total defence, including continuous presence, local environmental knowledge, logistical capacity, and food security potential. These capacities position Sámi actors not only as stakeholders affected by security policy, but as potential contributors to situational awareness, crisis response, and resilience in remote regions.

Two respondents explicitly noted that, although they had no evidence of foreign coordination, the cumulative effects of online polarisation and erosion of trust surrounding Sámi issues were consistent with the types of societal fragmentation described in Nordic security assessments as serving hostile actors' strategic interests. This observation underscores the importance of addressing domestic information environments as part of broader resilience efforts.

Reflections and concluding remarks

This chapter has examined Sámi rights and information integrity in the Nordic Arctic through the combined lenses of hybrid threat research, Nordic and European security assessments, and illustrative empirical material drawn from interviews and survey responses. In doing so, it has sought to advance understanding of information integrity, disinformation, and societal resilience in the Arctic by integrating Indigenous perspectives into analyses of hybrid threats and foreign information manipulation and interference (FIMI). This integration is essential, as Indigenous communities are not only affected by evolving security dynamics but are also embedded within—and contribute to—the information environments and governance systems that shape Arctic resilience.

The empirical material gathered via interviews and surveys and analysed in this study does not provide substantiated evidence of coordinated FIMI activities specifically targeting Swedish Sápmi. However, both the academic literature and Nordic and EU security assessments indicate that the Arctic is increasingly exposed to FIMI as part of a broader hybrid threat landscape, in which Russia is identified as the primary actor and China as a longer-term strategic challenger. Within this context, Sámi-related issues—particularly land use, legal recognition of Indigenous rights, resource governance, and relations with state authorities—constitute areas of structural vulnerability rather than demonstrated foreign

targeting. Interviewees consistently noted that the polarisation, hostility, and erosion of trust observed in digital discussions surrounding Sámi rights resemble the strategic effects commonly associated with FIMI in the literature, even if attribution remains unproven. This distinction is analytically important: while current dynamics appear predominantly domestically generated, the cumulative nature of these conflicts creates information environments that could plausibly be exploited by external actors seeking to amplify division, delegitimise institutions, or undermine societal cohesion in the Nordic Arctic.

While several interviewees observed that the polarization and hostility surrounding Sámi issues in digital environments are consistent with the strategic effects attributed to foreign influence operations in the literature, these observations remain anecdotal and cannot support attribution or claims of organised external interference. The analysis therefore underscores the importance of distinguishing between structural vulnerability—where Sámi-related conflicts could plausibly be exploited by external actors—and empirically verified influence operations.

By contrast, the interviews and survey responses consistently point to domestically generated misinformation, conflict-driven narratives, and online hostility as the most immediate challenges affecting Sámi information environments. These dynamics are closely linked to long-standing issues such as the majority population's knowledge of history, land-use conflicts, legal recognition of Sámi rights and culture, resource extraction, predator management, and infrastructure development. Digital platforms and algorithmic amplification intensify these tensions by simplifying complex governance issues, rewarding emotionally charged content, and lowering the threshold for hostile engagement. In this respect, the empirical findings align closely with existing research and official data demonstrating that hate, threats, and harassment directed at Sámi individuals and livelihoods are persistent phenomena rooted primarily in national and local contexts rather than in externally coordinated influence campaigns.

At the same time, the analysis highlights a structural gap between state-centric security assessments, which convincingly frame the Arctic as exposed to hybrid threats and FIMI, and community-level information realities, which remain underexplored in formal threat reporting. Several interviewees emphasised that Sámi communities all over Sweden possess unique situational awareness,

long-term environmental knowledge, and cross-border social networks that are highly relevant to understanding and responding to emerging risks in the Arctic. From this perspective, Sámi communities should not be viewed solely as potential targets of information influence, but also as underutilised contributors to resilience, early warning, and democratic legitimacy in Arctic governance.

The findings therefore suggest that strengthening information integrity in Sápmi should not be framed solely as a counter-FIMI measure, but as a broader resilience-building effort that addresses domestic misinformation, governance-related communication gaps, and long-standing conflict narratives that foreign actors could opportunistically leverage. Interviewees emphasised that Sámi communities possess significant untapped potential

as contributors to resilience, early warning, and situational awareness due to their local presence, cross-border social networks, and long-term environmental knowledge. From a policy perspective, this points toward the value of more systematic inclusion of Sámi institutions and organisations in cross-border and transatlantic initiatives focused on total defence initiatives, joint situational awareness, anticipatory analysis, media literacy, crisis preparedness, and inter-agency coordination. Such inclusion would not only reduce vulnerability to FIMI by improving trust and transparency but also enhance the analytical

depth and legitimacy of Arctic security governance. Recognising Sámi actors as partners in safeguarding information integrity—rather than solely as potential targets of influence—emerges as a key recommendation for addressing hybrid threats in Sápmi and the wider Arctic region.

The analysis further underscores the potential for Sámi communities to play a more integrated and strategic role within joint total defence frameworks in the Nordic Arctic. Sámi livelihoods—particularly reindeer herding and cultural knowledge (handicrafts, equipment, clothing and survival)—constitute not only cultural and economic practices but also sources of situational awareness,

The analysis further underscores the potential for Sámi communities to play a more integrated and strategic role within joint total defence frameworks in the Nordic Arctic.

local presence, and food security in remote regions where state capacity is limited. Long-term ecological knowledge, continuous land use, and cross-border mobility position Sámi actors as natural contributors to early warning, crisis response, and continuity of essential services. Comparative experience from Canada, where Indigenous communities participate in national Ranger programmes, illustrates how Indigenous knowledge systems can be formally integrated into defence and civil preparedness structures, enhancing resilience and legitimacy simultaneously. Adapted to Nordic legal and institutional contexts, similar approaches could strengthen cooperation between Sámi institutions and civil authorities and contribute to a more inclusive and effective total defence posture in the Arctic.

Overall, this study should be regarded as preliminary and exploratory. The limited empirical material constrains the scope of inference and precludes definitive conclusions regarding prevalence, trends, or attribution. Nevertheless, by integrating macro-level threat assessments with micro-level community perspectives, the report demonstrates that safeguarding information integrity and societal resilience in the Arctic requires approaches that are not only security-focused but also socially inclusive. Recognising Sámi communities as knowledge holders and partners—rather than merely as vulnerable populations—emerges as a critical condition for addressing hybrid threats and FIMI in the evolving Arctic security environment. ❁

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

Alexander Dalziel, Henrik Häggström and Camilla Unsgaard

Information security in the Canadian and Swedish Arctics

In many respects, the Canadian and Swedish Arctics are different. Climate is milder in the European Arctic. While imperfect, infrastructure is more advanced and features better connectivity in terms of transportation and telecommunications in Sápmi. Indigenous governance is better established and more articulated in the Canadian north than in Sweden and Sápmi. In Canada, there are several distinct Indigenous groups, whereas in Sweden there is only one recognized Indigenous people, the Sámi. Their histories and current circumstances differ greatly, including the ways in which Indigenous groups integrate into society. And the sheer size of the Canadian Arctic and its lengthy coastline contrast with Sweden's much smaller Arctic region.

Nonetheless, as described in the two preceding chapters, when it comes to similarities in the information domain, there are commonalities between the norths of Canada and Sweden. Notable among them are:

- Misinformation is widely detected; disinformation is suspected but more difficult to confirm and attribute;
- Infrastructural and socio-economic disparities create vulnerabilities to information systems undermining civilian and national cohesion;
- Distinct Indigenous geographies and institutions, including Inuit Nunangat and Sápmi, as well as cross national boundaries like those of the Gwich'in First Nation;

- Indigenous governance confers unique resources to resist misinformation and disinformation and protect information, in many cases through regional and international coordinating institutions;
- Indigenous governments and communities have a high awareness of dynamics in their information spaces;
- Complex historical relationships among Indigenous peoples and national governments that continue to shape trust and information flows;
- Compromised information flows fragment public trust in institutions;
- Misinformation and disinformation threaten multi-jurisdictional governance of Canada and developing institutions in Sápmi, in politically sensitive environments with historic and ongoing colonial injustices.

Indigenous groups share the ambition and willingness to contribute to the wider security and defence — provided it can be done in a respectful and inclusive manner that respects their self-determination.

The convergences suggest that transatlantic cooperation can usefully strengthen the information resilience of the Arctic, and that Arctic-centred cooperation can have strategic benefits for Europe and North America more broadly. Moreover, the divergences in many cases are a potentially rich source of innovation and mutual learning to enhance disinformation detection and response. The quest for self-determination and the recognition of rights has generated a complex landscape of Indigenous institutions and governments, all of which open points to engage on and devise responsible whole-of-society approaches to dealing with a threatening information and cognitive environment locally and nationally.

Misinformation is clearly a widespread problem. What is missing is the comprehensive ability to detect when it is part of intentional campaigns designed to mislead audiences and covertly advance the interests of external players, state and non-state.

***Information security and the A7 agenda:
Policy directions, localized initiatives***

Solutions can be found and implemented throughout the democratic Arctic through the A7 and its partners. Canada and Sweden are leading actors within the A7. With their close partnerships and memberships in leading international political, defence and economic institutions like the European Union, NATO, NORAD and CUSMA, they will play a key role with the other Nordic states and the United States in ensuring that enduring cooperation and policy are developed in the transatlantic Arctic. Key to making that cooperation as strong and enduring as possible will be domestic and transborder partnership with the north's Indigenous peoples.

Take two new initiatives in the A7. Canada and Sweden signed in November 2025 a comprehensive strategic partnership, one that confirms a “joint commitment to security, defence and stability” and the need for “Arctic cooperation and north-north connections” as two of its five pillars (Government of Canada 2025a). In addition, Canada's quadrilateral North Atlantic maritime security partnership with Denmark, Norway and Germany is a blueprint for how non-regional partners can become involved in initiatives with implications for the Arctic (Global Affairs Canada 2025; Dalziel 2025a).

Any such initiatives will demand a better understanding of the Arctic to succeed. It will be up to Canada, Sweden and their peoples to communicate the possibilities and parameters of working in the democratic Arctic. Additional developments such as Canada's participation in the EU's Security Action for Europe (SAFE) will create other opportunities for northern actors to get involved in transatlantic initiatives (Government of Canada 2025b). That will demand a sure flow of reliable information, not only between capital cities, but from and to the Sámi, First Nations, Métis and Inuit whose homelands are in the far north, the peoples who have maintained, developed and defended it.

Seen through the lens of this paper, information integrity is an area that will require more work by the A7 and their allies. To that end, the main recommendation is to dedicate a distinct line of effort to information security, tackling FIMI, within a larger effort to tackle hostile hybrid operations in Arctic settings as part of Canada's proposed Arctic Security Dialogue (Global Affairs

Canada 2024). It would include national collective, localized research, data sharing, integration and analytics, and international presence. A four-pronged, whole-of-society approach can contribute to understanding information threats and responding to them:

- **National and A7 collective effort:** To identify disinformation campaigns, disarm them and lessen vulnerabilities to them, form nationally inclusive information integrity networks that have all levels of government, Indigenous governments and institutions, civil society, academia and private sector representation. The networks should be designed around merging northern and Indigenous knowledge with national civil society and academic research, with the aim of developing “total defence” type readiness in information security frameworks with clear civilian roles and responsibilities and contacts with national security and defence institutions. Moreover, these can be developed and maintained through A7 cooperation as part of transatlantic defence and security frameworks.
- **Strengthened knowledge base:** Localized research co-designed and jointly pursued with local governments and organizations will be crucial to building sound policy for information resilience in Arctic societies. Beyond building awareness in those communities and in national policy circles, the aim should be to create mutually beneficial two-way data and knowledge sharing about threats to information integrity and best practices in response. Products could be designed for use by Indigenous, territorial and municipal governments with the constituencies they represent. The local information ecosystem would benefit from locally relevant insights into national security threats through national, territorial and regional institutions, as well as more quality content from reliable sources on popular platforms such as radio and Facebook.
- **Data integration, sharing:** As part of strengthening the means to share knowledge, the co-design and co-deployment of mutually beneficial data collection, analysis and dissemination methods should be a component of these efforts. Digital platforms can improve real-time knowledge about external threats to information environments in the Arctic through fusing Indigenous, local, national and international

knowledge with data analytics. Success will depend on an appreciation and integration of Indigenous data sovereignty.

- International presence: As alluded to above, with growing interest in the Arctic, the need for stronger coordinated strategic communications will be important in engaging partners in NATO, the EU and elsewhere who are interested in participating in defence cooperation and infrastructure development in the region. The inclusion of Indigenous and northern governments in Arctic security forums will itself be an informational success that will strengthen resilience.

There are no doubts that other opportunities and challenges await the countries and peoples of the Arctic in defending their information – opportunities that can be identified in cooperation with inhabitants of the north. In the context of mounting hybrid warfare and the Arctic’s increasing geostrategic significance, strengthening the means for reliable communication between north and south is an imperative. Transatlantic partnerships among northern governments, Indigenous, regional and national, can strengthen the fabric of communication, with benefits extending far beyond dealing with foreign interference. ❁

ANNEX A

Semi-Structured Interview Guide (Sweden version)

Target group: Sámi representatives with experience in political representation, community governance, land-use management, and public engagement
Estimated duration: Approximately 60 minutes

1. Introduction and Context (approx. 5 minutes)

- 1.1. Could you describe your current role, professional background, and the context or organisation you represent today?
- 1.2. How would you characterise the relationship between Sámi society and digital information environments, including interactions with public authorities and broader societal actors?

2. Digital Information Environment in Everyday Life (approx. 10 minutes)

- 2.1. How do digital platforms and online communication channels influence the type of information that reaches you and your local community?
- 2.2. Have you encountered situations where algorithms or digital information flows appear to amplify particular narratives (e.g. political, cultural, or societal)? If so, could you provide examples?
- 2.3. Are there specific Sámi-related issues that you believe are frequently misunderstood, oversimplified, or misrepresented in social media or online discussions?

3. Experiences of Disinformation and Information Influence Related to Sámi Issues (approx. 10–15 minutes)

- 3.1. Have you observed content that you perceive as organised influence activity or disinformation targeting Sámi people, Sámi institutions, or Indigenous issues more broadly?
- 3.2. If so, what were the main themes or messages involved?
- 3.3. Have you encountered influence attempts that you believe originate from foreign actors or accounts operating from outside Sweden?
 - a) What indicators led you to that perception?
- 3.4. Do you perceive that certain influence efforts or misleading narratives are directed particularly at specific groups within Sápmi (e.g. reindeer herders, young people, women, activists, or political representatives)?

- 3.5. Which topics do you consider most prominent in such influence or disinformation efforts (for example land rights, climate change, NATO, energy, mining, or Sámi identity)?

4. Effects on Local Communities, Trust, and Relations with the State (approx. 10 minutes)

- 4.1. In your experience, how do digital narratives and potential disinformation affect trust between Sámi communities and Swedish public authorities?
- 4.2. Have you observed digital information dynamics contributing to conflicts or tensions within Sámi communities, or between Sámi and the majority population?
- 4.3. Do you perceive differences in how digital content affects different generations within Sámi society?
- 4.4. How do local actors—such as *samebyar*, Sámi organisations, youth councils, or municipalities—currently work to address, manage, or respond to misleading or false information?

5. Strengths and Vulnerabilities in Sápmi (approx. 10 minutes)

- 5.1. What strengths do you believe Sámi communities possess when it comes to resisting misinformation or influence operations?
- Cultural traditions
 - Social networks
 - Local and environmental knowledge
 - Language and media institutions
- 5.2. What structural or contextual vulnerabilities do you believe make it easier for misleading or manipulated information to spread?
- Geographic dispersion
 - Digital infrastructure
 - Historical marginalisation
 - Distrust of authorities
- 5.3. Are there particular groups or contexts within Sápmi that you consider especially vulnerable to digital influence?

6. International Developments, NATO, and Geopolitical Narratives (approx. 5–8 minutes, if time permits)

- 6.1. Have you observed changes in information flows or public debate following Sweden's accession to NATO?
- 6.2. How do international developments—such as the war in Ukraine, Arctic geopolitics, climate change, or mining policy—shape digital discussions related to Sámi issues?
- 6.3. Do you perceive that foreign actors seek to instrumentalise Indigenous issues in their narratives in order to influence public opinion in the Nordic countries?

7. Future Needs and Recommendations (approx. 10 minutes)

- 7.1. What types of support, tools, or initiatives would most effectively strengthen Sámi communities' resilience to misinformation and information influence?
- 7.2. How could Swedish authorities improve cooperation with Sámi communities on issues related to information integrity, hybrid threats, and total defence?
- 7.3. What forms of education or capacity-building do you consider particularly important (for example for youth, community leaders, samebyar, or political institutions)?
- 7.4. If you were asked to provide three recommendations to an international policy report (e.g. Canada–Europe), what would they be?

8. Closing

- 8.1. Is there anything we have not discussed that you consider important for understanding information influence, security, or resilience in Sápmi?
- 8.2. Would you be willing to participate in follow-up discussions if clarification or additional input is required?

ANNEX B

Survey: Experiences of Information Influence

Research and engagement survey

Project: Arctic Disinformation and Indigenous Communities on NATO’s Northern Flank – A Transatlantic Perspective

Date: October 2025

Project partners:

- University of Ottawa – Information Integrity Lab
- Swedish Defence University – Centre for Total Defence and Societal Security (CTSS)

Project funder: Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, Canada Office

Introduction to the survey

This survey forms part of the research project “Arctic Disinformation and Indigenous Communities on NATO’s Northern Flank – A Transatlantic Perspective”, conducted in cooperation between the University of Ottawa’s Information Integrity Lab and the Swedish Defence University’s Centre for Total Defence and Societal Security (CTSS). The project is funded by the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung in Canada.

The purpose of the project is to strengthen transatlantic cooperation between Canada and Europe in order to enhance resilience against information influence and disinformation in the Arctic. A particular focus is placed on Indigenous communities—such as Sámi, Inuit, and other Arctic peoples—and how these communities are affected by information flows, digital platforms, and foreign influence activities.

In Sweden, this issue is closely linked to Sámi crisis preparedness and resilience efforts, where Indigenous organisations play an important role in

strengthening local preparedness, information security, and participation in total defence. Through this survey, we seek to gather experiences, perceptions, and perspectives that can inform future recommendations for a more inclusive and resilient security framework in northern regions.

In addition to this survey, interviews will be conducted with individuals who wish to elaborate on their experiences in greater depth. Participation in interviews is voluntary.

All responses are treated confidentially and are used exclusively for research purposes.

Project description

- The project aims to strengthen transatlantic cooperation between Canada and Europe to improve information integrity and resilience in the Arctic, particularly with regard to information warfare and Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference (FIMI).
- These objectives can only be achieved in cooperation with Indigenous peoples of the Arctic and their institutions. Ensuring the integrity of information flows between Indigenous communities, governments, and institutions—nationally and internationally—supports broader societal participation in security and defence policymaking in Arctic and northern regions.
- The project therefore includes outreach, consultation, and dialogue with Indigenous governments and institutions in the North American and Nordic Arctic to identify priorities and gather insights into their perspectives on disinformation challenges, particularly on digital platforms.

Objective

To produce a public report analysing threats, tools, and resources for protecting Arctic digital information environments and providing recommendations to decision-makers at all levels on countering disinformation.

Handling of responses

- All responses are treated as anonymous unless otherwise specified by the respondent and agreed with the research team.
- Opportunities for follow-up discussions related to the findings may be offered.

Survey

Background

This survey concerns how you, as an individual, experience information in social media, news, and digital platforms. We are interested in both everyday experiences (e.g. how algorithms affect what you see on Facebook, Instagram, or TikTok) and more targeted influence (e.g. disinformation or campaigns aimed at creating distrust in authorities or amplifying conflict).

All responses are anonymous and used solely for research purposes.

1. Your Experiences of Online Information

- 1a. Have you ever experienced online information that you perceived as false, biased, or misleading?
- Yes, often
 - Yes, sometimes
 - No, never
 - Unsure
- 1b. If yes, please briefly describe an example. (Open text)

2. Algorithms and Everyday Influence

- 2a. Have you noticed that your searches or clicks lead to receiving more of the same type of content on social media?
- Yes, often
 - Yes, sometimes
 - No
 - Don't know
- 2b. Has this affected how you view societal issues or public authorities?
- Yes, positively
 - Yes, negatively
 - No effect
 - Unsure

3. Hostile or Foreign Influence

- 3a. Have you seen online messages that you believe may originate from foreign actors (e.g. Russian troll factories, Chinese or Iranian campaigns)?
- Yes
 - No
 - Don't know
- 3b. If yes, what was the message about? (Open text)

3c. Did you perceive that the message affected you or your community?

- Yes, significantly
- Yes, to some extent
- No
- Unsure

4. Types of Influence Encountered (Multiple answers possible)

- False articles or news (“fake news”)
- Manipulated images or videos
- AI-generated content (e.g. text, images, or deepfakes)
- Social media comments/posts that appeared coordinated or unnatural
- Other: _____

5. Reactions and Coping Strategies

5a. How do you usually respond when encountering such information?
(Multiple answers possible)

- Ignore it
- Discuss it with others
- Report the content
- Share it to warn others
- Other: _____

5b. Why do you respond in this way? (Open text)

5c. Have you noticed that people of different gender identities (e.g. women, men, non-binary, transgender persons) and/or with intersecting backgrounds (e.g. ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, geographic location, occupation, religion/belief) experience disinformation and influence campaigns differently in digital media?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

5d. If yes, in what ways are different gender identities targeted? How do intersecting backgrounds matter? (Open text)

6. Trust and Confidence

Has online information affected your trust in Swedish authorities, politicians, or public institutions?

- Yes, increased trust
- Yes, decreased trust
- No effect
- Unsure

If yes, in what way? (Open text)

7. Strengths and Vulnerabilities

- 7a. What strengths do you believe your community or group has in resisting false information? (Open text)
- 7b. What vulnerabilities make it easier for such information to spread? (Open text)

8. International Issues

- 8a. Have international issues (e.g. war, climate change, NATO, Indigenous rights) influenced the type of information you see on social media?
- Yes, significantly
- Yes, to some extent
- No
- Don't know
- 8b. Have you noticed differences in how these issues are presented depending on language or country?
- Yes
- No
- Unsure

9. Technology and Solutions

- 9a. Do you think social media and AI make it easier or harder to determine what is true?
- Easier
- Harder
- No difference
- Don't know
- 9b. Are there tools or forms of support that would make you feel more confident in the information you receive? (Open text)

10. Future and Recommendations

What do you think should be done to strengthen resilience against disinformation in Canada/Sweden and within First Nations/Inuit/Métis/Sámi governments, communities, and institutions? (Open text)

ANNEX C

Data Collection on the Canadian Arctic

#	FORMAT/VENUE	DATE	SOURCE ORIGIN	SOURCE DESCRIPTOR
1	Workshop presentations, US Embassy Cyber Forum	September 16	Nunavut	Indigenous; Northerner
2	Conference Panel, Whitehorse Arctic Security Conference	September 22	Yukon	Indigenous
3	In-person roundtable, University of Yukon	September 23	Yukon	Northerner
4	Virtual/in-person Roundtable	September 23	Yukon	Indigenous; Northern
5	Conference panel, Vancouver International Security Summit	October 17	Nunavut	Indigenous
6	Telephone Interview	November 6	Yukon	Northerner
7	In-person Interview	November 9	Northwest Territories	Northerner
8	Telephone Interview	November 18	Northwest Territories	Northerner
9	Online Interview	November 20	Nunavut	Indigenous
10	Online Interview	November 22	Nunavut	Indigenous
11	Conference Panel, Gauntlet Seminar	November 24	Nunavut; Yukon	Indigenous; Northerner
12	Workshop Panel, NAADSN	November 26	Nunavut; Canada; Greenland; Norway	Indigenous; International; Non-northerner
13	Survey	December 2	Nunavut	Indigenous
14	Online Interview	December 9	Inuit Nunangat	Indigenous
15	Presentation, ArcticNet Annual Scientific Meeting	December 18	Nunavut	Indigenous

ANNEX D

Data Collection on Swedish Sápmi

#	FORMAT/VENUE	DATE	SOURCE ORIGIN	SOURCE DESCRIPTOR
4	Online Interview	November 28	Swedish Sápmi	Indigenous
1	Online Interview	December 5	Swedish Sápmi	Indigenous
2	Online Interview	December 19	Swedish Sápmi	Indigenous
3	Online Interview	December 22	Swedish Sápmi	Indigenous
5	Online Survey	December 15	Swedish Sápmi	Indigenous
6	Online Survey	December 15	Swedish Sápmi	Indigenous
7	Online Survey	December 15	Swedish Sápmi	Indigenous
8	Online Survey	December 15	Swedish Sápmi	Indigenous

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About the authors

Alex Dalziel has almost three decades of experience working on Canada and its geopolitics, built around over 20 years of experience in Canada's national security, intelligence and foreign policy communities. He has worked, studied and lived abroad in Finland, Latvia, Ukraine and the United States. While in government, he held analyst and executive positions with the Privy Council Office, Department of National Defence, Canada Border Services Agency and Canada School of Public Service. His current area of specialization is Arctic geopolitics, cutting across the dynamics of North America, Nordic, NATO, Russia, and non-regional states like China. He also writes and speaks on Canada's broader geopolitical and security role in the world and the intersections of intelligence, national security, trade and economic security. Dalziel holds a BA and MA in History from Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador, as well as certificates in Russia and Baltic Area Studies from the University of Eastern Finland and in European Studies from the University of Bonn. He brings to his work foreign language skills in Russian, French and Finnish. ♣

Henrik Häggström is currently a Strategic Advisor to the Swedish Defence University, specialising in comprehensive defence and threats to national security, including developments in the Arctic region. He is a recognised expert in law enforcement methodology, cross-border law enforcement cooperation, and intelligence-led policing. His research and advisory work have been commissioned by Swedish law enforcement authorities, agencies in Southern Africa, as well as NATO and the United Nations. He also advises the Swedish Prime Minister's Office on emerging and disruptive technologies related to emergency response, crisis management, and

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Camilla Unsgaard, a former police officer for 22 years, that since 2020 service as the Program Director for the International Program at the Swedish Defence University's (SEDU) Center for Social Security (CTSS). In this capacity, she is the Swedish representative in the steering committee at the NATO Partnership for Peace Consortium (PfPC) and leads the university's contribution, including budget and implementation. Camilla is the chief architect of the International Strategic Leadership Program (SLP), a high-level initiative designed for strategic civil-military leaders focusing on decision-making under pressure within the contexts of comprehensive security, defense, and crisis management. Currently, Camilla is the Project Leader for the bilateral capacity-building project (2023–2026) between SEDU and the National Defence University of Ukraine (NDUU), supported by the NATO DEEP. Having successfully directed the pilot SLP implementation on-site in Ukraine, she now serves as a Strategic Advisor to the NDUU. Her mission is to institutionalize and adapt the SLP specifically for Ukraine's security and defense sectors, with the goal of handing over full ownership of the curriculum to Ukrainian partners by 2027. Camilla's strategic insights are grounded in 22 years of service within the Swedish Police. Her extensive background includes a decade of field operations in Stockholm County, where she held senior positions in first-response units, community-oriented policing, and crowd management. An

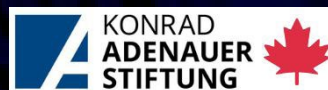
expert in tactical methodology, she served at the National Police Academy, where she developed “train-the-trainer” programs for national tactical and strategic methods. At the National Operational Department, she was project leader for the police reform project to implement a new national concept for crowd management. Over her final 12 years at National Operational Department, she pivoted toward International Peace and Security at the Swedish Police’s Peace Support Operation, serving as a mission officer for UNMIL, course director for pre-deployment education and a senior advisor and project leaders in bilateral projects across Jordan, Gambia, Liberia, and the Balkans. In parallel, she also worked in the capacity of exercise leader for the national police staff. Camilla’s influence extends into the global pedagogical and military spheres. She served as the Pedagogical Functional Chair for the International Association for Peacekeeping Centres (IAPTC) and was seconded to the Folke Bernadotte Academy as Head of the Civilian Component for Viking 18—the world’s largest civil-military staff exercise. A mission veteran, she also deployed with the Swedish Armed Forces to the NATO/KFOR mission in Kosovo as a Military Police Liaison Officer. Beyond her operational roles, Camilla is a lecturer on Swedish total defence and crisis management, decision-making under pressure, human security, gender in peace and security, civil-military cooperation, law enforcement and adult and blended learning methodologies. As a member of the Sami community, she provides a unique and essential bridge between global security trends and national security/total defence requirements. Her lectures offer a specialized perspective on the needs, interests, and priorities of the Sami people, specifically as they relate to the evolving security landscape of the Arctic and Northern regions. ❁



The **Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V.** (KAS, Konrad Adenauer Foundation) is one of six so-called political foundations of Germany and is politically associated with but legally and financially independent of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), post-war Germany's governing party for more than 50 years. As co-founder of the CDU and the first Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany, Konrad Adenauer (1876-1967) united Christian-social, conservative and liberal traditions. His name is synonymous with the democratic reconstruction of Germany, the firm alignment of foreign policy with the transatlantic community of values, the vision of a unified Europe and an orientation towards the social market economy. His political legacy continues to serve both as our aim as well as our obligation today. **KAS** receives almost all of its funding by decision of the German parliament from the German government. The amount of funding is proportionate to the election results of the CDU to Germany's federal parliament, the Bundestag.

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