

The Arctic is a unique region. The Arctic is almost a “nation”, almost like a “state”. The Arctic is *the whole* world! From these provocative expressions, I will weave my humble thoughts about the Arctic, and I will try and explain my point of view in a few words.

To begin, however, in my role as the President of Permanent Seminar of International Studies (SSIP, from its Italian acronym) I am very proud to introduce this collective volume, which arises from the webinar organized by SSIP on March 30th, 2021. The main goal of the webinar was to try and clarify the contemporary issues facing the Arctic, while also looking to the future.

The SSIP is an independent, non-political, non-profit institute situated in Naples. It was formally established on January 20th 2020, but it boasts a long history as its precursor was founded under a different name during the 1990s. The Istituto Europeo per le Nuove Professioni (European Institute for New Professions), as it was called at the time, was established by a group of University teachers.

In January 2020, during the beginnings of the Covid-19 era, and featuring a new group of colleagues, we changed our name and statute to promote the study and research of all fields of both international and European matters, namely law, politics, economics, social issues, and the like. We also provide training and technical assistance towards practical solutions to the most relevant legal, economic and financial problems.

Our mission, as embossed on the homepage of our website (www.ssipseminario.it) is; to “*Create an International and European awareness*”.

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Personally, I would also like to thank all my colleagues from the SSIP Permanent Seminary.

The Arctic is home to almost four million people today, the population derived from indigenous peoples and more recent arrivals, hunters and herders living on the land and city dwellers. Roughly 10% of the inhabitants of the Arctic territories are indigenous and many of these peoples distinct to the region. These groups continue their traditional activities in the context of an ever-changing world., however, as the Arctic environment changes, so do the livelihoods, cultures, traditions, languages, and identities of the indigenous peoples and other communities.

Land, internal waters, territorial seas, and the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) in the Arctic fall under the jurisdiction of one of the eight Arctic coastal states, Canada, Denmark (via Greenland), Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden, and the United States. International law makes efforts to regulate this area, as is the case with other areas. For example, the EEZ is the zone where the U.S. and other coastal states have their jurisdiction over natural resources.

To give just one example of the state of play in the region, I quote from an official document. Within the EEZ, the U.S. has the “sovereign rights for the purpose of exploring, exploiting, conserving and managing natural resources, whether living and non-living, of the seabed and subsoil and the superjacent waters and with regard to other activities for the economic exploitation and exploration of the zone, such as the production of energy from the water, currents and winds; jurisdiction as provided for in international and domestic laws with regard to the establishment and use of artificial islands, installations, and structures, marine scientific research, and the protection and preservation of the marine environment”.

Other rights and duties are provided for under international and domestic laws mainly through the Arctic Council, an intergovernmental forum, promoting “cooperation, coordination, and interaction among the Arctic States”. The full members of the Arctic Council, which have the right to vote on and veto decisions, are the eight Arctic States; Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, the Russian Federation, and the United States. Every decision and statement by the Arctic Council requires the *consensus* of these eight Arctic States.

The six Permanent Participants to the Council, be they Arctic Indigenous peoples or other Arctic inhabitants, have a consultation right only in connection with the Council's negotiations and decisions.

This happens even as the Permanent Participants represent a real voice of the Arctic Council, and they make valuable contributions to its activities in all areas.

So who owns the Arctic region in the end?

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