

# DECOLONIZING SEAL TRADE



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# FOREWORD &

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It was 2016, when I had just returned from a month-long studying trip in Sakha Republic, Siberia and it was time to start planning this thesis. During that month, I had eaten more meat than I usually eat in a year; vegetarian food was not easily available in those settings. After returning to Finland, I started paying attention to the number of campaigns for vegan diet. Although I agree that the planet cannot support current levels of meat production, the contrast with Sakha was irritating. I couldn't but think how the hegemony of veganism affects people who live in conditions where veganism is not sustainable or feasible. I realized that my perception of *global* sustainability is very different from a *local* and *culture*-related sustainability. From there, I became interested in how these local and global sustainabilities affect each other, or how two local, or two global, sustainabilities are related. The EU seal trade ban proved to be a multi-faceted story of that.

First of all, I want to thank the director of Creative Sustainability [CS] Master's Programme Mikko Jalas, who was my supervisor & adviser in this MA thesis. He has guided, challenged and encouraged me throughout this process and I am sure that I will carry much of his good advice with me to future work. I also want to thank CS study coordinator Naoko Nakagawa for support throughout my studies: I've always felt heard. I also must thank the fellow CS students for this journey; besides forming a second 'family', we have worked and learned so much together and from each other that I am tempted to add all of you as authors of this book, because so much of my knowledge has come from you. I especially want to thank Glen Forde, not only for proofreading, but for encouraging, cheering, and reflecting thoughts.

# ABSTRACT

In 2009, the European Parliament and the European Council ratified a ban on seal product trade, which was actively promoted by animal welfare and environmental organizations. This was a response to commercial seal hunting in Canada, which was considered inhumane and against EU citizens' moral foundations. The ban affected not only commercial seal hunting, but also Inuit in Greenland and the North-East coast of Canada. Seal hunting is a significant part of Inuit culture, identity, social structures, resilience – and economy. Proceeds from selling the seal skins enables Inuit to purchase supplies for hunting, which contributes to food security in rural Arctic communities. The EU seal trade ban does not limit the Inuit seal product trade: Inuit seal hunting is considered sustainable and humane. However, with the introduction of the ban, sales from the Inuit seal hunt dropped drastically and have not recovered. This thesis studies the impacts of the EU seal trade ban on the Inuit, Finnish citizens' impressions of seal clothing and the abilities of design to decolonize these. These are embedded in the research questions: *'How do the limitations on seal trade in Europe affect the Inuit?'* and *'How do sustainability discourses define the Inuit seal trade?'* and studied through a literature review. The results for the third question, *'How can seal clothing contribute to decolonizing sustainability and knowledges?'* are based on a literature review and a questionnaire that was conducted in 2017 and received 350 responses.

The structure of the thesis is organized with Charles S. Peirce's semiotic methodology and the data is analysed with decolonial theories by Aníbal Quijano, Walter D. Mignolo and Tony Fry. The results of the thesis indicate that while for European Council and animal welfare organizations the EU sea trade ban was a question of morals, for Inuit it formed a question of cultural and human rights. These views are tied to location and culture. However, this study proposes that with Fry's decolonial design theories, co-understanding of sustainabilities could be achieved by (i) designing seal clothing that ontologically decolonizes, and (ii) designing borderlands which make these points of view tangible and invite the stakeholders to re-evaluate the seal trade discussion by placing it in a cultural and geographical context.

# ABSTRAKTI

Vuonna 2009, Euroopan Unionin Parlamentti ja Neuvosto hyväksyivät hyljetuotteiden kauppakiellon, jota eläin- ja ympäristönsuojelujärjestöt olivat aktiivisesti ajaneet 70-luvulta lähtien. Kauppakielto oli kannanotto Kanadan kaupalliseen hylkeenpyyntiin, joka koettiin aiheuttavan eläimille tarpeetonta kärsimystä ja sen myötä se on vastoin EU:n kansalaisten moraalikäsitystä. Kielto vaikutti kaupallisen hylkeenpyynnin lisäksi myös Inuiitteihin Grönlannissa ja Kanadan koillisrannikolla. Hylkeenpyynti on osa Inuiittien kulttuuria, identiteettiä, sosiaalista rakennetta, resilienssiä ja – taloutta. Sillä on myös tärkeä rooli Arktisten kylien ruuansaannin turvaamisessa ja hylkeennahkojen myynnistä saatavat tulot kattavatkin erityisesti metsästyksen kustannuksia, kuten polttoainekuluja. EU:n hyljetuotteiden myyntikiellon ei ollut tarkoitus vaikuttaa Inuiittien harjoittamaan hyljekauppaan, sillä se koetaan humaniksi ja kestäväksi. Kuitenkin, kauppakiellon voimaantullessa myös kysyntä Inuiittien myymille hyljetuotteille romahti, eikä kauppa ole vieläkään toipunut. Tämä tutkimus tarkastelee EU:n kauppakiellon vaikutusta Inuiitteihin, suomalaisten käsityksiä hyljevaatetuksesta ja muotoilun mahdollisuuksia vaikuttaa näihin. Tutkimuskysymyksiä *'Kuinka hyljekaupan rajoitukset Euroopassa vaikuttavat Inuiitteihin?'* ja *'Kuinka kestävän kehityksen diskurssit määrittelevät Inuiittien hyljekaupan?'* käsitellään kirjallisuuden kautta. Vastaukset kolmanteen tutkimuskysymykseen, *'Kuinka hyljevaatetus voi osallistua dekolonisoimaan kestävää kehitystä ja tietokäsitystä?'*, on johdettu aikaisemmasta tutkimuksesta, sekä vuonna 2017 tehdystä kyselystä, joka keräsi 350 vastausta kaikkialta Suomesta.

Tämän tutkimuksen rakenne on organisoitu Charles Peiracen semioottisen metodologian mukaan ja aineisto on analysoitu Aníbal Quijanon, Walter D. Mignolon ja Tony Fryn dekolonisaatiota käsittelevien teorioiden mukaan. Tutkimuksen tulokset osoittavat EU:n hyljetuotteiden kauppakiellon olleen sekä EU:n Neuvostolle, että eläinsuojelujärjestöille erityisesti moraalinen kysymys. Sitä vastoin Inuiiteille EU:n kauppakiellossa oli eritoten kyse kulttuurisista ja ihmisoikeuksista. Nämä molemmat näkemykset ovat sidoksissa kulttuuriin ja sijaintiin. Tämä tutkimus ehdottaa, Fry:n dekoloniaalisen muotoilun teorioita mukaillen, kulttuurien välisen yhteisymmärryksen luomista kestävästä kehityksistä (i) muotoilemalla hyljevaatetusta, joka ontologisesti dekolonisoii ja (ii) luomalla rajamaita [borderlands], jotka sijoittavat hyljekaupan kulttuuriseen ja maantieteelliseen kontekstiin ja sitä kautta kutsuu osallisia arvioimaan uudelleen käsityksen hyljekaupasta.

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# INTRO- DUC- TION

## *1 Introduction*

### *1.1 Research Questions*

## *2 Theoretical Framework*

### *2.1 Critical Approach*

### *2.2 Decolonizing Knowledge*

### *2.3 Modernity in Design*

### *2.4 Sustainabilities*

### *2.5 Borderlands*

## *3 Data & Methodology*

### *3.1 Methodology & Structure*

### *3.2 Questionnaire*

### *3.3 Photography Exhibition*

# 1 INTRODUCTION

In 2009, the European Parliament and the Council adopted regulation EC 1007/2009, which banned the trade in seal products within the European Union. It was a response to commercial seal hunting in Canada, which was accused of the cruel and inhumane killing of seals. However, the seal ban not only disrupted the European markets for commercially hunted seal products, it also affected the seal product trade conducted by Canadian and Greenlandic Inuit<sup>1</sup>. The EU did not aim to harm indigenous people with the EU seal ban; the regulation included an *Inuit exception* that continued to allow trade resulting from Inuit seal hunt.<sup>2</sup> Nonetheless, with the regulation the demand for all seal products faded drastically, which impaired Inuit economy, society and culture in Greenland and the Eastern Arctic of Canada. Diminished demand for seal products suggests that the EU failed to communicate to citizens and retailers about the Inuit exception and the ethical and sustainable Inuit seal hunt, whereas the ban was a strong message about inhumanity in seal hunting.

The legal aspects of the EU seal trade ban have attracted a considerable amount of academic interest<sup>3</sup>. However, less attention has been paid to studying the topic on a human level, although the public morals of EU citizens forms one of the main justifications for the seal trade ban. In this research, we approach the topic specifically from the level of Finnish people, who are both EU citizens and potential customers of seal clothing. The objectives are to define the meaning of culture and location in the EU seal trade ban discussion, separate this from coloniality and discuss the role of, and opportunities for, design in the process of decolonizing the Inuit seal trade.

The thematic chapter is structured with Charles Peirce's three semiotic categories: Firstness, Secondness and Thirdness. *Firstness*, which examines Finnish people's first impression of seal clothing, is studied through a questionnaire, and it provides information on how Finnish people perceive Inuit seal hunting and seal clothes. *Secondness* forms an understanding of seal clothing, viability of seal population, Inuit seal hunt and the EU seal trade ban, and *Thirdness* brings the Firstness and Secondness together to be analysed with decolonial theories by Aníbal Quijano, Walter Dignolo and Tony Fry. A critical, abductive, approach guides the

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1 e.g., WWF, 2013; Koivurova, Kokko, Duyck, Sellheim, & Stepien, 2012

2 EC, 2009

3 E.g. Koivurova, Kokko, Duyck, Sellheim, & Stepien, 2012

research process, with the aim of making room for Inuit epistemologies and ontologies in the EU seal trade ban discussion by dismantling the myth of the superiority of western knowledge.

The proposed roles for design are based on Fry's decolonial design theories. The first is designing seal clothing that ontologically decolonizes; the second is designing borderlands. Aside from the abovementioned objectives, with this research I urge discussion on coloniality in design and sustainability to enable a world with a pluri-versity of knowledges, in comparison with uni-versity of knowledge. One form of discussion is a photography exhibition, which is built on the results of this research. The exhibition is a borderland for Finnish and Greenlandic cultures in the context of seal trade, with an emphasis on location and knowledge.

## 1.1 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This thesis responds to three emerging questions from the case study of the EU seal trade ban and Inuit seal trade. Together, these questions explore justice in the relations of indigenous and western people. The motivation is to define the roles and opportunities of design in decolonizing knowledge and sustainability, with the aim of creating cross-cultural understanding.

### *1. How do the limitations on seal trade in Europe affect the Inuit?*

In 2009, the European Council (EC) ratified the regulation on the EU seal trade ban, which aimed to stop commercial seal hunting in Newfoundland. The regulation, which was actively promoted by animal welfare and environmental organizations, included an Inuit Exemption, which allowed Inuit to continue to trade in the EU.<sup>4</sup> However, the regulation severely affected Inuit seal trade and, through that, culture, socio-economic systems and food security. The formation of the EU seal trade ban and its impact on Inuit has gained considerable interest among social and political sciences<sup>5</sup>, Inuit<sup>6</sup> and the countries that were affected<sup>7</sup>. This research question is studied through a literature review.

### *2. How do sustainability discourses define the Inuit seal trade?*

With this question, I discuss the modern, or western, narratives on sustainability and morals in the EU seal trade ban. For the EC and animal welfare and environmental organizations, the EU seal trade ban was grounded in morals and sustainability. However, for Inuit the ban is foremost grounded in a cultural misunderstanding and therefore, the Inuit response to the ban has concentrated on explaining the Inuit culture and the importance of seal hunting to Inuit<sup>8</sup>. Moreover, the Government of Greenland defines the EU seal ban as “*fuelled by eco-colonialism*”<sup>9</sup>. The question ‘How do sustainability discourses define the Inuit seal trade’ aims to address this inconsistency in perceptions of the EU seal trade ban.

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4 EC, 2009

5 E.g. Koivurova, Kokko, Duyck, Sellheim, & Stepien, 2012; Sellheim, 2016a; Wenzel, 2000

6 E.g. Inuit Circumpolar Council; Inuit Sila

7 Government of Greenland; Government of Canada

8 Arnaquq-Baril, 2016; Government of Greenland: Department of Fisheries, Hunting & Agriculture, 2015

9 Government of Greenland: Department of Fisheries, Hunting & Agriculture, 2012. P.34

### *3. How can seal clothing contribute to decolonizing sustainability and knowledges?*

The hypothesis for this question is based on Tony Fry's theory of ontological design. Fry suggests that the things we use form our Being, and therefore, design has an ontological impact on us. The aim is in the "*designing of things that ontologically care*", meaning that the psychological and social impact of a product is considered in the planning of the product.<sup>10</sup> In this research, I apply Fry's ontological design theory to the EU seal ban case study. The hypothesis is that if things define Being, the branding and design of seal clothing are able to reform the user's perception of sustainability and of knowledge. Wearing seal clothing, then, may contribute to an awareness and acknowledgement of Inuit knowledge and sustainability. This question is examined mainly through literature review; the aim is to form a preliminary understanding for future empirical research, which will include testing of the hypothesis. In addition to the literature review, the questionnaire on Finnish people's first impression of seal clothing provides data on the associations and knowledge of seal clothing. This information will support and guide the future research and seal clothing design, but also explain what qualities need to be decolonized from seal clothing.

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10 Fry, 2017. Pp. 28-29

# 2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This research explores the relations between two different cultures, one western and one indigenous, and therefore awareness of the epistemological and ontological foundations of both cultural systems is of high importance, not least because of the colonial relationship between the two. With a recognition of the delusive hierarchical relation of indigenous and western knowledge, I attempt to take into consideration both knowledge systems throughout this research. Decolonial theories by Peruvian sociologist Aníbal Quijano, Argentinian semiotician Walter Mignolo and Australian design theorist and philosopher Tony Fry will guide the discussions throughout the book.

## 2.1 CRITICAL APPROACH

Critical approach examines theories and social models with an aim to reveal the subjectivity of knowledge and the “ideological mystique in the cultural and social phenomena”. This principle is also included in the research and knowledge-forming process: according to critical theory, research always has an agenda and the researcher is guided (and limited) by the knowledge she possesses. Therefore, conducting objective and neutral research is impossible. Connected to this, critical approach is abductive, meaning that the research is conducted with a guiding principle. This may vary from an “*intuitive thought to well-rounded hypothesis*”, which frames and leads the observations.<sup>11</sup> For this study, critical approach provides a framework that allows cross-cultural discussion on seal trade and seal products. One of the aims is to reveal and explain the epistemic differences and cultural myths that are included in the perceptions of seal products and sustainability. In this research, the critical approach, together with decolonial theories, pursues a pluri-versity of sustainabilities.

Critical theory was founded in 1923 in Germany by the so-called Frankfurt school, a group of academics that were unsatisfied with the prevailing scientific practice and political movements. While science in general aimed for neutral, objective and universal knowledge, critical theory concentrated on the interpretation of phenomena in their cultural, historical and social contexts. The foundations of critical theory are in Marxist social theory, contesting the dictatorships in Germany and partly also in the Soviet Union. However, from the time of its foundation, critical theory has been influenced by a number of alternative social phenomena beyond Marxism, including gender studies, environmental movements and post-modernism.<sup>12</sup> Critical theory has provided a liberating framework and alternative approaches for minorities in the western sciences, but in this work, the aim is to reach beyond the western knowledge systems. Understanding the seal trade – or lack of seal trade – between Inuit and Finnish, one must first understand how these cultures perceive seal products and how culture and location affect these perceptions. This information is significant both for trade and reaching cross-cultural understanding on sustainabilities. From there, we<sup>13</sup> can continue studying how these cultures perceive each others’ perceptions of seal products, which is a task for future research and to be conducted through a photography exhibition (see 3.3: *Photography*

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11 Anttila, 1996. Pp. 140-143

12 Anttila, 1996. Pp. 140-143

13 With ‘we’ I refer to everyone who contributes to the future research.



*Exhibition*). Addressing the coloniality in the EU seal trade ban is a decolonial step towards pluri-versity of knowledges, which is the ultimate objective of this research.

The process is guided with the decolonial theories, in particular of Aníbal Quijano, Walter D. Mignolo and Tony Fry. Their work on decoloniality is interlinked: Mignolo's theory is built on (and partly with) Quijano, and Fry connects his theories on design and sustainment to Mignolo's theory. Furthermore, another link is Colombian-American anthropologist Arturo Escobar, who has contributed to Mignolo's work and provided insights on Fry's paper on decoloniality.

## 2.2 DECOLONIZING KNOWLEDGE

*“The term ‘post-colonialism’ is illusory. There is no moment beyond colonialism. The withdrawal of a colonial power does not mean the end of colonialism, but rather a redrawing of the line, and its return in a new post-national guise”.* Tony Fry, 2017. P. 18

The colonization of Asia, the Americas, Africa and Oceania initiated the colonial era that, together with modernism, placed Europe in the center of the world. In the Arctic, the colonization started at the end of the first millennium, but proceeded slowly at first due to lack of accessibility. In the 20th century, colonization reached all the lands previously occupied by indigenous people and by today, coloniality affects the lives of every indigenous person in the North.<sup>14</sup> Although colonialism no longer proceeds in the same form<sup>15</sup>, it is evident that the impacts of colonialism – such as poverty, inequality and identity related challenges<sup>16</sup> – are still present in the colonized countries and with the colonized people. However, the *impacts* of colonialism are not the only reasons why colonial racial hierarchy is still present. Another, perhaps more significant, reason is that coloniality is still continuously practiced in the world’s politics, economy and knowledge production. Therefore, we have not yet reached the post-colonial era. Also, coloniality placed the Eurocentric cultural model as a universal goal of all societies and development projects. The presence of coloniality in the *western* epistemologies, politics and other systems has only recently begun to receive the attention it deserves. If coloniality, which is still embedded both in the systems of colonizers and the colonized, is not separated, it will continue shaping the world. Aníbal Quijano, a Peruvian sociologist, addresses in his article *Coloniality and Modernity/Rationality*<sup>17</sup> that as coloniality is the foundation of the modern western knowledge system, and since western knowledge has replaced other knowledge systems through colonialism, both western knowledge and the universal concept of knowledge has to be decolonized. This *epistemological decolonization* will lead us to *new intercultural communication*, which includes pluri-versity of knowledge systems, and it is the

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14 Csonka & Schweitzer, 2004

15 The power over land and natural resource use is still with the colonizers, and indigenous people are not always involved in the decision-making process, or even informed about the decisions that affect them. Forestry projects in Finnish Lapland or hydroelectricity projects in Canada are only a few examples of this.

16 Arctic Human Development Reports (AHDR) I & II provide a comprehensive understanding on the consequences of colonialism in the Arctic.

17 The article was originally published in 1992 in the book *Los conquistados: 1492 y la Población Indígena de las Américas*, edited by Heraclio Bonilla. The English translation of the article was published in *Cultural Studies* in 2007.

first step in the “*destruction of the coloniality of world power*”<sup>18</sup>, Quijano explains.<sup>19</sup>

### 2.2.1 MYTH OF MODERNITY

To understand coloniality in the world's power structure and epistemology, I shall begin with the concept of *modernity*. As Tony Fry describes, the history of modernity had a number of origins: geographical, cultural and temporal. The destruction of the Roman Empire shaped new territories and power structures, which led to religious conflicts and crusades in the Middle Ages. The knowledge which was gathered through journeys to the Arab world, Greece and India contributed to the formation of modern knowledge and science, and through that to the genesis of the Renaissance.<sup>20</sup> In the time of the European Renaissance, nations and people anticipated freedom from the international ruling institutes, such as the Catholic Church; this culminated in the Age of Enlightenment as a separation of science and church<sup>21</sup>. The beginning of modernity is often placed either as the Renaissance or Enlightenment, which can be explained with the variant timings of the major events connected to philosophical and historical modernity, Mignolo explains. He refers to Hegel's division on *historical modernity*, which includes the Renaissance, the Reformation and the “Discovery” of the New World, and *philosophical modernity*, including the Reformation, the Enlightenment and the French Revolution. These events, indeed, were all central in shaping the modernity, but they also contributed to forming the foundational connection between coloniality and modernity.<sup>22</sup>

In Europe, modernity is often described as an emancipating and progressive era, which reformed social, religious and scientific understanding and freedom on both a structural and individual level. However, outside of Europe, modernity appeared as a justification for colonization, violence and destruction of other cultures and knowledge systems. According to Enrique Dussel, “*the Modern civilization casts itself as a superior developed civilization*”, which justifies the violent conquer of the ‘primitive’ people. It was the obligation of modern Europeans to ‘improve’ these people, and in return, the Europeans were ‘justified’ in covering the costs of modernization by exploiting land and human labour.<sup>23</sup> Dussel calls this a *myth of modernity*, “*an irrational myth, [that is] a justification for genocidal violence*”<sup>24</sup>. Although Dussel's work encompasses particularly Latin America and while

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18 Quijano, 2007. P. 177

19 Quijano, 2007

20 Fry, 2017

21 Webb, 2000

22 Mignolo, 2007

23 Dussel, 2000. Pp.472-473

24 Dussel, 1993. Pp. 65-66

colonization proceeded in different times and forms around the world, the rhetoric of modernity is also apparent in the colonial acts in the Arctic, where the strong assimilation politics especially during and after the World War II brought about social, cultural and structural changes that seriously affected the resilience of indigenous peoples.<sup>25</sup> Modernity, then, is inevitably different for the colonizers and the colonized.

Mignolo indicates the inconsistency of the appearance of modernity in Europe and elsewhere with *coloniality*, which did not only develop together with modernity, but is a *constitutive* of modernity. This means that modernity entails coloniality, which is particularly clear in the development of modern, capitalist economy. Mignolo encapsulates this well through Aníbal Quijano's and Immanuel Wallerstein's theories as follows:

*"Quijano and Wallerstein stated that it was not the 'discovery that integrated the Americas into an already existing capitalist economy. On the contrary, a capitalist economy, as we know it today, couldn't have exist without the 'discovery and conquest of the Americas'. The massive appropriation of lands, massive exploitation of labor, and production of commodities on a new scale for a global market was possible with the emergence of the 'Americas' in the European horizon".<sup>26</sup>*

In the modern economy, the connection between coloniality and modernity is indisputable. Nevertheless, maybe even more disconcerting is coloniality in modern knowledge, which performs as a self-proclaimed superiority of knowledge that conquered the other ways of knowing through colonization. Aníbal Quijano links this to the discussion on *totality*. While the idea of totality is currently negated by the post-modernists, Quijano suggests that the idea of totality is invalid only if it performs the Eurocentric concept of totality, which considers all societies as one hierarchical and interlinked system that is fitted in the same structure. However, totality in other cultures often comprises "*heterogeneity of all reality*", with no reason for domination.<sup>27</sup>

The European concept of totality in knowledge includes a strong statement of its *superiority*. Modern knowledge was introduced to the world through colonization and it formed an effective tool for domination. This universal epistemic shift placed Europe in the center of the world and modernism as a goal of all societies. Aníbal Quijano describes this as a "*colonization of the imagination of the dominated*", which proceeded in phases. At first, the colonization of imagination was systematic *repression* of knowledge

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25 AHDR, 2004. P. 46

26 Mignolo. 2007. P. 477

27 Quijano, 2007. Pp. 174-177

and knowledge production. Second, the rulers imposed their own knowledge, beliefs and images. This was connected to social and cultural control over the dominated. Thirdly, the colonized *“imposed a mystified image of their own patterns of producing knowledge and meaning”*. This was conducted in three sub-phases in a linear order: 1) restraining the access to these, 2) teaching selectively, and 3) seducing with power.<sup>28</sup> While some of these acts, such as mandatory attendance to the boarding schools in USA, Canada, Greenland and Fennoscandia, were sometimes supported with violence, the colonization of the imagination of the dominated forged the aspiration for European culture and knowledge; not least because it was represented as an access to power – and future.

### 2.2.2 SEPARATING THE MYTH FROM THE MODERNITY

The challenge of separating coloniality from modernity is the lack of awareness of the connection between them. The superiority of western knowledge is taken for granted and practiced in the world’s politics, ethics, economy, infrastructural ‘developments’ and structuring of societies<sup>29</sup>. The reason for the irrationality of all other forms of knowledge and production of knowledge is based on the rhetoric of western knowledge being a rational and objective description of the world. Therefore, only a person from western culture can be a subject of knowledge, forcing the others to be objects.<sup>30</sup> This is connected to the paradigm of the ‘Other’, which places the one with more power – such as a gender, race, sexuality or religion – as a standard, while the ‘others’ are compared and represented in relation to the first. The stereotype of a human is then a white, heterosexual, Christian man, and the identities of the others are built in relation to him.<sup>31</sup> However, it is already widely acknowledged that treating indigenous peoples as objects of research, or development projects, does not fulfill the criteria of good research, or design practice<sup>32</sup>. This type of paternalistic and colonial approach is also against a number of international agreements on indigenous people’s rights, such as the UN Declaration of the Rights of the Indigenous People and ILO 169. Nonetheless, the decolonial process still pursues the major paradigm shift that enables the pluri-versity of knowledges<sup>33</sup> and dismantles the colonial power structure.

Regardless of decolonization of some of the colonized countries, the vision of European society as an ideal is still vivid, worldwide.

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28 Quijano, 2007. Pp. 169

29 Mignolo, 2007

30 Quijano, 2007

31 Eg. Quijano, 2007; Hall & du Gay, 1996

32 Eg. Ritchie et al., 2013; Datta, 2017; Belcourt, Swaney, & Kelley, 2015

33 A significant step would be introducing discussions on pluri-versity of knowledge and other knowledge systems to the curriculums of the Universities.

According to Mignolo, this originates from changing only the content of discussion, not the terms. By changing the content, Mignolo refers particularly to liberalism and decolonization of Africa and Asia. Changing the terms, in turn, affects the discussion on a different level.<sup>34</sup> Looking at this through Systems theories, we may understand the behavior of this system more thoroughly. A system always includes elements, interconnections and purpose. In this case, the content can be considered as an *element* of a system, and term as a rule of a system. Rules are one form of *interconnections* between the elements. In addition to the elements and interconnections, a system always includes *purpose*. Changing any of these will affect the system. Often, changing the elements of a system is the most obvious choice, because the elements are more tangible and visible than the interconnections, or purpose. However, the impact of changing the elements is often minor comparing to the impact of changing interconnections or purpose.<sup>35</sup> For instance, replacing the teachers of a Finnish University with Sámi teachers may not pose an epistemic change if the interconnections (learnings) and the purpose of the education remain the same. Instead, changing the interconnections (production of knowledge, criterias for knowledge, evaluation and teaching) or the purpose (from uni-versity to pluri-versity) will cause a significant epistemic, or paradigm, shift. For clarity, replacing one knowledge system with another is not what I aim for. I agree with Mignolo, Quijano and Fry that dissolving modernity is not only impossible, but also unnecessary<sup>36</sup>. The aim of decoloniality is to reveal and dissolve the myth of modernity to enable other epistemologies to emerge as equal, and through that dissolve the colonial power.

How, then, did this emancipatory movement develop into a servant of colonization? Again, there is no one single explanation for this, but Mignolo's discussion on emancipation/liberation explains why decolonization cannot be conducted through emancipation. First, we may look into the geopolitics of liberation and emancipation. The main events of emancipation were the Glorious Revolution in England in 1668, the independence of the United States of America from the British Empire in 1776 and the French Revolution in 1789. The emancipation was conducted by Europeans and the aim was to provide the freedom of a new social class. Liberation instead, "provides a larger frame that includes the racialized class" and often refers to national liberations, such as the Haitian Revolution in 1804. This explains that emancipation and liberation located in different territories and they were implemented by different cultures. Mignolo asks the important question (that should always be asked in cross-cultural

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34 Mignolo, 2007. P. 459

35 Meadows & Wright, 2009. Pp.28

36 Fry, 2017; Mignolo, 2007

work): *“Who benefits from them? Who are the agents and intended targets of emancipating or liberating projects?”*<sup>37</sup> These questions reveal the difference between emancipation and liberation, and through that, indicate why emancipation cannot be applied to decolonization. Conversely, liberation aims for decolonization, which refers only to liberation *from* the colonizers, excluding the decolonization *of* the colonizers. Hence, Mignolo suggests, we need *decoloniality*, which *“encompasses both the colonized and colonizers – and therefore, emancipation and liberation”*.<sup>38</sup> As a “vehicle” for decoloniality, Mignolo suggests border thinking, which is discussed in section 3.4 *Borderlands*.

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37 Mignolo, 2007. Pp. 454-456

38 Mignolo, 2007. Pp. 457

## 2.3 MODERNITY IN DESIGN

The connection between design and modernity is clear: since the industrial revolution, design has made the products of modern knowledge more desirable and functional for the global market. Specifically, design was a servant of industry and modern economics, shaping consumerism and contributing to the extensive exploitation of natural resources and human labour. However, with the fade of the industrial era, design had to find new occupations in a society where products became more intangible, and technology reshaped information flows. This, together with an emerging awareness of the responsibilities of designers, caused practitioners to seek alternative directions and roles, also beyond the neoliberal system. Klaus Krippendorff describes this as a semantic turn in design, resulting in design as a *sense-making* activity.<sup>39</sup> This definition is, however, framed only for artefacts, although including both tangible and intangible. Ezio Manzini's work in design for sustainability takes the concept of design as sense-making further and applies it to social movements, particularly social innovations. Manzini expands the role of the designer from *problem-solver* to *sense-maker*. He divides human activities into a physical/biological world and a social world, and the role of the designer depends on which of the worlds he/she influences. The designer as problem-solver interacts with the physical world, which is the more traditional interpretation of designers' abilities, while the designer as sense-maker contributes to the social world. These two approaches can co-exist and be practiced together, as the two worlds often merge.<sup>40</sup> Although some branches of design are reaching out beyond the service of modernity, I consider that separating modernity from design completely is as challenging a task as separating coloniality from modernity. Again, it may be neither necessary nor possible to deny modernity completely, but rather the designer must reveal it, and separate coloniality from it. As a method for that, Tony Fry urges for "*design that ontologically cares*".

### 2.3.1 "DESIGNING THINGS THAT ONTOLOGICALLY CARE"

Fry guides the attention towards *ontological design* to understand the coloniality of design, but also to redirect design towards *care* and *sustainment*. He explains that "*We are in fact the producers, and product of the materiality and immateriality of this world now named Anthropocene.*"<sup>41</sup> This introduces Fry's idea of ontology in

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39 Krippendorff, 2006

40 Manzini & Coad, 2015. P. 35

41 Fry, 2017. P. 24



design: we are rarely aware how much the artefacts define us, nor are designers aware of the ontological impacts of their work. Therefore, Fry suggests, understanding the ontology of design should be included in the design process.<sup>42</sup>

Another key element in Tony Fry's proposition for decoloniality of design is *care*. By *care*, Fry does not refer to the humanistic psycho-emotional care, but to the care in designs. As an example of an uncaring object, he mentions nuclear weapons, though any design with harmful qualities is counted as uncaring. An essential feature of uncaring design is *defuturing*. All human actions can be divided to futuring or defuturing depending on the impact the actions cause. Colonization was defuturing for the colonized; coloniality is defuturing for the colonized and the pluriversity of knowledge; design and anthropocene are overall defuturing for all people, cultures and biota. Designs that care are future-creating, which some others<sup>43</sup> may also call sustainable. However, Fry deliberately avoids using the word sustainable, because it often includes the notion of sustaining the unsustainable and coloniality. With this, Fry refers to the use of term in, for instance, cases such as sustainable oil extraction, which itself is ontically defuturing.<sup>44</sup>

Within the study on ontology, Fry's concept of care is built on Martin Heidegger's work. Heidegger's concept of care<sup>45</sup> is connected to *dasein*, which, with Fry's words, explains care as "*ontologically present in being*".<sup>46</sup> While Heidegger's work encompasses humans, Fry brings his theory to design. As we discussed earlier, Fry describes design as an ontological force which shapes our being. Design also has the power of *making* – and through that, *unmaking*. This follows the logic of 'when something is created, it displaces the previous solution'. For these reasons, the impact of design is not only environmental, but also political. As a mean of addressing and acting on the colonial and unsustainable issues in design, Fry suggests "designing of things that ontologically care".<sup>47</sup>

In this thesis, I do agree that design not only affects the biosphere, but it is, and will always be, also political. This cannot be separated from design, but it can be acknowledged and redirected towards sustainment by adding futuring and caring attributes to design. I also agree that design contributes to coloniality through modernity and by shaping Being. Although I acknowledge the ontological impact of design, I am not fully

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42 Fry, 2017

43 Eg. Papanek, Victor; Braungart & McDonough

44 Fry, 2017

45 Heidegger, Martin. 2006. Being and Time

46 Fry, 2017. Pp.13-15

47 Fry, 2017. Pp. 28-29

convinced that it would form the primary means for reaching sustainabilities; I rather see it as one prominent option among others. Arturo Escobar, a professor of anthropology, connects the ontology of design to transition movements. He proposes that Latin American social movement *Design for Autonomy* (D/A) could form a special case for Fry's theory<sup>48</sup> on ontological design and decoloniality. The D/A projects aim for liberation from neoliberal globalization, or sometimes from a colonial power. Fry's decolonial theory, transition movements and D/A, may all include 'autonomous design', which means that "community practices the design of itself". Before colonization, this ontological approach to design has been typical for indigenous groups and, with some limitations, it is still practiced. With the examples from transition movement and D/A, we may speculate that Escobar considers locality as a key element in Fry's ontological design approach.<sup>49</sup>

Furthermore, Escobar suggests that Fry's theory may be positioned in *pachakuti*, which is a concept by some indigenous people in Latin America. Pachakuti means "a profound overhaul of the existing social order, not as a result of a sudden act or a new great synthesis of knowledge or novel agreements, but of an expansive and steady, albeit discontinuous, effort to permanently unsettle and alter the established order." The idea of pachakuti is seen from a contemporaneous point of view, meaning that it is nonlinear without past or post, which challenges the way world history is described through the eurocentric model.<sup>50</sup> As I am not an expert on pachakuti, I won't take the concept further in this research, but I consider it as a good point of view to bring understanding of the pluriversity of ontologies.

### 2.3.2 THESIS SITUATED IN DESIGN RESEARCH

In this research, the stress is on design as a sense-making activity, although seal clothing also forms a connection to the physical world. Framing the research through the classical division by Christopher Frayling, who divides design research into research *into/ through/ for* design<sup>51</sup>, I may conclude that this research produces knowledge on seal clothing *for* design, which connects the research to problem-solving. Providing knowledge for the clothing industry is not as crucial here as providing knowledge for the borderlands, which will be created in the form of a photography exhibition, through the lens of design as a sense-making activity. Moreover, this thesis is also research *into* design, as we discuss coloniality in design.

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48 The name of Fry's article on decoloniality is *Design for/by* "The Global South". However, since Fry refers to the Eurocentric countries as North and Africa/ South America etc. as South, using this name in this research would be confusing, because the Eurocentric countries are located south of the Arctic.

49 Escobar, 2017

50 Escobar, 2017. P. 47

51 Frayling, 1993

## 2.4 SUSTAINABILITIES

Livelihood in rural Arctic Inuit communities is formed differently and guided by a different way of knowing than livelihood in the modern/western societies. Therefore, Inuit sustainability and modern sustainability are also not alike. Now, this is itself a well researched and acknowledged subject<sup>52</sup>, as is sustainability in Inuit knowledge, and I don't aim to repeat or redefine those. One of the objectives of this research is to decolonize the concept of sustainability and morals in the EU seal trade ban. We examine the role of *sustainabilities* in the context of coloniality and the EU seal ban case. With the plural word choice, I aim to clarify that the western concept of sustainability sometimes conflicts with the Inuit concept of sustainability, and the reason for that, I suggest, is not that they could not coexist, but the coloniality embedded in western sustainability.

I face constraints in attempting to provide a clear definition of sustainability in Inuit culture, because of the potential risk for cultural misinterpretation. Instead, I will discuss the Inuit and indigenous knowledge in order to form an understanding of the differences between various knowledge systems and the challenges in cross-cultural terminology.

### 2.4.1 ESTABLISHING A COMMON TERMINOLOGY

Forming a common language and terminology is one of the major challenges in cross-cultural communication and research. Although, to respect diversity, this is not always possible, and in such cases the use of multiple terms simultaneously is preferable. While in the western knowledge system sustainability is divided into three sectors: environmental, social and economical, these terms are related to culture and they often are not relevant, or cannot be directly translated into indigenous languages. For instance, equivalent translations for the terms '*environment*' or '*nature*' may not exist in all indigenous languages. In the Maya language, the closest word for nature is '*ba'alche*', which means '*things in the forest*'. Another word is '*maayab*' that means Maya land, including both built environment and nature.<sup>53</sup> Apart from the epistemic differences in terminology, there may also be ontological reasons to define the terms. Pirjo Kristiina Virtanen explains that the indigenous people in Amazonia have no

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52 Sustainability in the context of the Arctic and arctic indigenous people is well addressed, for instance in Arctic Council's Sustainable Development Working Group (SDWG) <http://www.sdwg.org/activities/project-reports-from-completed-sdwg-projects-1998-to-2015/>

53 Anderson, 2010. P. 17

separate concept for nature – it is part of humans and humans are part of it. Therefore, Virtanen chooses to use the term *natural environment* for highlighting the social relations within the term.<sup>54</sup> However, in this this research I chose to use the term *environment*, because it is also often referred to in Inuit Circumpolar Council's (ICC) documents. ICC represents Inuits from Canada, Alaska and Greenland, which makes it an international non-government organization, including several indigenous groups with a variety of languages.<sup>55</sup> Colonization and coloniality have familiarized Inuit with western terminology, but if the local language is strong, it often describes the local biota, cultural objects and social relations more accurately than the language of the colonizers. For instance, Yup'ik vocabulary enables them to denote not only the different seal species, but also the age groups, appearances and behaviours.<sup>56</sup>

The epistemic differences between the modern and indigenous knowledges were misinterpreted by the colonizers, which positioned the knowledges in hierarchical order. As a consequence of perceiving indigenous knowledge as worthless, colonizers attempted to erase centuries, even millennia, of history and knowledge in the moment of colonization. As Tony Fry describes this, "*history thereafter began with a moment of colonization*"<sup>57</sup>. Colonization polarized the knowledges into *traditional*, or *primitive*, and *modern*. The Europeans placed the modern knowledge in the present and future, while the traditional knowledge was seen as old – temporally prior to modernism. This created the image of traditional knowledge as static, non-evolving. Another issue with the term traditional is the pressure from outside to define what is traditional and what is modern knowledge in contemporary indigenous knowledge.<sup>58</sup> Indigenous people often live within two systems, modern and traditional, and dividing these knowledges suggests that the two could not merge, although it is common to merge these knowledges for instance to support culture-related activities, such as hunting. For these reasons, the terms *traditional*, or *traditional knowledge*, are avoided by some scholars. I do agree with the criticism of this term, although for the sake of clarity and communication, I still consider this term in some cases the most appropriate. Furthermore, it is in active use by ICC, whose example I follow in the terminology choices. The use of the term 'traditional' is, therefore, defined here as dynamic, including past, present and future, and it doesn't exclude evolving traditions that may rise through cultural adaptation. To

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54 Virtanen, Kantonen, & Seurujärvi-Kari, 2013

55 ICC Alaska: [www.iccalaska.org](http://www.iccalaska.org); ICC Greenland: [www.inuit.org](http://www.inuit.org); ICC Canada: [www.inuitcircumpolar.com](http://www.inuitcircumpolar.com)

56 Fienup-Riordan, 2007

57 Fry, 2017. P. 8

58 Porsanger, 2011

follow the principles of United Nations *Declaration of the Right of Indigenous People*, the content, meaning and application of the term can only be defined by the representatives of each culture themselves<sup>59</sup>.

### 2.4.2 INTERPRETING THE SIGNS

To understand the differences between Inuit and western knowledge, we will next explore briefly the epistemology of Inuit knowledge. Karla Jessen Williamson provides an insight to Kalaallit Ways of Knowing in her book *Inherit My Heaven: Kalaallit Gender Relations*. Jessen Williamson suggests a triangular model of “*timikkut, tarnikkut, anersaakkullu as a framework of knowledge and through which they [kalaallit] view life, including social constructs*”<sup>60</sup>. *Timikkut, tarnikkut, anersaakkullu* can be translated, in the same order, as *the body, the name/soul and the spirit*. This ontological framework arose through Jessen Williamson’s interviews in the village of Maniitsoq, following her acceptance that the knowledge she had collected cannot be interpreted with western frameworks. In Kalaallit knowledge, dreams and premonitions are equal to the signs from the physical world.<sup>61</sup> Fienup-Riordan’s interviews indicate a similar phenomenon in the forming of Yup’ik knowledge. Careful and constant observation of the signs from nature enables the observant to look into future. These signs can help to predict weather or other things that are essential for survival in the near future, but they can also point to events in the distant future. One of Fienup-Riordan’s interviewees, Frank Andrew, told that once he “*uncovered a small bow with arrow, a cutting board and wolf fur*”. This finding was interpreted as meaning that most of Andrew’s descendants would be male, which came true.<sup>62</sup> These examples indicate the importance of both physical and spiritual signs, which both contribute to the formation of Inuit knowledge. This knowledge, passed from one generation to another through stories, is accumulative, meaning that the continuous observations build on the previous knowledge. As with the signs, the stories include half mythology and half reality, both equally important. The stories reflect the view of the whole society and they connect “*the listener to the souls and minds of human beings, animals, and the land*”, and also the past, present and future.<sup>63</sup>

Another example from Potawatomis<sup>64</sup> explains how signs from nature can be observed and how they are related to

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59 United Nations, 2007

60 Williamson, 2011. P. 65

61 Williamson, 2011

62 Fienup-Riordan, 2007. P. 24

63 Williamson, 2011. P. 63

64 Native American

sustainability. This story is told by Robin Wall Kimmerer, Potawatomi and Professor of Environmental Biology. Wall Kimmerer describes Potawatomi sustainability through the action of wild strawberry-picking. At first, she notes, the strawberries are recognized as berry people, who are “sovereign beings with their own intelligences, their own wisdom, their own responsibilities”. Therefore, they are not only persons with rights, but also teachers. Second, when picking strawberries, never take the first one you see, because it may be the last one. Taking strawberries is allowed only if there is enough. Thirdly, ask permission from nature. Fourth, listen to the answer. Asking a question is pointless without listening to the answer and, if the permission is not given, then one needs to accept it. Fifth, if the permission is given, take only what you need and don’t waste – respect it. Sixth, minimize harm. “Don’t use a shovel when digging stick will do”. Here, Wall Kimmerer described the Potawatomi relation to nature and nature management, as we may express it in western terms.<sup>65</sup> Connecting this to the previous discussion on indigenous knowledge, the careful observation and interaction with the signs can be identified also from this example. Finally, after these examples on indigenous epistemologies and ontologies, I would like to clarify that I am not suggesting that all indigenous knowledges are similar to each other; there are great differences even within the Inuit groups. Instead, I attempted to provide examples of different ways of knowing, knowledge formation and the challenges in cross-cultural terminology. As I stated earlier, I am not qualified to create a solid image of Inuit sustainability and that is not the aim of this research. Alternatively, this research provides a view on how the sustainabilities can be discussed and how coloniality could be separated from this discussion. A key element here, I suggest, is *trust*.

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65 Robin Kimmerer: Reclaiming the Honorable Harvest, 2012

## 2.5 BORDERLANDS

Here, we will examine the information from this theory chapter and create a framework that allows us to discuss sustainabilities and coloniality in the EU seal trade ban case study. Mignolo proposes *border thinking* as a method for decoloniality, which is taken further by Fry, who suggests that the designer may contribute by designing the *borderlands*, where border thinking will guide the decolonial discussion.

### 2.5.1 BORDER THINKING

Mignolo explains border thinking as a “*method that connects pluriversity into a uni-versal project of delinking from modern rationality and building other possible worlds*”<sup>66</sup>. In other words, border thinking examines the subject and object of coloniality with an aim to dismantle coloniality and create pluriversal futures. The futures are defined by each ethnic group themselves, while not defuturing other groups. Although Mignolo describes “*pluri-versality as a uni-versal project*”, he clarifies that it cannot be conducted only by one ethnic group, but it should be planned and proceeded as a pluriversal project.<sup>67</sup> Moreover, Mignolo adds, “*the project of decolonization must operate in full awareness of its location*”<sup>68</sup>. The location impacts not only power, but also the point of view: “*I am where I think*”<sup>69</sup>. This means that coloniality/modernity appears differently in Helsinki and in a rural community in Greenland.

### 2.5.2 BORDERLANDS

*“From the perspective of design, the borderland can be viewed as an intermediate space of thought and action based upon political and pragmatic acts of appropriation and bricolage.”*<sup>70</sup>

Borderlands are geographical and/or conceptual places, where border thinking can be proceeded. They are “*politically formed and thereafter designed, built and occupied*”<sup>71</sup>. Tony Fry expresses the idea of designers contributing in formation of the borderlands. This aligns with the evolution of design and designers’ role, which is increasingly pointing towards sense-making and

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66 Mignolo, 2007. P. 498

67 Mignolo, 2007. P. 499

68 Mignolo, 2007. P. 498

69 Mignolo, 2011. Pp. 91-92

70 Fry, 2017. P. 11

71 Fry, 2017. P. 12

facilitating change<sup>72</sup>. The qualities that support this are design-erly ways of knowing – also referred to as Design Thinking – and participatory design skills. A significant part of the design process is to define and reframe the problem without being limited by disciplinary, or any other, boundaries. Solutions, then, are often formed together with the problem definitions. Therefore, designers are comfortable working within a framework that is not limited only to standard patterns or methods. This requires trust in the process of unknowing and intuition, until the correct problem definition and solution appears. To be able to define the correct problem, the designer works between the stakeholders.<sup>73</sup> The methods for understanding the stakeholders includes for instance *co-experience* and *empathy*<sup>74</sup>. Katja Battarbee describes Design Empathy as *“an approach where observations in real contexts and empathic tuning in are used in turn to learn about the experiences that people have and the meanings that these experiences have. In practice, empathy helps to make the leap from knowing to understanding.”*<sup>75</sup> Currently, well-established design practice involves stakeholders as equal co-designers throughout the process<sup>76</sup>. I consider that design has a lot of potential in forming borderlands and creating common understanding between stakeholders. In return, border thinking and decoloniality guide the attempts to liberate design from coloniality/modernity, which I see as a major hindrance to sustainable design.

The results of this research will be used for creating a borderland for Finnish and Greenlandic people on the EU seal trade ban case. The borderland that will be created is a photography exhibition including photographs from Rovaniemi, Helsinki, Nuuk and a rural village in Greenland, which are exhibited together with seal clothing. For this borderland, this research provides an understanding of Finnish people's first impressions of seal clothing and an in-depth review of the EU seal ban case. The photographs of Greenland and the Inuit point of view will be produced in Greenland, by people from Greenland. The exhibition will be built after the thesis has been published and therefore I will not review it here. The spirit of the exhibition is captured well in Tony Fry's elaboration of borderlands:

*“It [borderlands] may also be materialized as an intercultural zone of encounter and discussion where information is exchanged, lifeworlds are translated, solidarity is built and friendships forged.”*<sup>77</sup>

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72 Eg. Manzini & Coad, 2015; Soini, 2015; Thackara, 2006; Konttinen, 2016

73 Cross, 2011

74 Eg. Battarbee, 2006; Mattelmäki & Sleeswijk Visser, 2011

75 Battarbee, 2006. Pp. 66-67

76 Mattelmäki & Sleeswijk Visser, 2011

77 Fry, 2017. P. 11



# 3 DATA & METHODOLOGY

The structure of the thesis is formed with the guidance of semi-otic methodology by Charles Peirce. Data is collected through a questionnaire, and it represents Finnish people's perception of seal clothing. This data is situated into the discussion on the EU seal trade ban, which affects the Inuit in Greenland and the Atlantic coast of Canada. The theoretical framework of this research consists of critical approach and decolonial theories.

## 3.1 METHODOLOGY & STRUCTURE

The research examines the EU seal trade ban and perceptions of seal clothing. Together, these form a hermeneutic circle, or spiral, (Figure 1), continuously reforming each other. The nature and image of Inuit seal trade impacts the nature and perception of seal clothing, which itself impacts the seal trade.



*Figure 1. The research as a hermeneutic circle. One of the aims of this research is to examine how seal clothing can decolonize Inuit seal trade and vice versa. The overall objective is to contribute to pluri-verity of knowledges and sustainabilities.*

The principal idea behind the structure of this thesis is to proceed in a similar order to how the consumer of seal clothing proceeds when becoming familiar with seal clothing and the Inuit seal hunt. This begins from the first impression, continues with forming a deeper understanding of the attributes of seal skin and the Inuit seal hunt, and finally processing together the information from the first two parts. This process follows Charles Peirce's categories of Firstness, Secondness and Thirdness<sup>78</sup>. In this research, *Firstness* describes Finnish citizens' connotative experience – the first impression – of seal clothing. The data for Firstness is gathered through a questionnaire, which was conducted in spring 2017. *Secondness* includes a denotative description of seal skin as a material, but also a holistic picture of the Inuit seal hunt and the seal trade between the EU and Inuit of Greenland and Canada. *Thirdness* brings the Firstness and Secondness together; they are discussed through the decolonial theories. The challenge in using Peirce's methodology in this research is the acknowledgement of a pluri-verity of knowledges, which is the core and the aim of this thesis. This requires critical selection of theories, methodologies and methods, to ensure that the research does not interpret the phenomenon as a uni-versal truth, but enables other ways of knowing. Although Peirce's work aims for a universal semiotic theory, he also acknowledges and distinguishes parts

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78 Peirce & Hoopes, 1991

that are not applicable for universal purposes<sup>79</sup>. However, I chose to use Peirce's methodology only partially: while usually firstness, secondness and thirdness are all interpreted with Peirce's semiotic theory on signs (object/sign/interpretant), I consider that model as limiting both the decolonial purpose and the research questions of this thesis. Therefore, Peirce's semiotic methodology is primarily applied only to the structure. However, as these theories were developed together, the introduction to the three categories includes a discussion on signs.

### 3.1.1 PEIRCE'S THEORY OF SIGNS

Peirce is an American philosopher, who at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century was influential in a number of academic fields, including philosophy, chemistry, astronomy, psychology and mathematics. His contribution to semiotics challenged the prevalent concept of thoughts as ideas; instead, Peirce described thoughts as *signs*. Further, he defined three type of signs: Icons, Indexes and symbols. *Icons* are replications of the object. For instance, a photograph of a seal jacket is an icon of the jacket. Icons can also represent objects that do not exist, such as a drawing of a jacket. *Index*, in turn, is a direct sign of an object, and its existence depends on the object. Therefore, blood on the shore of Greenland may be an index of seal-skinning. *Symbol* appears through agreements. This means that the word 'seal' is a symbol that has a meaning only for English speakers. For this reason, a symbol always requires an interpretant. With interpretant, Peirce refers not to a person, but to the ground of reference, a cognition, that the sign is correlated with. Moreover, the meaning of the words is defined by the interpretant.<sup>80</sup> This is relevant for this research because it includes the notion that the word 'ringed seal', or 'norppa' represents a different thing to a Finnish person than 'natsiq' represents for Inuit.

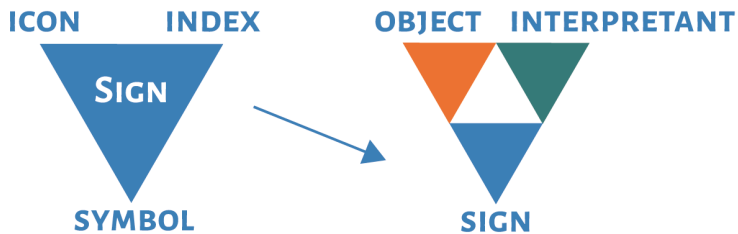


Figure 2. A sign (blue triangle) can be an icon, index or symbol. A sign denotes, either directly or indirectly, an object. The perception of the sign is referred to as the interpretant (green, orange and blue triangles).<sup>81</sup>

79 Peirce & Hoopes, 1991

80 Peirce & Hoopes, 1991

81 Peirce, 2001

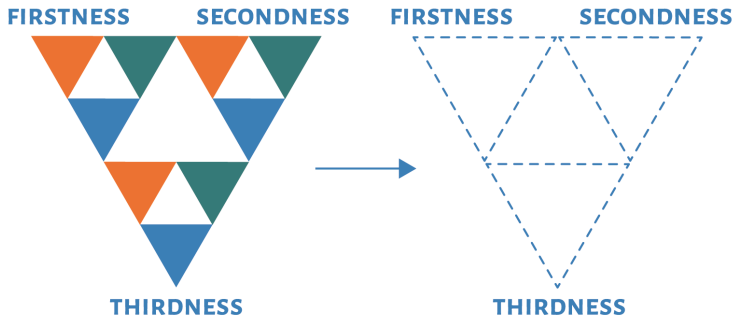


Figure 3. Peirce describes Firstness, Secondness and Thirdness with his theory of signs, which is represented in the first image. However, for this research only the categories are considered relevant, whereas in-depth interpretation of signs with Peirce's methodology is of minor interest in the scope of this research.

### 3.1.2 THE CATEGORIES OF FIRSTNESS, SECONDESS AND THIRDNESS

Peirce presented these three categories to the Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1867. The aim was to categorize the human experience of things. In that paper (*On a New list of Categories*), the categories were referred to as follows:

- *Quality (Reference to a ground)*
- *Relation (Reference to a correlate)*
- *Representation (Reference to an interpretant)*

Peirce continued developing the theory and terminology throughout his career. These original terms for the categories were later referred to as Firstness, Secondness and Thirdness. However, the advantage of the original terms is that they describe how Peirce defines the categories according to their relations. Firstness, here referred to as *Quality*, is constituted from the person's knowledge and experience base, which Peirce refers to as ground. It is the first impression that arises after the present, which is the moment before thinking and therefore, cannot be described<sup>82</sup>. Secondness, or *Relation*, describes the perception's relation to the correlates. This postulates defining and explaining the correlates to the perception – in other words, explaining the elements of the phenomena. Thirdness, *Representation*, then describes how these elements are in relation to the interpretant. In this phase, the first impression and the correlates are examined together, achieving an understanding of their relations and the phenomenon.<sup>83</sup>

82 Peirce describes this as a substance, although this can be identified also from other knowledge systems with various terms and meanings. For instance, the present moment is the core of Buddhism, and meditation is a practice that helps a person to achieve this present state of mind.

83 Peirce & Hoopes, 1991

The description of the trichotomic model of the elements in semiotics was developed more clearly in Peirce's later works, and the stress of writing was now on *describing* the categories, instead of *justification*, which appeared as a priority in his earlier work. His unpublished book *A Guess at the Riddle* defines Firstness as a conscious description of the present. In comparison to the earlier description, which defined Firstness as beginning *after* the present moment, he now defines it to *describe* the present moment, although acknowledging that this description is always false, because the present moment cannot be replicated. Firstness is the initiative, highly subjective description of the subject/object relationship and it is free from "synthesis and all differentiation: it has no unity and no parts"<sup>84</sup>. Moreover, Secondness builds on the Firstness, although they both remain separate parts, meaning that the comparison of them arises only in Thirdness. Secondness cannot arise prior to Firstness, but if Secondness is missing, the description remains unilateral. As Peirce describes this: "A thing cannot be other, negative, or independent, without a first". Secondness, therefore, describes the 'rest' of the phenomena that is defined by the Firstness. While the Firstness and Secondness "describe the facts of experience", the Thirdness "brings them into relationship"<sup>85</sup>. Peirce describes this as a qualitative stage of the research. Chronologically, Thirdness is placed last of these three, but content-wise it is in the middle of the first and second.<sup>86</sup>

In this research, Peirce's trichotomic categories guide the research structure. Table 1 describes how Firstness, Secondness and Thirdness are considered in the thematic chapter of this thesis.

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84 Peirce & Hoopes, 1991. P. 189

85 Peirce & Hoopes, 1991. P. 190

86 Peirce & Hoopes, 1991

<b>Category</b>	<b>Peirce</b>	<b>Decolonizing Seal Trade</b>
<b>Firstness:</b> First Impressions of Seal Clothing	The first impression of the experience.	Finnish citizens' (the questionnaire respondents) intuitive perceptions of seal clothing:  Awareness of legal status of seal trade  Interest in wearing seal clothing  Defining the variables for wearing/ not wearing seal clothing
<b>Secondness:</b> Inuit Seal Trade & the EU Seal Trade Ban	The other reality of the phenomenon.	Representing the elements of seal clothing, Inuit seal hunt and the EU seal trade ban, in relation to each other.  Material Properties of Seal Clothing  The impact of seal hunt on seal population  The qualities and purpose of Inuit seal hunt  The justification of the EU seal trade ban and its impact on Inuit
<b>Thirdness:</b> Decolonizing Seal Trade	The relation between the Firstness and Secondness.	The perceptions of seal clothing are examined together with the other elements of the EU seal trade ban. These form two groups:  Defining the colonality in the EU seal trade ban  Relation of ontological design to decolonizing Inuit seal trade  The relation of Firstness and Secondness is interpreted through decolonial and ontological design theories.

Table 1. Firstness, Secondness and Thirdness in the thematic chapter.

## 3.2 QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire studies Finnish people's prejudices, opinions and knowledge regarding clothing made from seal fur and skin. The aim is to reach an understanding of how Finnish people perceive seal clothing, their willingness to wear seal products and the reasons why people would or would not wear them. The questionnaire did not focus on Finnish people's perception of *Inuit* seal products, because that would have limited the definition of the first impression. The variables of the questionnaire were ethical choices in eating habits, age group, and the region [maakunta] and size of the respondent's current home city. The questionnaire was designed to be short, and the questions were either multiple choice questions or they measured a difference between two values. The reason for the "quick and easy" type of questionnaire was to lower the respondents' thresholds to answer, which may increase the possibility of reaching a higher number and greater variety of people. Moreover, the respondents were able to clarify their responses in a comment field, and that opportunity was often seized. Prior to publishing, the questionnaire was tested with four (4) different respondents, and the required corrections were made.

### 3.2.1 LOCATION

The main reason why Finland is a country of interest in this research is that it is an EU country that is located in the North. In the case study, I explore the acceptance of seal clothing, which as a clothing material is especially suited to a cold climate. Therefore, seal clothing is not limited to luxury products; its properties can also be utilized in extreme weather conditions. Furthermore, the author's ability to carry out the research in Finnish, the native language of the country, and obtain first-hand knowledge of the local culture was a high priority in choosing the region. Using the native language ensures that people with a lower level of English are not excluded.

The data for this research was gathered through a questionnaire. The questionnaire studies Finnish people's prejudices, knowledge and attitude towards seal products. Most of the data from the questionnaire were generated in Helsinki and Rovaniemi. Those cities were chosen because they represent diverse demographics and environment within Finland. Helsinki has 628 208 inhabitants, whereas Rovaniemi is home to 61 838 citizens<sup>87</sup>. The total

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87 Tilastokeskus, "Väestö."

population of Finland is approximately 5,5 million. Helsinki is the capital city of Finland and the capital of the Uusimaa region, while Rovaniemi is the capital of the region of Lapland. The author, who has conducted the research and analyzed the results, is Finnish and she has lived several years in both of the sampled cities, Helsinki and Rovaniemi.

### 3.2.2 RESPONDENTS

The questionnaire was conducted online in Google Forms and it attracted 350 responses from all over Finland. Although the questionnaire was open for the whole country, the distribution channels of the questionnaire were concentrated in Helsinki and Rovaniemi, and therefore most of the responses were gathered from those regions. Figure 4 demonstrates all replies by region. The main distribution channels were Aalto University's and University of Lapland's student mailing lists. In Aalto, the questionnaire was shared with the students from the Department of Design and Department of Media, and in the University of Lapland with several departments, including Art and Design. The respondents were not requested to define their education level or occupancy, but the highest peaks of the response rates followed the sharing of the questionnaire on these mailing lists. This suggests that most of the respondents are University students. Aside from mailing lists, a small number of flyers were shared in Helsinki, but those attracted few replies. Some flyers were handed out personally by the author, which engaged people, but it was experienced as problematic because the topic raised discussion while it was important for the author to remain distant so as not to affect the questionnaire results. Outside of Uusimaa and Lapland, an exceptional amount of replies were received from Northern Ostrobothnia and Kainuu. This can be explained by the fact that the questionnaire was shared on the author's personal Facebook account and re-shared on Facebook by eight (8) of the author's contacts, mainly from Kajaani and Oulu. The amount of responses from other regions were from zero to five (0-5).

#### HOME REGION OF THE RESPONDENTS



Figure 4. Respondents by region.



The questionnaire does not represent the opinions of all Finnish citizens, it represents only the opinions of those who it reached and who responded. Since most of the respondents are from Lapland or Uusimaa, in addition to the general analysis I conducted an analysis to compare these two regions. Concentrating on two regions limits the amount of variables and therefore the results are more reliable, although the sample size is reduced. The number of responses from these two regions were high enough to be compared with each other, unlike the rest of the regions with only 1-22 responses. Furthermore, the data from Lapland and Uusimaa should not be taken as forming statistics from these regions, because this would require more responses and more distribution, such as greater distribution in social and age groups. However, I consider that the take from Uusimaa and Lapland is reliable enough to point out the differences and similarities between the two. Figure 5 and figure 6 demonstrates the variables within these regions. Figure 5 describes the size of the respondent's home city. In Lapland, roughly 77% of the respondents are from a city with 50 000-100 000 inhabitants. Rovaniemi is the only city in Lapland with more than 50 000 inhabitants and therefore it can be concluded that most of the respondents are from Rovaniemi. In Uusimaa, 94% are from a city of more than 100 000 inhabitants, which indicates Helsinki, Espoo and Vantaa. Figure 6 describes the age distribution of the respondents. Most of the respondents from Lapland and Uusimaa are from the 21-30 age group, though the 31-40 age group is also well represented, especially in Uusimaa.

### SIZE OF THE HOME REGION OF THE RESPONDENTS

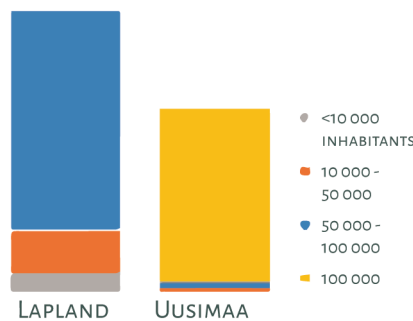


Figure 5. The population of the respondents' home cities.

## RESPONDENTS' AGE GROUPS

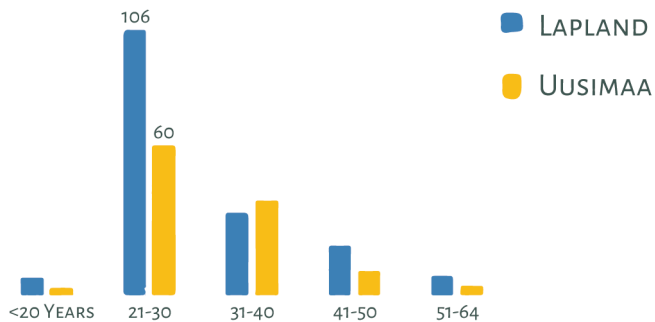


Figure 6. Age groups of the respondents from the Lapland and Uusimaa regions

### 3.2.3 METHOD OF ANALYSIS

The analysis of the questionnaire is both qualitative and quantitative. I chose to not use coding, because several responses included comments, and separating those would have provide incomplete information for our purposes. Instead, the quantitative data is reviewed together with the comments, if relevant. Depending on the sample size, approximately >10 % difference in responses is considered significant.

### 3.3 PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBITION

The photography exhibition begins from where this research ends. The exhibition will form a borderland for Finnish and Inuit cultures and promote discussion on the seal trade and seal clothing. The aim of the exhibition is to raise awareness of pluri-versity of knowledges and pluri-versity of sustainabilities. Although the exhibition does not provide information for this research, I consider this research and the exhibition to form one entity.

# FIRST- NESS

- 4 *First Impressions of Seal Clothing*
  - 4.1 *Questionnaire*

# 4 FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF SEAL CLOTHING

This chapter studies the perceptions Finnish people have of seal clothing. The data is formed through a questionnaire and presented here with preliminary analysis. The objective of the questionnaire is to define Finnish citizens' connotative understanding of seal clothing, which will be discussed later with the denotative notions, and situated to the seal trade.

## 4.1 QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire studies Finnish citizen's perceptions, beliefs and knowledge of clothing made out of seal skin and fur. The questionnaire received 350 responses, which are reviewed here. The Inuit were mentioned only in the last question, which defined the potential customer's willingness to purchase a seal product with a higher price, if it would support Inuit culture. The questionnaire was intentionally removed from the Inuit context, because the purpose was to define the first impressions of seal clothing.

### 4.1.1 VARIABLES & QUESTIONS

Variables in the questionnaire are geographical location, size of the city or region, age group, opinion on hunting and eating habits. The variables are purposefully limited to a minimum and some common variables, such as gender and educational background, were not considered significant enough for the purpose of this research. Rather more interesting is to understand how values-based categories impact the acceptability of seal products. Therefore, the relationship of seal product acceptance to eating habits and opinions on hunting in general are the main focus in this research. I assume that these values-based variables enable categorization of the responses more accurately than, for instance, gender.

The questions are divided into two groups: *knowledge* of seal product trade and *opinion* of seal skin and fur. The first question about knowledge determines if the respondents are aware of the legality of imported seal product sale in Finland. The alternatives for this multiple-choice question are the following: *illegal*, *legal* and *I don't know*. The second question in the knowledge part leads the respondent towards the opinion section. The question is about the ethical differences between seal fur and skin and it inquires if the respondents consider either of these more ethical than the other. The alternatives are: (a) *leather is more ethical*, (b) *fur is more ethical* or (c) *both as ethical, in seal products leather and fur are equally ethical*. However, the third option, (c) *both as ethical*, was unclear and caused confusion among the respondents, which affects the validity of this question and responses. *As Ethical* was intended to be equivalent to *as unethical*; this was not communicated clearly enough and therefore a number of comments addressed the lack of response options.

The second group of questions is about opinions. It studies respondents' willingness to wear seal skin or fur, and the values related to seal products. The respondents are asked to declare if they would use seal fur or skin clothing and if they would use those in nature or in the city. If the respondent is interested in wearing seal clothes, he/she is asked to clarify the following values related to seal clothes: (a) importance between stylishness and usability of clothing, (b) importance of ethical hunting methods, (c) responsible number of harvest, (d) economic support of the local community and (e) economic support of an Inuit community. The clarifying questions are placed on a polarized scale with 5 options. For the latter four questions, *low price* is on the other end of the scale. The reason for using price as a counter to values is to define respondents' level of commitment to their values. Furthermore, if the respondent shows no interest in wearing any seal products, the clarification to the response is also required, which is asked in the form of a multiple-choice question with an option for a comment. The response alternatives were derived from the blog discussion<sup>88</sup> on the ethicality of recycled fur clothing, including the following alternatives: (a) *I do not use animal products*, (b) *Fur and seal clothing does not represent my style*, (c) *I am worried about the reactions of others*, (d) *I am worried about promoting fur industry* and (e) *other reason*. The respondents were allowed to select multiple options.

#### 4.1.2 KNOWLEDGE OF SEAL PRODUCT TRADE

The results of the research indicated that the respondents have only a little knowledge about the legality of imported seal product trade in Finland. From all 350 respondents, only 6% replied that seal product trade in Finland is allowed only through exception, which is the correct answer. Furthermore, only 1 respondent of these 6% elaborated the exception to apply to Inuit, though clarifying the response was optional and therefore, it is possible that more than 1 respondent was aware of the Inuit exception. In contrast, 9% of the respondents replied that the seal product trade is *not* legal and 25% replied that it *is* legal. The majority, 59% replied "I don't know" to the question on the legality of seal product trade. In addition, this question emerged in 73 comments and 8 of them expressed concerns about the viability of the seal population.<sup>89</sup> This could be explained by the media visibility of endangered Saimaa ringed seals. The responses suggest that the respondents are not aware if selling imported – or any – seal products is legal in Finland. For this matter, there is a minor difference between the responses from Uusimaa and Lapland. The respondents from Lapland replied 10% more often that seal

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88 <http://pupulandia.fi/2014/08/20/eettinen-turkis-onko-sellaista-olemassa/>

89 The percentages are rounded up/down to the closest even number.

product trade is legal, while the respondents from Uusimaa replied 12% more often that they are not aware of the legal status of seal trade. It is safe to conclude that the communication on the Inuit exception has not reached the respondents of this questionnaire. However, the major reason for the lack of knowledge may be the small scale of the trade of seal skins and furs in Finland. According to Finnish Customs, between the years 2006-2017 only 127 seal items (clothing, or skins) were imported to Finland from Greenland, Denmark or Canada, while in 2002-2005 the import total was 5030 items<sup>90</sup>.

#### 4.1.3 INTEREST IN WEARING SEAL CLOTHING

The majority (58,4%) of respondents are not interested in wearing clothes made out of seal skin or fur. There is often more than just one reason for this decision and the reasons are often values-based, meaning that the use of seal, fur or animals is not considered ethical in clothing. One fifth (19,5%) of them don't use any products made out of animals. Approximately half (50,5%) do not use fur products because they are worried about impacting fashion. This means that even though the fur itself would be responsibly produced, the respondents are worried about promoting fur industry with less strict values. Almost one third (35,7%) of the respondents do not consider fur to be their style, which can be both a question of values or appearance. Only 8,6% express their concern about others' reactions, if they would wear fur. This was a surprisingly low number, considering the negative image of fur clothing in the public discussion and media. The questionnaire did not intend to define if the respondents are against all fur clothing, or only fur clothing made out of seal. However, some respondents clarified that they could use products made from other animals, but not from seal. Furthermore, some (5) respondents defined that seals are too *cute* to be killed or used. Cuteness, indeed, is a factor that may be a reason not to use certain animals. In Finland, the endangered Saimaa ringed seal is probably the most visible seal in the media. For instance, WWF's Norppalive<sup>91</sup>, a real-time video streaming of a wild Saimaa ringed seal, gathered over 3 million views in 3 weeks in summer 2017.

Dietary choices are connected to willingness to wear clothes made from seal. Figure 7 demonstrates how omnivores are more willing to wear seal clothes than the respondents who have values-based dietary restrictions. Another noteworthy variable is the size of the respondents' cities. The smaller the city, the more willing the respondents are to wear seal clothes. For instance, 61% of the citizens from a town of less than 50 000 are willing to

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90 "ULJAS - Tulli," n.d.

91 <https://wwf.fi/wwf-suomi/viestinta/uutiset-ja-tiedotteet/WWF-n-Norppalive-paattyi---kat-selukertoja-yli-kolme-miljoonaa-3207.a>



wear seal clothes, while the citizens of towns with 50 000-100 000 inhabitants the number is 38% and the in the cities of more than 100 000 inhabitants the willingness is only 35%. However, the sample group from the towns smaller than 50 000 inhabitants is rather small (66 responses) and therefore, further research would be required to draw reliable numbers. The knowledge on the legality of seal hunting does not have a significant correlation to the willingness to wear seal clothes. However, the comments propose that the respondents are concerned about the endangered status of the seal species.

### IMPACT OF DIET ON INTEREST IN WEARING SEAL CLOTHING

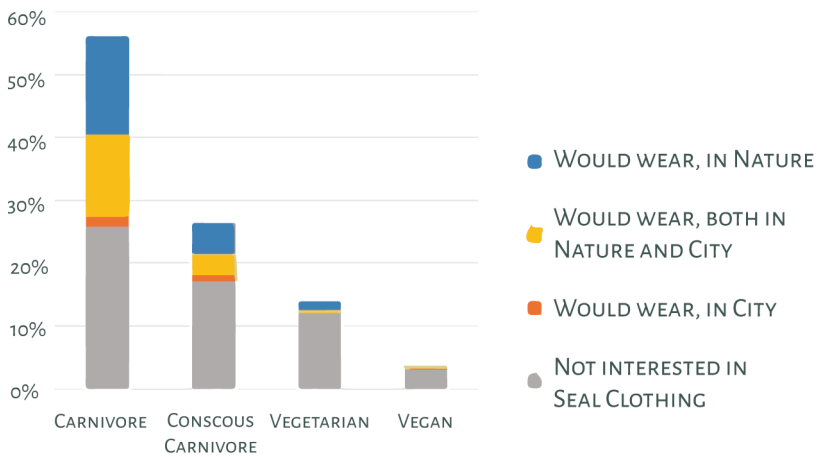


Figure 7. Diet affects the respondents' interest in wearing seal clothing.

#### 4.1.4 SEAL CLOTHING AND VALUES

According to the questionnaire, respondents who are interested in wearing seal clothing clearly value ethical production over cheap price. In every category, less than 7% of the respondents chose cheap price over ethical choices. Furthermore, the majority is not only for, but *strictly* for the ethical production of seal clothing. The respondents are strict especially about the impact on the seal population. 72% consider this extremely important and are willing to pay more to confirm that the harvest won't harm the seal population. 16% consider it important, 8% as important and the final 4% would rather pay less for the product than ensure the viability of the seal population. The second most important values are related to sustainable economy. Respondents appreciate that the money from the sale stays with the local community or supports Inuit community. Surprisingly, the least strict opinion is about ethical hunting methods. 55% considers ethical hunting

methods extremely important, 25% quite important, 15% as important as cheap price and 4% values cheap price more. This is surprising, because concern over hunting methods is the justification for the EU seal ban. However, the questionnaire clearly indicates that the ethical choices in hunting methods, business and viability of seal population are all very important values and the customers are willing to pay more for a more ethical product. On this matter, there are no significant differences between Uusimaa and Lapland regions, nor the size of the region. The only significant variables seemed to be diet and the purpose for using seal clothing.

Diet proved to be the most drastic variable among the respondents who were interested in seal clothing. Only a few vegans (1) and vegetarians (6) were interested in seal clothing and their responses were the strictest for the ethical choices over price. However, these replies cannot be generalized because of the small sample group. Instead, there is a credible sample size of omnivores and conscious omnivores, which can be compared with each other. While at least 80% of the conscious omnivores chose the most strict ethical option in each category (80%-97%), only approximately half (44-62%, depending on the category) of the omnivores chose the most strict option. The most remarkable difference was with the value of ethical hunting methods. Comparing to the other values, the omnivores were not as strict with the importance of ethical hunting methods. Only 44% were strict about ethical hunting methods, 30% preferred ethical hunting methods, 19% considered them as important as cheap price and 7% valued cheap price more than ethical hunting methods. In contrast, for conscious omnivores the same results were 80%, 14%, 6% and 0%. This indicates that conscious omnivores consider ethical hunting methods significantly more important than the omnivores do.

Another interesting variable connected to the values is the purpose of seal clothing. In this research, the purpose of seal clothing is divided into three categories depending on where it is used; in nature, in nature and the city, or in the city. From all the respondents who considered themselves possibly wearing seal clothing, 76 responded that they would use the clothing in nature, 56 both in nature and the city and only 8 respondents would use seal clothing in the city. The size of the latter sample group is small for accurate generalization, but remarkable enough for indicating direction. Overall, the respondents who are interested in wearing seal clothing in nature are the most strict about ethical choice over price in each category. Also, the respondents who are interested in wearing seal clothing in the city are the least strict about ethical hunting methods, but they consider viability of seal population, and supporting local and Inuit economy, more

important than do the respondents who would use seal clothing both in nature and in the city. The differences between all these groups vary from approximately 10% to 20%, which means that the differences are not drastic, but significant. It is interesting that the purpose of seal clothing was not expected, or attempted, to be a variable for this part of the questionnaire. However, the questionnaire indicates that the purpose of using seal clothing is connected to the respondents' purchasing values.

#### 4.1.5 OPINIONS ON SEAL FUR AND SKIN CLOTHING – COMPARING LAPLAND AND UUSIMAA

##### INTEREST IN WEARING SEAL CLOTHING, LAPLAND

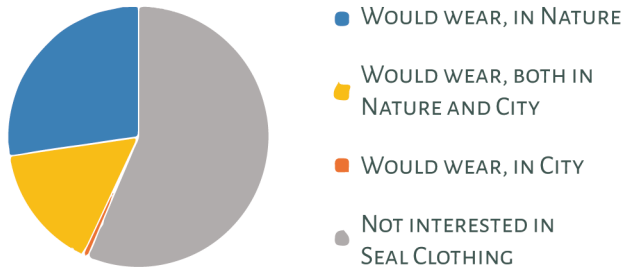


Figure 8. In the region of Lapland, seal clothing would be primarily used in nature, or both in nature and the city.

##### INTEREST IN WEARING SEAL CLOTHING, UUSIMAA

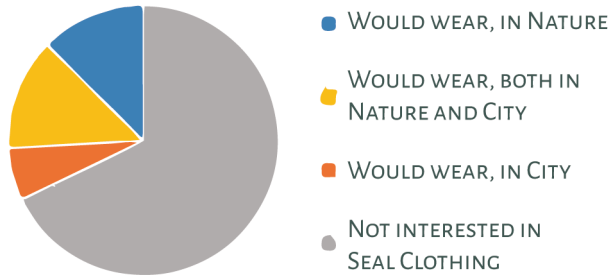


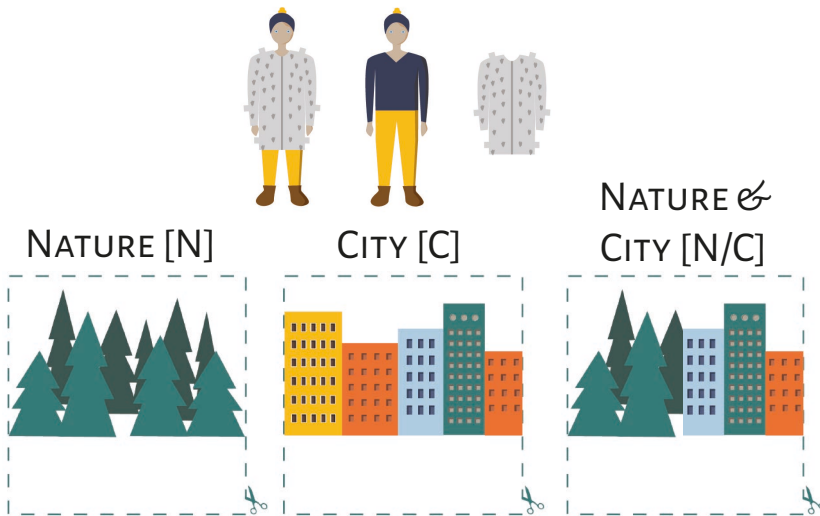
Figure 9. In Uusimaa, the interest in wearing seal clothing in an urban setting is higher than in Lapland.

The combined results from Uusimaa and Lapland are similar to the results from the whole country; 61% would not wear seal products. Furthermore, responses by category in Lapland and Uusimaa are similar, but with a few notable differences. In Lapland, 56 % of the respondents would not use seal products, while in Uusimaa the same number is higher, 68%. Another

notable difference is the purpose of seal clothing among the respondents who could be interested in wearing seal clothes. As could be predicted, the respondents from Lapland would use seal clothing more often in nature than in the city. Conversely, the respondents from Uusimaa are more interested to use seal clothing both in nature and in the city, which could suggest that they prefer clothing that is designed to work in various circumstances. The common thing with the respondents from Uusimaa and Lapland is that for both usability is more important than the appearance of the clothing. 68% of them consider usability more important, 23% consider both as important and the remaining 10% choose appearance over usability. However, when comparing these two regions with each other, it seems that the respondents in Lapland choose slightly more strictly usability instead of appearance, than the respondents from Uusimaa.

#### 4.1.6 CONCLUSION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The most significant variables were the purpose of using seal clothing (nature/city) and the diet (carnivore/ conscious carnivore/ vegetarian/ vegan) of the respondent. Below is a visual summary of these findings.



*The paper doll images represent the significant connection between the respondents' location and the perception of morals.*



**No interest to wear seal clothes in C.**  
98% of the respondents belong to this group.



**Interest to wear seal clothes in C.**  
Only 2% of the respondents were interested in wearing seal clothes in the city.



**Interest to wear seal clothes in N.**  
The primary use for seal clothing, both in Lapland and countrywide, is to wear it in nature.



**No interest to wear seal clothes in N.**  
Almost all the respondents who were interested in wearing seal clothes would also wear them in nature.



**No interest to wear seal clothes in N/C.**  
In this category, diet was a significant variable. A majority of all groups except carnivores, including almost all of the vegans & vegetarians, belonged to this group.



**Interest to wear seal clothes in N/C.**  
In Uusimaa, the respondents were equally interested in wearing seal clothing in nature and in the N/C. For all the respondents, this was the second desired use for seal clothing.

# SEC- OND- NESS

## *5 Inuit Seal Trade & the EU Seal Trade Ban*

*5.1 Sealskin as a Material: From Extreme Arctic Gear to  
Luxury items*

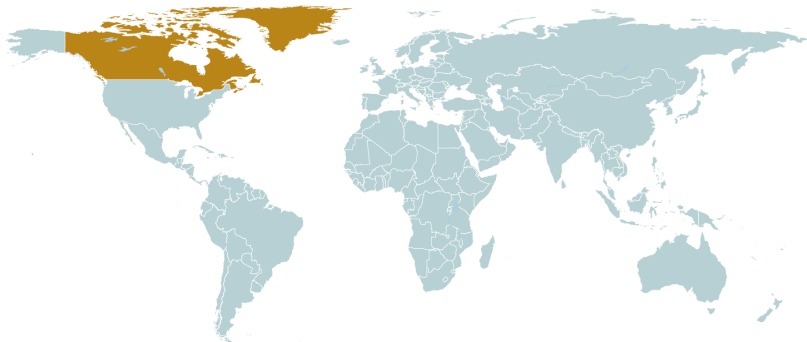
*5.2 Viability of Seal Population*

*5.3 Inuit Seal Hunt*

*5.4 The EU Seal Trade Ban*

# 5 INUIT SEAL TRADE & THE EU SEAL TRADE BAN

The aim of this chapter is to provide a holistic understanding of the phenomena and events related to seal hunting in the Atlantic coast of Canada and Greenland. We will take a look at the history of seal clothing both from the Inuit and western perspective, and the meaning of seal hunting to Inuit, and also learn about the EU seal ban and the history of seal discussion in Finland.



*Map 1. The EU seal trade ban particularly affected the Inuit in Greenland and on the Atlantic coast of Canada. Newfoundland in Canada is the main concentration of commercial seal hunting.*

*Inuit* are indigenous people in the Arctic. Within Inuit, there are several cultural groups, such as Iñupiat in Alaska; Kalaallit, Tunumiit and Inughuit in Greenland<sup>92</sup>; and Inuvialuit in the western part of Canada. The Canadian Inuit in the eastern Arctic of Canada inhabit Nunavut, Nunavik (Northern Quebec) and Nunatsiavut (Labrador).<sup>93</sup> The Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC)

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92 Williamson, 2011

93 “Inuit”, Government of Canada, 2009;

prefers the use of *Inuit* rather than *Eskimo*, because it “is not an Inuit term, and is not one that Inuit have themselves adopted”.<sup>94</sup> However, Yup’ik in Alaska and Siberia often calls themselves Eskimos, instead of Inuit. Previously, the word *Eskimo* was believed to mean “eater of raw meat”, but currently linguists connect it to an Ojibwa word meaning “to net snowshoes”.<sup>95</sup> Indigenous peoples’ right to self-determination is included in the UN Declaration of Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which means that they have a right to define who is Inuit and how they should be referred to.<sup>96</sup> In this research, we concentrate on the Inuit in Greenland and the Eastern Arctic of Canada.

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94 “The Use of the Term ‘Inuit,’” 2010

95 “Inuit or Eskimo?,” 2011

96 United Nations, 2007



## 5.1 SEALSKIN AS A MATERIAL: FROM EXTREME ARCTIC GEAR TO LUXURY ITEMS

The first commercial seal hunters arrived in Canadian waters in the 16th Century. They were European fishermen, for whom sealing was not initially the main source of income. Among the settlers in Newfoundland, commercial seal hunting took place in the early 1700s and by the end of the century, seal oil export had become a significant part of the economy of the fishermen in Newfoundland and Labrador.<sup>97</sup> The 18th Century saw the beginning of the large-scale commercial seal hunt. Primarily, the seals were hunted for their pelts that were sewn into clothing, and oil, which was used in cooking, lamps and lubrication. In the early 19th century, the Hudson's Bay company, a retail company that commenced with the fur trade, started the seal trade with the Inuit. By the end of 1800, ringed seal hunt provided both subsistence and cash for the Inuit on the Atlantic coast, and remained as a significant source of money until the first EU seal trade restriction was introduced in 1983. World War II was a turning point for the purpose of seal trade: the demand for seal pelts exceeded the demand for seal oil. Since then, the pelts have been the primary reason for commercial seal hunt, though seal oil has found a new market in a form of omega-3 capsules<sup>98, 99</sup>

### 5.1.1 SEALSKIN ENABLING LIFE IN THE ARCTIC

In the extreme climate of the Arctic where material sources are scarce, the Inuit have succeeded in developing innovative ways to keep themselves warm and dry with the items they have found from the nature surrounding them. Seal is one of those "items"<sup>100</sup> and over thousands of years the Inuit have accumulated knowledge on how to use various parts of seals for various purposes. Seal has always been important for Inuit diet, and the skin of the seal has provided tents, kayaks and clothing.<sup>101</sup> Betty Kobayashi Issenman, a specialist in Inuit clothing, has studied the use of seal in her book *Sinews of Survival* (1998). Issenman describes how the oils in the seal skin makes it water repellent, while the porosity of the material enables it to breathe. These are important material

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97 Royal Commission on Seals and the Sealing Industry in Canada, 1986. Vol. 2; Ryan, 1994. P. 49- 51

98 EC, 2009

99 Royal Commission on Seals and the Sealing Industry in Canada, 1986. Vol.2. Pp. 19; 29-30

100 Note on the word selection "item": Several studies have demonstrated that arctic indigenous people do not have a "word for a thing(...)" – all objects and images are considered as living and animated". (Garin et al., "Invisible Sustainability." P. 77)

101 Government of Greenland: Department of Fisheries, Hunting & Agriculture, 2009. P. 4

features for Inuit, who inhabit the cold and humid coastal regions. Besides the skin, also other parts of seal were utilized for clothing purposes, such as seal intestines which were sewn into waterproof garments. These gutskin coats were extremely light, only 170-200 grams, and functioned as a top layer to protect the other layers from getting wet.<sup>102</sup>

The use of seal depends on the species, because each seal species has specific attributes. Traditionally, the Inuit have used the skins of four seal species found in the Arctic: the ringed seal, bearded seal, harbour seal and harp seal. The ringed seal skin is excellent material for clothing because it is water repellent and weighs less than caribou skin. It is traditionally used for spring and summer parkas and pants, and it is ideal for summer and winter boots. Conversely, bearded seal skin is “extremely tough and thick”, and therefore excellent material for laces, belts and soles for boots.<sup>103</sup> However, the skin boot soles are not interesting only because they are comfortable for the user – they are also gentle for the environment. A research that was conducted in Siberia with Nenets reindeer herders, explains that the soft sole of the traditional boots bends the vegetation under them, instead of crushing the delicate plants. For this reason, the skin sole enables design that doesn’t harm the thin and fragile top layer of soil that often lays on permafrost.<sup>104</sup> Moreover, through the soft sole the user can feel the ground better and get information on the environment through her feet.<sup>105</sup>

In the cold weather, fur clothing has some significant advantages compared to other materials. In fact, cold weather can *maintain* fur clothing. Issenman explains that if the fur gets wet, it can be taken out to the cold air to freeze where the ice can be beaten off from the garment. This feature can be crucial, if a person falls through the ice or the material gets wet for other reason. Issenman continues that in milder temperatures wool is practical because of its ability to absorb humidity from the skin, but in extreme cold weather, such as -50°C, this feature can be problematic, because the humidity freezes and forms a heavy, icy layer on the person. Accordingly, animal fur and skin have enabled Inuit to live, hunt and travel on the water, ice and land in the Arctic.

For the traditional Inuit outfit, furs and skins from different animals are combined, because they all have special functions; a caribou fur is warm and seal is water resistant. However, the

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102 Issenman, *Sinews of Survival*. Pp. 34-36; 74

103 Issenman, *Sinews of Survival*. pp.34-36

104 Garin et al., “Invisible Sustainability.”

105 Garin, Nikolay. 1991. “Design for the environment of Far North: the Principle of Borrowing from Indigenous Material Culture”. Unpublished PhD Thesis, Moscow: Stroganov Moscow State University of Arts and Industry. (Cited in Garin et al., “Invisible Sustainability.”)

traditional clothing has now been mostly replaced with non-traditional materials and clothes. Colonization of the Arctic brought significant social changes for the Inuit communities and the nomadic livelihood was replaced with stationary settlements<sup>106</sup>. The contemporary Inuit livelihood does not require as much insulating clothing as in the past and therefore it often may not be efficient to consume time for sewing traditional clothes for situations where they are not required. Children go to school, adults work in warm offices and the ones who work outdoors are often near a heat source. Traditionally, the Inuit women mastered the skill of processing skins and sewing the clothes, but through the imposed education system and a shift towards a market economy and salary jobs, the time and skills are now limited and more often the clothes are bought from a store. Nevertheless, some of the traditional clothes, such as seal mittens and footwear, have not been replaced, and they are still relevant and in active use in the Inuit communities.<sup>107</sup>

The market for seal fur clothing is not limited to Inuit communities. In the late 1600s, fur trade was one of the reasons to explore the Arctic, and for many Inuit communities it was the first contact with Europeans. First came the individual traders, but soon the trading companies were established. In Canada, the Hudson's Bay Company was the most influential one and it had a significant role in the relationship between the Inuit and Europeans. The Inuit often benefited only a little from the trading deals. From the trade they received steel needles, metal pots, cloth and European hunting instruments, which the Inuit adapted into their material culture, because the items were useful and saved their time. However, George Wenzel describes in the book *Animal Rights, Human Rights* that although the fur trade exploited the Inuit, for the Inuit culture the transformation in the material culture was an adaptive strategy rather than an event that initiated the cultural change. The slow, selective change in the material culture had only a minor effect on the Inuit and their culture, whereas the new diseases and the European institutional structures played a major role in the cultural change.<sup>108</sup> This will be discussed more in detail in section 5.3.4 *Sealing as a part of contemporary Inuit economy*.

### 5.1.2 FUR FASHION IN EUROPE – LUXURY?

While the era of fur trade in the Arctic introduced new objects into the daily lives of the Inuit, in Europe the fur trade influenced clothing fashion. Furs of various animals have always been used

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106 E.g. AHDR-II.

107 Issenman, *Sinews of Survival*.

108 Wenzel, *Animal Rights, Human Rights, Ecology, Economy and Ideology in the Canadian Arctic*.

for clothing; the wealthier population had access to the finest and most exotic animals, while less wealthy people used the fur of dogs and rabbits. Until the end of the 19th Century, full fur coats were mainly worn by men, whereas in women's clothing fur was used only in trimmings and linings. In 1896, the Tsar of Russia visited Paris, which was a turning point for the fur fashion. The visit initiated a vogue for full fur coats for women, which may be the most familiar fur product for many Europeans today.<sup>109</sup> The second wave of fur coats was in the 1920's, in the time of the Charleston. To wear a fashionable and light charleston dress, one needed a warm coat. This was the practical reason for the popularity of the fur, but the meaning of the fur may have been even more important: it was a sign of luxury and social class.<sup>110</sup> This is noteworthy because it explains the semantics embedded in fur clothing. For the traditional Inuit livelihood the good features of fur were essential for survival in the Arctic, in Europe the meaning of fur products was in fashion and social status. The question is, how does the purpose of the garment affect the acceptance of seal clothing, or the values embedded in it?

Today, seal clothing collections, such as Great Greenland's (Greenland) and Natural Boutique's (Canada), include fur jackets, dresses, mittens, hats, and boots. The design of most of the clothes suggests the garments to be worn in a city instead of nature. Only some products, such as mittens for snowmobiling, are branded for outdoor use. It is indeed tempting to divide seal clothing into two lineages: outdoor clothing and luxury. There is a clear division between the purposes of wearing seal clothing (nature or city), but is seal clothing worn in a city always luxury, and what is luxury? Nikolas Sellheim discovered in his field study in Newfoundland that "(...)some claim high prices for e.g. seal skin jackets are an indication for luxury, others claim that the high prices are an indication for the life-long lasting quality of the product and should therefore be considered an investment<sup>111</sup>." This is an important division, because the animal welfare campaigns often represent seal fur as a superficial luxury – at the cost of animals' lives. I attempt to open Sellheim's observation with help of an article on luxury and sustainability by Jean-Noël Kapferer and Anne Michaut. First, exploring what is luxury. Luxury can be defined, and has been defined, in various ways. In this research, I follow the definition Kapferer and Michaut derived from the study by De Barnier et al.<sup>112</sup>, which compared a variety of definitions of luxury. This definition consists of seven criteria

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109 Laver and De La Haye, *Costume and Fashion*. Pp. 210-211

110 Seeling, Muoti. Pp. 132-135

111 Sellheim, "The Right Not to Be Indigenous: Seal Utilization in Newfoundland."

112 De Barnier, Falcy, and Valette-Florence, "Do Consumers Perceive Three Levels of Luxury?"

The reason I chose Kapferer and Michaut's description instead of the original article is that Kapferer and Michaut's definition was deduced from the work of De Barnier et. al , and therefore I was not able to retrieve the same results from the original.

for luxury, which are “exceptional quality, hedonism (beauty and pleasure), price (expensive), rarity (which is not scarcity), selective distribution and associated personalised services, exclusive character (prestige, privilege), and creativity (art and avant-garde).” According to this definition, quality and luxury are then not in contradiction with each other. Kapferer and Michaut conducted a questionnaire<sup>113</sup> which revealed that quality is, in fact, the first attribute that luxury consumers expect from a luxury product. Furthermore, an authentic luxury product is often produced locally with local craftsmanship, preserves local knowledge and is made from high quality raw materials. This all aligns with the values of sustainable production, and of Inuit production of seal clothing. However, the attributes that support social inequality, such as exclusiveness and hedonism, oppose the values of sustainability. Whether the seal product brand promotes these attributes that are typical for luxury depends on the product and the customer’s perception. Kapferer and Michaut’s questionnaire also indicated that the contradiction between luxury and sustainability depends on how a customer defines luxury; the clients who define luxury as extreme quality don’t see a contradiction between luxury and sustainability as often as the clients who define luxury as expensive or rare.<sup>114</sup> This finding is aligned with Sellheim’s observation, despite the deviant use of the term luxury. In both cases, the same product is perceived differently, depending on the value it represents to the customer.

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113 Respondents of the questionnaire consist from 966 French luxury consumers.

114 Kapferer and Michaut, “Luxury and Sustainability: A Common Future? The Match Depends on How Consumers Define Luxury.”

## 5.2 VIABILITY OF SEAL POPULATION

Seals from a number of northern seal species have been harvested for various purposes since the first people entered Greenland and the Atlantic coast of Canada thousands of years ago. Today, only certain seal species are hunted, and none of the species which are holding an endangered status according to the IUCN's Red List of Threatened Species<sup>115</sup>. Further, five out of six seal species in Greenland and the Atlantic coast of Canada are classified as *least concern*, with only the hooded seal carrying a *vulnerable* status.<sup>116</sup> However, the hooded seal population stock is relatively stable and increasing, and therefore both Canada and Greenland have classified hooded seals as least concern, yet have expressed concern about the harbour seal population, which has decreased. One reason for the differences in classification is poor data. The commercially hunted seal species, such as harp seal, attract more international research on the population size, while the resources for, and interest in, counting the other seals are minor.<sup>117</sup>

In this research, my main interest is in the seal species that are hunted by Inuit, which partly differs from the seals commercially harvested by non-indigenous people. The seal species harvested by Inuit in Greenland are harp seal, ringed seal, hooded seal and bearded seal. However, the harvest of the latter two seal species remains minor, while in 2009, harp and ringed seal formed 98% of the yearly seal harvest in Greenland<sup>118</sup>. In Canada, Inuit seal hunting consists of a small number of harp, hooded, grey, ringed, bearded, and harbour seals. Nevertheless, ringed seal is the primary seal species for the Canadian Inuit seal hunt, and important for both subsistence and commercial purposes.<sup>119</sup> Almost all commercially harvested seals in the Arctic are harp seals. This has some impact also on the Inuit hunt: in Greenland, harp seals are now preferred to ringed seals, because the price for the harp seal pelt is higher<sup>120</sup>, whereas in Canada, the Inuit seal trade is dependent on commercial seal hunting facilities, such as processing factories and distribution chains<sup>121</sup>. The animal welfare campaigns which led to the EU seal ban were directed against harp seal hunting. The campaigning started from concern for

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115 The scale of the Red List from the most concerning to the least concerning: Extinct, Extinct in the Wild, Critically Endangered, Endangered, Vulnerable, Near Threatened, Least Concern

116 <http://www.iucnredlist.org/search>

117 E.g. Boertmann et al., 2007 P. 10; Government of Canada, 2016; WWF, 2013. Pp. 20-21

118 Government of Greenland: Department of Fisheries, Hunting & Agriculture, 2012. P.22

119 Government of Canada, 2011

120 Government of Greenland: Department of Fisheries, Hunting & Agriculture, 2012. P.22

121 "WT/DS400 European Communities - Measures Prohibiting the Importation and Marketing of Seal Products - Trade - European Commission," 2014

the viability of the harp seal population, but after the population was well secured, campaigning shifted to a moral debate on seal hunting.<sup>122</sup> Currently, the harp seal population is the most viable of all seal species, with approximately 7.5 million seals in the Canadian and Greenlandic seas.<sup>123</sup>

Data on seal hunting and the number of seals in Greenland is limited due to the remarkable size of the region, the widely dispersed seal population and hunting activities, and restricted mobility. Seasons and weather conditions restrict the possibility of travelling to the remote locations that are often accessible only by boat or airplane. This is time- and resource-consuming and therefore, the information on most of the seals in Greenland has been considered as *data poor*. However, as the Government of Greenland remarks in a report on Management and Utilization of Seals in Greenland (2012), the Inuit hunters have difficulty agreeing with the statement of poor data, as data on seals in Greenland has been included in traditional knowledge for millennia and is still continuously observed. International cooperation in monitoring and studying seal populations in both Greenland and Canada is conducted with the North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission (NAMMCO). Furthermore, the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES/NAFO) monitors harp and hooded seal populations, including indigenous and commercial sealing of these species. The hunts are also studied and guided on national, regional and local levels, though there are no quotas for indigenous seal hunting due to low harvest levels. For monitoring the harvest, the hunters are required to have a licence and report the annual catches<sup>124</sup>. In Greenland, the number of full-time hunting licences is approximately 2,200 and the number of part-time licences reaches 5,500. To fulfill the criteria of a full-time hunter, at least 50% of income must be derived from hunting. Furthermore, hunting is not limited to seals, but also includes other animals and fishing.<sup>125</sup>

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122 Wenzel, 2000. P. 142

123 <http://www.iucnredlist.org/details/41671/0>

124 "Ringed Seal – NAMMCO," n.d.

125 Government of Greenland: Department of Fisheries, Hunting & Agriculture, 2012

## 5.3 INUIT SEAL HUNT

The first traces of seal hunting in the Atlantic coast of Canada and Greenland took place approximately 2000 BCE. The charred pieces of seal fat, seal bones and harpoon heads are among the earliest findings from the region indicating the role of sea mammals in the early inhabitants' diet. Migration to these areas began with nomadic families or small groups, most of them originating from Alaska, and progressed in waves. By 1400 ACC, the earliest cultures had submerged with Thule Inuit, the ancestors of the contemporary Inuit cultures.<sup>126</sup> Accordingly, seal hunting has continued in the eastern parts of the Canadian Arctic and Greenland for thousands of years, accumulating knowledge of stock management, hunting methods, seal use and environment. For Inuit, this knowledge is significant not only for subsistence reasons, but it also forms the core of the culture and is connected to beliefs, social structures and economy.<sup>127</sup>

### 5.3.1 SUSTAINABILITY AND ETHICS IN INUIT SEAL HUNT

As traditional knowledge is often embedded in stories that are passed from one generation to another, I will attempt to explain the ethical aspect in Inuit seal hunting first with a traditional Yup'ik story. The story is written by Ann Fienup-Riordan, an anthropologist who has conducted several publications on, and foremost *with*, Yupiit. Although the story belongs to Yup'ik from Alaska, instead of Inuit from Greenland or Canada, it describes well the relationship between the hunter and the seal, and their connection to the community. It is important to acknowledge that there are cultural variations within different groups of Inuit and therefore, this story represents only Yup'ik point of view. However, there are also similarities within these groups, and therefore, this story was selected to shed light on the traditional point of view. Furthermore, this is a short synopsis of the story and therefore it is not a perfect representation of the original.

The story goes that there was a couple, who had only one child. They wanted him to become a good hunter, but since he had no siblings to learn hunting with, they turned to the Shaman and asked his help. At the time of the Bladder festival, the Shaman sent the boy under the ice to live with the seals for one year, where one of the seals became his mentor. Throughout the winter, the boy observed the members of his community through the ice. He learned who were the hardworking ones shoveling

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126 Maxwell, 1985. Pp. 42, 60; MacGhee, 1978. P. 33

127 Eg. Dahl, 2000; Wenzel, 2000



snow and keeping the ice holes clear. When the hunting season started, his mentor told him that it was time to return to the good hunters. They swam towards the hunters and passed the first group, but didn't choose them, because, as the seal explained, they had been careless in their actions, such as drinking water straight from the bucket instead of using a dipper. They also passed hunters who "do not keep thoughts of ocean animals foremost in their mind"; hunters who don't pay attention to their surroundings. Finally, they reached a hunter that acts with respect both towards the animals and his community, and let him strike. The boy is still in the form of a seal when he is taken back to the village, but at the end of the bladder festival, he is found at the edge of the ice and brought back to his parents. This is how he became a great hunter.<sup>128</sup>

The story represents a "close parallel relationship of the human and animal worlds", Fienup-Riordan describes. Yup'ik people's view of hunting suggests that the animal chooses the hunter and therefore, people need to show respect in all their actions. A good hunter helps seals to observe people by providing a direct view to the human world. This includes clearing snow from the entrances, windows and paths, and maintaining the water holes on ice. Hence, the story doesn't represent only human-animal relationship, but also the meaning of hunt in human-human relationships; in order to be a good hunter, one needs to care for the community. Not only good actions make a good hunter, but also good thoughts. Yup'ik believe that thoughts are very powerful and they can either help or harm in hunt. If the hunter declines to share the meat with others, his selfishness may cause negative thoughts among the other members of the community. Animals, as sentient beings, are aware of these thoughts, and they may decide to not appear to him anymore. Therefore, it is not unusual to share the animal with relatives, or other members of the community who are in need, such as elders. In return for the meat, the hunters will receive good thoughts that will help them in hunting.<sup>129</sup> Similarly, George Wenzel emphasizes correct *intent* in hunting. Through his work with Clyde River Inuit in Baffin Island, Canada, he brings up two elements in intent. First, the primary reason for the hunt is food. The animal should be harvested with the intention of eating it, and no parts should be wasted. The second element with a correct intent is sharing the animal. An animal is not anyone's property, not even the hunter's, and therefore, it should be shared with others in the community. A hunter that keeps these both elements of intent in mind all the time will attract animals. Also, correct attitude is significant. The animals are aware of hunters' "thoughts, speech and actions". Again, the animals can *choose* to appear, or not appear to the hunter, and

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128 Fienup-Riordan, 2007. Pp. 17-19

129 Fienup-Riordan, 2007. Pp. 17-19, 21-22

therefore the animal is in a superior position in the hunt. If the hunter's attitude is not correct, if he wants to brag about his hunting skills, the animal can choose to not appear.<sup>130</sup> Therefore, I conclude, the term *good hunter* in Inuit culture doesn't only denote a hunter who succeeds in harvesting several animals, but it also encompasses the hunter's respect towards animals and sharing with others – a hunter with a correct relationship with animals and people.

Sustainability and ethics in Inuit seal hunting has attracted a considerable amount of interest among western scholars. Today, academics, legal authorities and a majority of animal welfare organizations consider the Inuit seal hunt as a sustainable and ethical practice. However, in the beginning of seal hunt protests, the Inuit seal hunt was also occasionally criticised by some animal welfare organizations, such as Greenpeace and IFAW, although the organizations themselves later argued that their intention had never been to target indigenous seal hunting<sup>131</sup>. The impacts of seal protests on Inuit will be discussed more in detail in section 5.4 *The EU Seal Trade Ban*.

Maybe the most convincing proof of the sustainability in Inuit hunting is the fact that the Inuit have hunted and inhabited the Arctic for thousands of years. It is not abnormal for a culture to survive for that long, but it is outstanding that it has not weakened the resilience of other systems, such as by exploiting other cultures or species. However, the sustainability in the precolonial Inuit culture may impose a threat to the resilience of contemporary Inuit culture. While the colonizers failed to understand the value of indigenous knowledge, currently the admiration of indigenous livelihood can be so high that some have been almost as colonial in their attempts to return indigenous people to precolonial times<sup>132</sup>. In other words, the precolonial Inuit culture was such an exceptional model of sustainable livelihood and circular economy that environmental groups are not always willing to accept the change that happened in the communities. This, however, is denying colonialism and is only another paternalistic way of impacting the Inuit culture. Indigenous people have a right to define their own culture and livelihood, as well as the right to develop it.

### 5.3.2 INUIT SEAL HUNTING METHODS

Four types of seal hunting methods are used in Greenland: open water hunting, hunting with nets, "uuttoq" hunting (sneaking) and hunting from the ice edge. When the sea is free from ice, the

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130 Wenzel, 2000. Pp.138-139

131 Wenzel, 2000. Pp. 142-149

132 Wenzel, 2000

*open water hunting* is conducted with small motor boats, often alone. After a hunter has spotted the seal, he reaches it quietly, shoots with a rifle and hauls the animal into the boat rapidly before it sinks. The current type of *hunting with nets* was introduced by Europeans, and it is practiced from October until the end of March. Netting is used only during the darkest times of the year, when no other hunting method is effective. It is more common in the Northern parts of the country where the sun does not rise at all for some months and using rifle is impossible. In spring, when the days are getting longer and ice cover is strong, *Uuttoq hunting* is appropriate for catching the seals. In this method, the hunter observes a breathing hole in the ice, waiting a seal to appear to take breath. When the seal appears, the hunter crawls close to the seal by using a white screen in front of him to camouflage into the environment.<sup>133</sup> *Hunting from the ice edge* is conducted from the edge of permanent or drifting ice. Sometimes seals may also be caught by the edge of a crack in the ice.

*“The primacy of sealing by boat seems first of all to be explained by the fact that it is a direct evolution of sealing by kayak, which was the dominant type of sealing in this part of Greenland until the 1960s. Hunting by a kayak was a job of a genuine hunter.”* Jens Dahl in his book *Saqqaq: An Inuit Hunting Community in a Modern World*.<sup>134</sup>

The Inuit hunting methods are declared humane, meaning that the killing doesn't cause too much stress to the seal. Only net hunting divides opinions, because it remains unclear if death is prolonged in the net.<sup>135</sup> A study on ethical hunting methods conducted by NAMMCO clarifies that the data on netting is still limited and cannot be reviewed<sup>136</sup>. However, the Inuit prefer net hunting only when harvesting seal meat by other methods is not possible. Jens Dahl, a Director of the International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA) in Copenhagen, observed through his field work in a small community Saqqaq that the preferred type of hunting is open water hunting. This is a direct continuation from kayak hunting, which has been the most valued type of hunting in the Inuit community. The best hunters have excellent skills to move and hunt on water by kayak, and hunting by boat is still the most appreciated hunting method that brings respect to a hunter. Net hunting is only practiced if the circumstances are poor, if a hunter doesn't own a boat, or has other limitations, such as age.<sup>137</sup>

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133 Government of Greenland: Department of Fisheries, Hunting & Agriculture, 2012

134 Dahl, 2000. P 137

135 Eg. NAMMCO Expert Group Meeting on Best Practices in the Hunting and Killing of Seals, 2009; WWF, 2013;

136 NAMMCO Expert Group Meeting on Best Practices in the Hunting and Killing of Seals, 2009. Pp. 11, 18

137 Dahl, 2000

### 5.3.3 COLONIALITY & CULTURAL CHANGE

Both Canada and Greenland were colonized for centuries before facing the most severe and extensive colonial acts. Prior to this, colonization emerged primarily in the form of trade control and commercial whale and seal hunting<sup>138</sup>. It was not until World War II that coloniality struck every indigenous community in the Northern hemisphere. The Cold War initiated a race for Arctic non-renewable natural resource exploitation. For indigenous people, this meant loss of land and the beginning of assimilation politics, including the introduction of welfare state policies, which eventually forced the nomadic people to move into permanent settlements. Welfare state policies included mandatory education and health services, which attracted a number of teachers, healthcare professionals and construction workers to the communities changing the demographics, sometimes drastically. 1940-1970 can be considered the years when the indigenous people of the Arctic had the least power over their own future.<sup>139</sup> The changes that redirected the cultures were not conducted with the communities: *"local people could not escape the impression that they were watching helplessly while things were being done around them and "for" them"*.<sup>140</sup>

Part of the welfare policies, which could be also referred as modernization, was mandatory school education in the 1950s and '60s. In Greenland and Canada, this often meant boarding schools, which alienated the children from their families and culture. Through the school systems, a number of children lost their mother language. Losing a native language means not only impairing communication with family and community, but also a disabling of access to indigenous knowledge.<sup>141</sup> The school system also replaced the elders as major knowledge providers, impacting their role in the community.<sup>142</sup> Structural racism at school, including the hegemony of modern knowledge and the suppression of Inuit culture and knowledge, undoubtedly had an impact on Inuit identities and appreciation of their own culture, although this is difficult to measure.<sup>143</sup> Moreover, treatment of children in the poorly-equipped boarding schools was uncertain. In 2015, Canada completed a Truth and Reconciliation commission on the boarding schools, leading to an apology for the physical, biological and cultural genocide. Considerably high death rates, physical and sexual abuse, and alienation from culture and family impacted a whole generation of indigenous people.<sup>144</sup> This generation

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138 Dahl, 2000; Wenzel, 2000

139 Csonka & Schweitzer, 2004

140 Csonka & Schweitzer, 2004. P. 49

141 Csonka & Schweitzer, 2004

142 Freeman, 2000

143 Rautio, Poppel, & Young, 2014

144 Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015

is sometimes called a 'broken' or 'lost generation', "who may have felt as little connected to their parents and grandparents as to their own children".<sup>145</sup>

The shift from nomadic lifestyle to formal settlements, rapid changes in demography and interrupted connections to culture and knowledge created dependency on the Europeans and directed power away from the communities.<sup>146</sup> Some of this power has been regained through decolonization processes, although the impact of the defuturing acts has remained high on a community and individual level. In Canada, the rights of the indigenous people were included in the Constitution in 1982, while in Greenland, Home Rule was established in 1979, initiated and promoted by the Greenlanders themselves. In both Greenland and Canada, the decolonization processes are inspired by international human and indigenous rights processes, and the indigenous people are an active force in decolonization.<sup>147</sup> However, colonization initiated drastic changes in Arctic identities, gender roles, social and power relations and knowledge. This, together with the challenges brought by climate change, stresses the resilience of the northern communities.<sup>148</sup> At worst, the stress emerges as high rates of domestic violence and suicide. There is evidence that lower suicide rates are connected to self-governance, although in Greenland Home Rule has unfortunately not had the same effect.<sup>149</sup> It is clear that the wellbeing of the Arctic indigenous people cannot be measured with the same criteria used to measure wellbeing in a western society. Arctic Human Development Reports I & II define additional dimensions in measuring wellbeing in these communities. These additions indicate the importance of indigenous people's control of their own future, and connection to the land and culture, but also the needs that were introduced with cultural change.<sup>150</sup>

#### Arctic Human Development Indicators by AHDR I & II

- *Fate control – guiding one's own destiny (% of surface lands legally controlled by the inhabitants through public governments and Native corporations)*
- *Cultural integrity – belonging to a viable local culture (language retention)*
- *Contact with nature – interacting closely with the natural world (consumption or harvest of local foods).*

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145 Csonka & Schweitzer, 2004. P. 49

146 Csonka & Schweitzer, 2004

147 Broderstad & Dahl, 2004. Pp.

148 McCarthy & Long Martello, 2005

149 Hild & Stordahl, 2004

150 AHDR, 2004; AHDR II, 2014

- *Material wellbeing (per capita household income).*
- *Health and Population (infant mortality and net-migration).*
- *Education (ratio of students successfully completing post-secondary education)*

#### 5.3.4 SEALING AS A PART OF CONTEMPORARY INUIT ECONOMY

Colonization and coloniality brought significant social and material changes to the Inuit communities, which inevitably also affected hunting practices. However, some of these changes happened through adaptation, which is an essential skill in the Arctic. Prior to the colonization, the Inuit, as well as other indigenous people in the Arctic, based their livelihood around animal migration. Life in a formal settlement, away from prey, requires modern transportation technology, such as motor boats, snowmachines and ATVs. This allows the hunter to travel longer distances in a shorter time. Another material change in hunting is rifles, which were adopted already during the years of trade.<sup>151</sup> Despite the material changes, Inuit knowledge guides the hunt. George Wenzel describes that *“anthropology today tends to see hunting as an active system of environmental relations dependent on harvest-er decision-making rather than technology itself”*.<sup>152</sup> A report from ICC’s Wildlife Management Summit indicates that Inuit are hoping to regain the land management rights to the land they inhabit. Moreover, one of the major themes in the summit was *“The need to shift to a holistic, ecosystem approach to management, a framework that recognizes that Inuit, arctic animals and their wellbeing are dependent on the ecosystem they call home. This framework – of seeing the whole ecosystem – is more clearly aligned with IK [Indigenous Knowledge] and Inuit ways of life and knowing, which has ensured our cultural sustainability through many generations.”*<sup>153</sup>

For the contemporary Inuit communities, the skin of the seal is less crucial than the meat that is a major source of food in remote villages. Therefore, it is often more beneficial to sell the skin to a tannery than keep it, because it is one of the rare opportunities in the Inuit communities to earn money and cover the costs of the hunt.<sup>154</sup> Jens Dahl’s work in Saqqaq aligns with this statement. His observations indicate that a hunter may get less than one seal per hunting trip and therefore, the hunt can be considered a subsistence rather than economic activity.<sup>155</sup> George Wenzel’s work in Clyde River addresses that Inuit would have a need for more seal meat, if they could cover the costs of the hunt. Also, there is a difference between employed and

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151 Wenzel, 2000

152 Wenzel, 2000. P. 94

153 Inuit Circumpolar Council, 2018. P. 7

154 “Management and Utilization of Seals in Greenland.” P. 12

155 Dahl, 2000

unemployed hunters' access to Inuit food: *"Men with access to wage work have access to money and can therefore bring home animals. Non-wage hunters basically find that they cannot hunt either as much or as productively because of their lack of cash".*<sup>156</sup>

In Greenland and northern parts of Canada, the growing season is short and favors only a few arctic species. Berries and plants are part of the Inuit diet, but for most of the year the only fresh local source of food is marine mammals, game, or fish. Even today, the remote location and small size of the arctic communities doesn't support importing food from elsewhere. Most of the communities are accessible only by air or boat, and only when the circumstances are favourable. Logistics costs make the price of imported goods extremely high, especially for communities with a low income level and few opportunities for wage income. The Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC) declares the high costs of imported food and high hunting expenses as the major threats to Inuit food security. Other significant challenges for food security include climate change – which is already affecting the animal population and limiting access to hunting grounds – and contaminants in traditional food. However, despite the elevated contaminant levels in arctic animals<sup>157</sup>, traditional food is still considered a healthier option than imported goods. First of all, imported food is often preserved or dried, and is associated with some new health disorders, such as obesity, diabetes and cardiovascular diseases<sup>158</sup>. Above the nutritional value of traditional Inuit diet is its cultural and social meaning to Inuit.<sup>159</sup> Therefore, seal hunting is not only the foundation of food security in the Arctic, but also a foundation of Inuit culture.

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156 Wenzel, 2000. P. 130

157 Contaminants, such as persistent organic pollutants (POPs), heavy metals and radionuclides, are brought to the Arctic by winds, sea currents and animals. Because of the cold climate, the pollutants get trapped, which exposes the arctic inhabitants to an elevated level of contaminants. (Inuit Circumpolar Council, Canada, 2012)

158 AHDR II, 2014. P. 313

159 Inuit Circumpolar Council, Canada, 2012

## 5.4 THE EU SEAL TRADE BAN

In 2009, the European Parliament and the Council adopted regulation EC 1007/2009, banning the trade in seal products within the European Union. It was a response to commercial seal hunting in Canada, which was accused of the cruel and inhumane killing of seals. However, the seal ban not only diminished the European markets for commercial hunting, but it also affected the seal product trade conducted by Canadian and Greenlandic Inuit<sup>160</sup>. The regulation was not intended to harm indigenous people, and therefore it did not limit trade that resulted from Inuit seal hunt; but with the regulation, the demand for all seal products faded drastically.<sup>161</sup> The impacts of the EU seal ban on Inuit have received some attention since the regulation was introduced. The issue has been raised by newspapers<sup>162</sup>, countries, academics and most of all, by Inuit themselves. Even several animal welfare organizations, who are the main contributors to the ban and opponents of commercial seal hunting, have apologized for the impacts of their campaigns to Inuit. However, diminished trade suggests that the discussion on Inuit rights and seal hunting has not reached the market in Europe. In this section, we will look into the reasoning behind, and implications of, the EU seal ban. We will proceed in a chronological order with a focus on the ban's impact on Inuit.

### 5.4.1 HISTORY OF EU SEAL HUNTING REGULATION

In the late 60's, the commercial seal hunt in Newfoundland, Canada, gained international media attention. The media criticized the killing of numerous few-day-old seal pups, which were harvested for their white fur. This was the beginning of animal welfare organizations' decades-long battle to end commercial seal hunting in Canada, which led the European Union to regulate seal trade.<sup>163</sup> The first legislation in EU on seal trade derived from the public concern on inhumane killing of seal pups for their fur. This was introduced in 1983 and called 83/129/EEC, the *seal pup directive*. The directive prohibited the import of harp- and hooded seal pup products to Europe, with the exception of "products resulting from traditional hunting by the Inuit people".<sup>164</sup> After EU had closed the market for seal pup products, harp seal hunting in Canada decreased to one third of the previous year<sup>165</sup>. The

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160 e.g., WWF, 2013; Koivurova, Kokko, Duyck, Sellheim, & Stepien, 2012

161 EC, 2009

162 e.g., Brabant, 2015

163 IFAW, 2016; Royal Commission on Seals and the Sealing Industry in Canada, 1986, p. 11

164 Seal Pups Directive, 1983

165 Fisheries and Oceans Canada, 2012



seal pup directive was extended twice, and the second time, in 1989, it was extended indefinitely<sup>166</sup>. Seal hunting increased again rapidly in 1996, when Canada introduced subsidies for seal hunting. The International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), an organization that has been greatly involved in campaigns to end commercial seal hunting, argues that seal hunting is not economically viable, and the real reason for subsidies is to kill seals to increase the cod population, which dropped in the early 1990s and affected fisheries.<sup>167</sup> However, Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) claims that the subsidies have never been directly admitted to seal hunting, only for developing sealing industry and infrastructure that supports the use of the whole seal. DFO considers sealing a viable industry and remarks that the subsidies ceased in 2001.<sup>168</sup> Whatever the reason for the Canadian seal industry subsidies, they increased the number of harvested seals until 2009, when the EU adopted Regulation EC 1007/2009 on Trade in Seal Products, and the number of harvested seals dropped again to the same levels as before the subsidies were introduced in 1996.<sup>169</sup>

A previous limitation on seal hunting in the EU is the Habitats Directive. Within the EU member states, the hunting of all seal species is regulated by the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC, which the European Council adopted in 1992 to conserve wild fauna and flora. The directive allows hunting of some seal species under strict conditions. For instance, in Finland approximately 300-500 grey seals are harvested yearly under the directive. However, the Habitats Directive applies only in the countries within the EU; Greenland, as an autonomous territory within the kingdom of Denmark, is not a member state. Therefore, the Habitats Directive is relevant for this study only in order to understand the EU seal hunt legislation, but it doesn't itself directly affect the seal hunt or trade in Canada or Greenland.<sup>170</sup>

The regulation EC 1007/2009 banned the seal product trade in the EU, including importing, exporting, and trade within the European Union. This was an achievement for the animal welfare organizations, yet the regulation has been criticized by the sealing communities, countries that are affected by the ban, and academics. The justification for the ban is ambiguous. Unlike most of the restrictions on wildlife use, the reason for the EU seal trade ban is not to assure the viability of animal population. The hunted seal species are not endangered, nor are concerns on the viability of local seal populations addressed in the regulation

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166 EEC, 1985; EEC, 1989

167 IFAW, 2016

168 "Background Information on the Canadian Seal Harvest (PRB 07-01E)," 2007

169 Fisheries and Oceans Canada, 2012

170 EEC, 1992

on seal trade.<sup>171</sup> However, commercial seal hunting has affected the seal population in the past, especially in 1975, but with the introduction of sealing quotas the population has recovered, and hunting doesn't pose a threat to the seal population<sup>172</sup>. According to the Fisheries and Oceans Canada, by 2011 "*the harp seal population [had] increased fourfold since the 1970's*" in the Northwest Atlantic part of Canada, a region that is the most involved in commercial seal hunting<sup>173</sup>. Whereas the seal protests started from concern for the viability of the seal population, in the '80s the strategy of the campaigns changed from the environmental concerns to a discussion on animal rights, which also formed the base for the EU seal trade ban.<sup>174</sup>

The EU seal trade ban was initiated from the concern over the cruel seal-hunting methods and the stress and fear the animals may encounter during killing. However, the adopted seal trade regulation does not argue that killing seals without causing them suffering would be impossible, but within current circumstances, it is not feasible to monitor the hunting methods.<sup>175</sup> Although cruelty is addressed as one of the main reasons for the seal ban, it may be based on biased information. For instance, Greenland home rule has expressed doubts on the objectivity of the study on cruelty in commercial hunting. The study was ordered by an "*extreme animal welfare organization*", and utilized in the proposal of the seal ban.<sup>176</sup> It remains ambiguous whether the knowledge on cruelty against seals is biased and whether the difficulty to monitor the hunt is an adequate reason to ban the seal trade. However, the European Council has been able to defend the EU seal trade ban by invoking *Public Morals*, meaning that the citizens of the EU do not accept killing of seals, as it causes suffering and distress to the animal. In 2009, Canada and Norway complained that the EU seal ban discriminates their markets and violates WTO trade agreement. The case had a final ruling in 2014, when WTO concluded that: "... seal products from Greenland were treated more favourably than seal products from Canada through the exception for products derived from Inuit hunts" and "EU had failed to design the legislation to prevent arbitrary discrimination and should have made more efforts to encourage Canadian Inuit to use the exception". The EU was able to defend the ban itself by reasoning it with "public moral concerns on seal welfare" and therefore the case resulted only a clarification of the Inuit exception.<sup>177</sup>

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171 EC, 2009

172 Fisheries and Oceans Canada, 2012; IFAW, 2016

173 Fisheries and Oceans Canada, 2012, p.14

174 Wenzel, 2000

175 EC, 2009

176 Government of Greenland: Department of Fisheries, Hunting & Agriculture, 2009, p. 20

177 "WT/DS400 European Communities - Measures Prohibiting the Importation and Marketing of Seal Products - Trade - European Commission," 2014

#### 5.4.2 DISCUSSION AFTER THE EU SEAL REGULATION WAS ADOPTED

The Northern Institute for Environmental and Minority law, a research group at the Arctic Centre, has contributed to the discussion and research of regulation EC 1007/2009. In 2011, Timo Koivurova et al. argued that including the EU in Arctic Governance (accepting the EU as an observer to the Arctic Council) would create better common understanding within these regions. Through the seal ban case, the article addresses how the decisions made in the EU may have a great impact on arctic livelihood. Using the seal ban case as an example suggests that the European Parliament and the Council are not completely aware of the complex position of seal hunting in the North, nor of the impacts of the ban on indigenous seal hunting communities.<sup>178</sup> Furthermore, Kamrul Hossain, an Arctic Centre researcher in the field of arctic governance, remarks that despite the *Inuit exception* which allows them to continue trade, the ban has a remarkable impact on Inuits' economy, and through that, on their culture. The Inuit exception lacks clarity, and therefore applying it in practice is difficult; this was also addressed in the WTO case. Moreover, he concludes that the Inuit exception fails to understand modern Inuit livelihood by including only a hunt with *traditional* methods.<sup>179</sup> This expresses a paternalistic attitude to restoring the culture, and therefore it violates the United Nations *Declaration on the Rights on the Indigenous People* by ceasing Inuit's self-determination right to cultural, social and economic development.<sup>180</sup> Indeed, in the rural arctic villages, in which the livelihoods are often a mix of subsistence activities and market economy, selling the by-products from seal hunting provides important income for Inuit. This monetary income enables them to purchase fuel for boats and other equipment that are necessary to practice subsistence activities, such as hunting.<sup>181</sup> Nikolas Sellheim's article *The Narrated Other* complements this view by arguing that the indigenous exemption encourages and enables only subsistence hunting rather than hunting as an economic activity.<sup>182</sup> In addition, Sellheim's dissertation questions the objectivity of the EU seal ban legislative process, especially in the context of non-indigenous seal hunting communities in Canada.<sup>183</sup>

The wording of the Inuit exemption has also received criticism from Inuit, because it poses the risk that non-Inuit begin to define what is traditional in Inuit culture and what is not, which can have hostile consequences to Inuit.<sup>184</sup> The use of term *traditional*

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178 Koivurova, Kokko, Duyck, Sellheim, & Stepien, 2012

179 Hossain, 2013

180 United Nations, 2007, Article 3

181 Glomsrød & Aslaksen, 2009, pp.75-76; 83-87

182 Sellheim, 2016b

183 Sellheim, 2016a

184 Government of Greenland: Department of Fisheries, Hunting & Agriculture, 2012

is problematic also in a public discussion, because it provides certain rights for indigenous people, and if it is misunderstood by the majority, it may cause dissonance between the cultures<sup>185</sup>. A non-indigenous person may experience the rights of indigenous people as unfair privileges, if the reality of a traditional hunt doesn't correspond to *their* image of a traditional hunt<sup>186</sup>. This image is often grounded in the material culture and represents Inuit hunt prior to colonialism. However, the cultural and social change occurred, and from there the Inuit have adapted new objects into their daily lives. Defining 'traditional' in a colonized culture is ambiguous, and it cannot be conducted by another culture. This is included in the Article 11 of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People: "Indigenous peoples have the right to practise and revitalize their cultural traditions and customs. This includes the right to maintain, protect and develop the past, present and future manifestations of their cultures"<sup>187</sup>. This means that the indigenous people retain the right to not only define *what* is traditional in their culture, but also the right to *develop* their traditional customs.

The animal welfare organizations acknowledge the consequences of the EU seal ban on Inuit. Of the biggest animal welfare organizations, IFAW, Greenpeace and WWF have all apologized for the harm their campaigns have caused to indigenous people; only Humane Society International (HSI) have not clearly announced an apology, nor addressed the indigenous exception in their campaign.<sup>188</sup> Moreover, WWF conducted research on Inuit sealing in Greenland. The research indicates the sustainability of seal hunting in Greenland and, furthermore, recommends that the EU take responsibility for the harm the ban has caused to Inuit<sup>189</sup>. An open question is how well the animal welfare organizations have communicated about the Inuit exception to their members. In January 2016, Greenpeace UK published a blog post about their support for seal hunting conducted by indigenous communities. The blog post received 12 responses before the thread was closed. All the comments were from disappointed members, who were strictly against killing of animals. As the question "I don't understand what difference the hunters' "respect" makes, it would not make killing a seal any more or less worthy" indicates, the seal issue is not only a concern about ethical killing methods,

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185 Wenzel, 2000

186 In Finland, a number of newspaper articles on Sámi fishing rights in the Teno river have raised discussion on the "privileges" that Sámi have as indigenous people. The majority of the (Finnish) commentators disagree with these rights, invoking the modern fishing equipment and motor vehicles that Sámi people use. Eg. "Uusi kalastussääntö hiljensi Tenojoen, mutta rannoilla kuohuu," 2017; "Tenojoen asukkailla on maailman vapaimmat kalastussäännöt – Silti he rikkovat niitä," 2017

187 United Nations, 2007. Article 11

188 "Greenpeace apology to Inuit for impacts of seal campaign," 2014; IFAW, 2016; WWF, 2013; "Humane Society International: Protect Seals," n.d.

189 WWF, 2013

but it also demonstrates lack of understanding the Inuit culture and sustainable livelihood in the Arctic.<sup>190</sup>

### 5.4.3 IMPACT ON INUIT

Of the Arctic indigenous communities, Inuit in Greenland and Canada were the most affected by the EU seal ban. The ban had no significant impact on the native population in Alaska, because seal hunting was already highly restricted in the United States by the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) of 1972<sup>191</sup>. Russia introduced a ban<sup>192</sup> on seal import and export in 2011 and is no longer directly affected by the EU seal trade ban. Reviewing the impacts of the EU seal ban on Russian indigenous communities is difficult, because of a lack of reliable information. However, it is safe to assume that of the indigenous communities, Canadian and Greenlandic Inuit have been the most affected by the ban, because the EU has been a significant trading partner for these countries<sup>193</sup>. Therefore, I narrow down the focus to cover the indigenous communities in Canada and Greenland that are affected by the EU seal ban. I acknowledge that the Inuit communities are different in these countries and that they are affected in different ways by the ban. However, in this research I assume that for a Finnish consumer there may not be a significant difference in perception of the livelihood of Canadian or Greenlandic Inuit, which would affect the acceptance of a seal product.

After the seal ban regulation was introduced, the seal product trade dropped by 90% in Greenland.<sup>194</sup> For Inuit society this is a major loss, because revenue from the trade enables hunting, which is a crucial part of the culture and identity.<sup>195</sup> For instance, hunting plays a central part in traditional knowledge. Traditional knowledge of nature and sustainable natural resource management have accumulated over thousands of years, and have been transferred in the form of stories and beliefs from generation to another. This knowledge is applied in subsistence activities such as hunting, and if hunting disappears, the knowledge is also in danger of disappearing.<sup>196</sup> Moreover, seal meat is an important part of an Inuit diet, not only culturally, but also for food security reasons. Several rural Arctic villages are accessible only by boat

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190 “Where Does Greenpeace Stand on Seal Hunting?,” 2016

191 MMPA was implemented to protect the marine mammal population, and address the international esthetic, recreational and economic significance of marine mammals. MMPA includes exception for Alaska Native subsistence hunt.

192 In 2011, customs union of Belarus, Kazakhstan, and the Russian Federation ban the import and export fur skins of harp seals. (The source for this information was not available in English)

193 e.g. “Assessment of the Potential Impact of a Ban of Products Derived from Seal Species.” 2008; Hossain, “The EU Ban on the Import of Seal Products and the WTO Regulations.” 2013

194 WWF, 2013. P. 34

195 Government of Greenland: Department of Fisheries, Hunting & Agriculture, 2009

196 Saamelaiskäräjät, 2006. Pp. 10-11

or plane, and only for part of the year. Therefore, relying heavily on imported food can cause food shortages in these regions where local food production is not profitable most of the year. The price of imported food is high and it is not considered as healthy as the traditional diet.<sup>197</sup>

Inuit themselves object to the ban and have taken action in the form of demonstrations, videos and social media campaigns. The Inuit in Greenland have founded Inuit Sila, an organization to promote Inuit seal products and hunt, and protest the EU seal trade ban.<sup>198</sup> Two central persons in the public discussion on Inuit seal trade are Alethea Arnaquq-Baril, a movie director, and Aaju Peter, a lawyer. Both have been active in the media to raise awareness of the impacts on the Inuit of anti-sealing campaigns and the EU seal trade ban. Arnaquq-Baril directed a documentary, *Angry Inuk*<sup>199</sup>, on the issues in the EU seal trade ban and Inuit seal hunt, and Aaju Peter is one of the Inuit who share their views in the documentary. They both tour in film festivals raising discussion on the topic. *Angry Inuk* and the speeches shared by Arnaquq-Baril and Peter have an influence on this research. Arnaquq-Baril and Peter transmit information on contemporary Inuit seal hunt, while criticizing the animal welfare and environmental organizations that refuse to compensate the damage to the Inuit that has resulted. The environmental organizations consider that the EU should take charge in restoring the market for Inuit seal trade<sup>200</sup>, although the environmental organizations themselves have been actively lobbying the regulation and have affected public opinion. Alethea Arnaquq-Baril explains that the Inuit have not been able to establish a connection with the anti-sealing groups despite the impact they have on Inuit<sup>201</sup>. Also, approving only subsistence seal hunting indicates that the aim of the anti-sealing groups is not to stop cruelty in seal hunting, but to reduce seal hunting as much as possible. However, trade is a significant part of the contemporary Inuit seal hunt and therefore, Arnaquq-Baril refers to the Inuit seal hunt as a commercial hunt.

*“People don’t think of us [Inuit] when they talk about commercial sealing. There have been many campaigns over decades fighting against seal hunting, and it kind of boggles my mind that people manage to spend a huge amount of time and money discussing the issue of commercial seal hunting without a thought to the Inuit who are actually the majority of the commercial sealers.”* Alethea Arnaquq-Baril.<sup>202</sup>

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197 e.g., Government of Greenland: Department of Fisheries, Hunting & Agriculture, 2009; AHDR II, 2014

198 “Inuit Sila,” n.d.

199 Arnaquq-Baril, 2016

200 IFAW, 2016; WWF, 2013

201 Cinema Politica, 2016

202 David Peck Live, 2016

For Inuit, the issue is the diminished demand for seal products in the European market. It suggests that Europeans are not aware of the Inuit exception or sustainable seal products. The *Assessment of the impacts of EU seal ban* included a questionnaire on the public perception of seal hunting. Public morals is, indeed, addressed as one of the main justifications for banning the trade, which suggests that this questionnaire had an important role in the decision. However, even the questionnaire itself declares that it “shows the attitudes of those who responded – not necessarily of the entire populations”, and that some organizations have encouraged their members to respond.<sup>203</sup> Finally, Nikolas Sellheim notes that although public morals is the legally accepted reason for the EU seal ban, EU has still not defined public morals.<sup>204</sup>

#### 5.4.4 CONCLUSION

The Inuit exception was supposed to confirm the continuity of Inuit seal trade after all other seal trade was banned in the European Union with regulation EC 1007/2009.<sup>205</sup> However, the seal ban that was partially justified with *public morals* affected public morals in such a way that seal products were no longer bought in the EU, even though the only seal products available in the EU are from sustainable and ethical hunting conducted by Inuit. The ban has been criticized for its impact on indigenous people: by undermining opportunities to practice seal trade, the Inuit were kept from the important source of monetary income that is closely related to the viability of their culture. Hence, Inuit themselves are against the seal ban and hope it to be dismantled.<sup>206</sup> The objectivity and fairness of the seal ban has also raised discussion in academics<sup>207</sup>, and furthermore, in 2015 EU was required to improve the Inuit exception to meet WTO trade agreement<sup>208</sup>. However, the question is if the regulation was able to change the public morals to be negative towards seal products, would the removal of the regulation turn the public morals more positively towards seal hunting? Perhaps the removal of the EU seal ban would not bring back the market; instead it could spark visible seal rights campaigns by animal welfare organizations, and the impact on public morals would remain rather negative. This is only speculation, but I suggest that besides the removal or change of the seal trade ban 1007/2009, it is justified to also explore alternative approaches to affect public morals, fill the knowledge gap and enable the Inuit exception to function.

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203 COWI, 2008. P. 124

204 Sellheim, 2016a

205 EC, 2009

206 Government of Greenland: Department of Fisheries, Hunting & Agriculture, 2009

207 E.g., Koivurova, Kokko, Duyck, Sellheim, & Stepien, 2012; Sellheim, 2016a; Sellheim, 2016b; Hossain, 2013

208 “WT/DS400 European Communities - Measures Prohibiting the Importation and Marketing of Seal Products - Trade - European Commission,” 2014

# THIRD- NESS

## *6 Decolonizing Seal Trade*

### *6.1 Coloniality in the EU Seal Trade Ban*

### *6.2 Seal Clothing as a Means to Decolonize Seal Trade*



# 6 DECOLONIZING SEAL TRADE

In this chapter, we examine the previous Chapters 4 and 5 with the decolonial theories that were presented in Chapter 2. The information is divided into two themes: *Coloniality in the EU Seal Trade ban* and *Seal Clothing as a means to Decolonize Seal Trade*. The first one reveals the coloniality embedded in the EU seal trade ban; the second studies seal clothing as a means for decoloniality. The results of the questionnaire are compared with the questionnaire results of *Assessment of the Potential Impact of a ban of Products Derived from Seal Species*, research that was conducted for the European Council prior to the seal ban. This questionnaire is referred to here as the COWI questionnaire, after the consultant company.

## 6.1 COLONIALITY IN THE EU SEAL TRADE BAN

### 6.1.1 “I AM WHERE I THINK”

As Mignolo concludes, thinking is always related to location.<sup>209</sup> With the EU seal trade ban, this is particularly clear. The stakeholders can be placed on the map according to their agenda: Commercial seal hunters in Newfoundland, Inuit hunters in Greenland and Atlantic coast in Canada, environmental activists in USA, Canada and Europe and European Council in the EU. This indicates that location impacts opinions on seal hunting and therefore, the opinions on the EU trade ban are subjective. The subjectivity of opinions is, obviously, common sense, but the point here is that defining only one, objective, statement on seal trade is illusory and denies the pluri-versity of knowledges.

The geographical differences in opinion on the seal ban are visible also on a country level. A questionnaire by COWI (see Table 2) denotes that 57% of Finnish citizens support the EU seal trade ban, UK 83% and the 27 countries of EU 73%. High resistance towards seal hunting in UK is aligned with high resistance towards hunting in principle (81%). The results from Finland, Sweden and Norway are exceptionally similar; this is the only group that is clearly distinguished from the others. A majority of the citizens of these three countries accepts hunting in principle, but also the environments and socio-economical structures are similar. Another geographical variant in the COWI questionnaire is rural/urban inhabitation. The residents of rural regions are more positive towards seal trade and seal hunt than the residents of urban regions. However, the exact numbers are not provided in the COWI report.<sup>210</sup> The results from the questionnaire on Finnish citizens' perception of seal clothing (table 3) indicate some similar trends with the COWI questionnaire. In rural regions, people are more positive towards seal clothing: 61% of rural citizens are interested in seal clothing, while the citizens from more densely inhabited regions express 35-38% interest towards seal clothing. Moreover, the results from Lapland and Uusimaa suggests that along with the size of the city, the geographical location may also create a difference.

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209 Mignolo, 2007

210 COWI, 2008

	EU 27	Canada	Denmark	Finland	Norway	Sweden	UK
Number of Respondents	32,061	3,533	467	767	336	1,492	9,087
Ban	73.0%	70.4%	57.4%	56.5%	54.4%	40.8%	82.7%

Table 2. The support for the EU seal trade ban COWI questionnaire

	<50 000	50 000 - 100 000	>100 000	Lapland	Uusimaa
Number of Respondents	66	145	130	172	112
Would wear seal clothing	61%	38%	35%	44%	32%

Table 3. Finnish people's interest in seal clothing

Examining these results through Mignolo's reiteration 'I am where I think', we will be able to explain why it is significant to reveal the geographical differences in the perceptions on the EU seal trade ban. With 'I am where I think' Mignolo means "that you constitute yourself ("I am") in the place you think."<sup>211</sup> Therefore, acknowledging and accepting "the interconnection between geo-history and epistemology,"<sup>212</sup> dismantles the myth of being right, because there is no universal truth or knowledge.

If knowledge is derived from location, then making the location visible by the local's point of view will help to bridge the gap between different ways of knowing. This will be a significant theme for forming the photography exhibition between Kalaallit Nunaat (Greenland) and Finland.

### 6.1.2 WHO BENEFITS FROM THE EU SEAL TRADE BAN?

Mignolo's definition on the difference between liberating and emancipating projects, which we discussed in the section 3.2.2 *Separating the Myth from the modernity*, includes a significant question: "Who benefits? Who are the agents and intended targets". In the EU seal trade ban, the main beneficiaries are animal welfare organizations. IFAW was founded to stop the commercial seal hunt and therefore, the existence of the organization,

211 Mignolo, 2011. P. xvi

212 Mignolo, 2011. P. 91

its economy and jobs originates from the objective to ban seal product trade. However, this logic applies to all environmental organizations and, although I acknowledge that it may create a conflict of interest, the significance of it is uncertain. Instead, I consider animal welfare organizations as beneficiaries of the ban because of their success in claiming superior sustainability and morals. The government of Greenland describes this as *eco-colonialism*. As the interest of this research is not to explore the moral foundations of commercial seal hunting, I concentrate on the discussion of modernity/coloniality between Inuit, European Council and Animal Welfare organizations. Finnish citizens are not included in this, because data from a questionnaire is not considered sufficient to produce such qualitative information.

The EU seal trade ban case includes two elements of modernity/coloniality: hegemony of western knowledge, and colonial power. Both animal welfare organizations and the European Council claim that the EU seal trade ban was not intended to impact the Inuit seal trade<sup>213</sup>. However, with the trade ban, the Inuit seal trade decreased. The issue here is that both of these parties were informed and aware of this impact prior to the adoption of the regulation. In 1983, the *seal pup directive* prohibited trade of harp and hooded seal products in Europe. Although it aimed to stop only commercial seal hunting, it affected all seal trade, including Inuit. In 1996, the seal trade began to recover, until the preparations for the regulation EC 1007/2009. The Government of Greenland was invited to participate in the process, which signalled a good intention to include Inuit and acknowledge other ways of knowing. However, the Government of Greenland concludes that their contribution was partly ignored and some significant reports were not included in the review.<sup>214</sup> Adopting the EU seal trade ban, both EC and animal welfare organizations ignored (i) impacts of the previous ban, (ii) the Government of Greenland's stance and (iii) Indigenous rights to "*participate in decision-making in matters which would affect their rights*"<sup>215</sup>. It appears that the cooperation with Inuit and the Government of Greenland was therefore only formal, and they were not considered as subjects of knowledge. The EC 1007/2009 affected the Inuit similarly to the previous ban. Table 4 reveals that the seal trade in Greenland has recovered since 2009, but remains minor

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213 EC 1007/2009, Article 14: The fundamental economic and social interests of Inuit communities engaged in the hunting of seals as a means to ensure their subsistence should not be adversely affected. The hunt is an integral part of the culture and identity of the members of the Inuit society, and as such is recognised by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Therefore, the placing on the market of seal products which result from hunts traditionally conducted by Inuit and other indigenous communities and which contribute to their subsistence should be allowed.

214 Government of Greenland: Department of Fisheries, Hunting & Agriculture, 2012

215 United Nations, 2007. Article 18.

compared to the years before the EU seal trade ban was proposed. The number of sealskins sold on the international market is only half what it was in 2006. Coupled with the decreased export value of sealskins, the economic benefit of the seal trade is only a fraction of what it was prior to the ban. In conclusion, the European Council ignored the Inuit perspective and knowledge during preparation of the regulation, and enacted it despite the evidence of its impact on the Inuit.

<i>Year</i>	<i>EU</i>	<i>Outside EU</i>	<i>Number of sealskins sold on the international market</i>	<i>Export value of sealskins and products in mill. DKKR#</i>
2004	71%	29%	84,700	42,6
2005	69%	31%	59,800	52,6
2006	66%	34%	82,554	57,7
2007	43%	57%	43,603	18,3
2008	16%	84%	33,839	7,4
2009	22%	78%	6,257	2,0
2010	26%	70%	16,257	3,4
2011	30%	70%	16,566	3,7
2012	38%	62%	42,858	7,6
2013	<i>Na</i>	<i>Na</i>	41,000	10,0

*Table 4. International sealskin trade by Great Greenland within the years 2004-2013. (Reproduced from Government of Greenland, 2015.)*

## 6.2 SEAL CLOTHING AS A MEANS TO DECOLONIZE SEAL TRADE

In Finland, interest in seal clothing is minimal; this may be due to a lack of knowledge of seal hunting, a narrow perception of sustainability, and the gap between products and customers' needs and wants. The questionnaire indicated that approximately 58% of respondents are not interested in wearing seal clothing. This aligns with the COWI questionnaire, which indicates that 56% of the Finnish respondents support the EU seal trade ban<sup>216</sup>. However, for a country where seal clothing trade is minor (Table 5), I consider 42% displaying interest in seal clothing to be high, particularly when 59% of respondents expressed that they are not aware of the legal status of seal trade in Finland. The purpose of use divided the respondents who were interested in wearing seal clothing. Most of the respondents would wear seal clothing in nature, and an almost equal amount in nature and in the city. Only 2% of the respondents would wear seal clothing only in the city, which is interesting because the market is aimed at urban designs. Fur is often perceived as a luxury product and this may be the reason why the Finnish do not consider wearing seal clothes in urban settings to be so attractive. However, the majority of seal clothing designs are for urban use, and therefore, expanding the market to Finland would require either rebranding luxury, or expanding the product family.

2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
828	1906	254	2042	18	8	0	0
2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
0	5	0	51	12	33	0	0

Table 5. Imported seal furs, skins and clothes within the years 2002-2017.

Source: Finnish customs.<sup>217</sup>

In this section, we discuss seal clothing from a decolonial and ontological perspective. Currently, seal trade is minor in Finland, but there is some interest, and therefore, with appropriate products and sufficient communication there is potential for an increase in sales. In the following subsections, I examine future scenarios on the impact of increased seal trade to the Inuit, and the impact of seal clothing to their users. The aim is to explore ontologically

<sup>216</sup> COWI, 2008

<sup>217</sup> The table created by the author with the information from: "ULJAS - Tulli," n.d.

designed seal clothing as a means to decolonize seal trade and, through that, to decolonize knowledges.

### 6.2.1 SUSTAINABILITIES IN SEAL CLOTHING

The questionnaire on seal clothing reveals a connection between diet and interest in wearing seal clothing. This suggests that the interest in wearing seal clothing is a moral choice, and accordingly, that a number of Finnish citizens consider some moral issues with seal clothing. Hence, for 10 % from the 58% of respondents with no interest towards seal clothing, refusal is only a matter of style. Surprisingly, one of the major reasons for not wearing seal clothes is concern about impacting fashion: although one's own fur clothing may be sustainable and moral, wearing it may encourage unsustainable and immoral fur industry. On this matter, I consider the EU seal trade ban with Inuit exemption to be beneficial. The pattern of seal fur is distinct and therefore, wearing seal clothing may only increase seal fur trade. Since Inuit have exclusive rights to the seal clothing trade, the risk of affecting immoral fashion is then minimal.

Furthermore, the questionnaire indicated that the purpose of use is connected to purchasing values: the respondents who would use the seal clothing in nature also place greater value on ethical hunting. Similarly, the COWI questionnaire addresses the connection between use of seal and acceptance of seal hunt. Using all parts of the seal is more acceptable than using only meat or skin. Also, hunting seals for food is more acceptable than hunting to produce luxury clothing. I suggest that instead of seeking the most moral use of seal, it may be more prominent to guide the discussion towards futuring aspects of seal clothing. Is seal clothing futuring to Inuit, Finnish and environment? For Inuit, seal trade is significant for food security and cultural reasons. Inuit seal hunting is also nurturing for the environment. Inuit seal hunt and Inuit knowledge, including holistic natural resource management, are intrinsically linked: if one diminishes, the other follows. Moreover, seal skin is a by-product of food harvest, and as a durable material with distinct qualities, it can be considered a sustainable alternative for some synthetic materials. The objectives of this research do not include life-cycle assessment (LCA), or other calculations on the environmental impact on seal clothing, which would study, for instance, the environmental impact of the tanning process and transportation. However, studies on the environmental analysis cannot be separated from the social and cultural impacts, which are of major importance in seal trade. For Finnish people, the futuring aspect of seal clothing is acceptance of other sustainabilities. Acknowledging other sustainabilities is not only fair, but a pluriversity of knowledges and locally

created sustainability strategies contributes to the resilience of all ecosystems.

### 6.2.2 ONTOLOGY IN ARCTIC DESIGN

According to Tony Fry, products become part of being, and therefore, things must be designed to *ontologically care*. Ontology in design is a topical question, as technology is increasingly impacting and forming us.<sup>218</sup> For the seal clothing discussion, ontology brings a fresh point of view: *How does seal clothing form being?* While ontology in design may appear uncomfortable from a western-knowledge point of view, for many indigenous people it is a not atypical concept. Svetlana Usenyuk et al. elaborated Golovnev, A.V. observations as follows in the publication *Invisible Sustainability*:

*"Perhaps the most important aspect indicated in many studies of Arctic natives is that in their diverse languages, there is no word for a thing as an inanimate material object distinct from a living being: everything around people, i.e. what they can see, touch, perceive, think out, make, etc. – all objects and images are considered as living and animated because of their ability to make influence on human body and mind."*<sup>219</sup>

A close relationship between the user and a *living* thing, as Usenyuk et al. define, is connected to the close relationship between local environment and tailored designs. This is also addressed by Fienup-Riordan. She explains that *"Yup'ik tools and clothing in general were [and are<sup>220</sup>] constructed according to the user's body measurements, so that the object and user were always in proportion to each other."* For this reason, the living things cannot be passed on to anyone else. Usenyuk et al. continue that the relationship with the thing begins at the moment of choosing the material: an example describes a Nenets reindeer herder discussing with a tree his intention to build a sledge from it. This close relationship with a thing undoubtedly forms a unique bond between the user and the design, which is based on a mutual *care* and therefore, on sustainability<sup>221</sup>. Usenyuk et al. note that copying a sustainable object from Arctic indigenous people to the Western world is impossible, because of this bond between the user and the object. However, what design *can* replicate is the

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218 Fry, 2017

219 Usenyuk, Garin, Rogova, & Mukhina, 2013. P. 77. (Golovnev's article available only in Russian.)

220 Fienup-Riordan's book Yuungnaqpiallerput: The way we genuinely live studies Yup'ik material world with Yup'ik elders. The past tense denotes to the objects that were built in the past and exhibited in a museum. However, we discuss about living culture, and therefore, I prefer to use present tense.

221 Another, more precise, term that could be used here is 'futuring'. I chose sustainability for making the comparison of sustainabilities easier.



bond itself. The article describes a design case where the aim is to design camping dishes that create a similar bond between a thing and the user, and through that, affect Being. This example of ontological design transfers the concept of sustainability from an indigenous group to other cultures.<sup>222</sup>

Finally, I address a few concerns about ontological design. Examining ontological design together with decoloniality is both promising and challenging. I agree with Fry that products shape us, and likewise, importing design from modern culture will shape cultures. It is well justified to ask from the design how it shapes the user. However, I am not convinced that the designer is able to respond to that question without knowing the context and location of use. This can be solved by designing only locally, although I argue that it is only realistic to follow that principle in certain cases. In the indigenous rural Arctic communities, some modern designs, such as snowmobiles, have been adopted into daily life. Technology solves problems that were introduced by colonization, particularly through the change from a nomadic lifestyle to stationary communities<sup>223</sup>. Adopting some, selected, designs may increase the resilience of these communities and help with cultural activities, such as hunting. Hence, proposing that design should come only from the local setting may not be realistic. One reason the indigenous people in the Arctic were nomadic is that the land has sustained only seasonal occupation<sup>224</sup>. Colonialism brought modern problems, and some of them can be responded to with modern designs, or with a combination of indigenous and modern designs. Nevertheless, the communities themselves must define what is appropriate for them. This is connected to the issue of *romanticizing* indigenous cultures that Fry also addressed. Creating a romanticized image of another culture is a threat to that culture, because it is represented as a realistic image of the culture, although it is based on a highly subjective perception that may include a personal or political agenda.<sup>225</sup> Moreover, discovering the faults in the false cultural image can be turned against indigenous people, if their way of life doesn't correspond with the image that has been created.

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222 Usenyuk, Garin, Rogova, & Mukhina, 2013.

223 Wenzel, 2000

224 Berardi, 1999

225 Fry, 2017

# DIS- CUS- SION

## 7 *Discussion*

7.1 *Review of the Research Questions*

7.2 *Proposals for Decolonizing Seal Trade through Design*

7.3 *Review of the Research Process*

7.4 *Conclusion & Future Prospects*

# 7 DISCUSSION

This research indicates that western cultures are lacking *trust* in other ways of knowing. This lack of trust originates in the myth of modernity, specifically in the self-proclaimed superiority of modern knowledge, and with the current global power relations, it remains an issue. For instance, considering the information on some seal populations as data-poor, while Inuit have extensive data on the population, indicates a lack of trust in Inuit epistemologies. I hope that this research will encourage critical thinking in sustainability discussions, where often the same models are suggested as universal solutions for the whole planet. This is understandable, because we are in the middle of a climate crisis, which is a global event and requires global attention. However, I suggest that the global should be perceived as pluri-versity, instead of university, and this requires trust in other ways of knowing.

## 7.1 REVIEW OF THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

### *How do the limitations on seal trade in Europe affect the Inuit?*

Of the Arctic indigenous people, the Inuit of Greenland and the North Atlantic coast of Canada were affected most by the EU seal ban. The introduction of the regulation reduced seal trade in Greenland by 90% and neither the quantity of sales nor the price recovered to previous levels. Between 2004 and 2006, Great Greenland's export was 42,6-57,7 million DKKR, while the figure for 2013 was only 10 million DKKR. The decrease in the sales and value of seal skin led to the subsidization of seal hunting, to enable the continuation of the hunt. In Canada, the Inuit seal trade was built on the same manufacturing and trade systems as commercial seal hunting. These limits on commercial seal hunting, therefore, also disrupted Inuit seal skin production and supply chain. The WTO concluded that the EU seal trade ban placed the Canadian Inuit seal trade in a more favorable position than the Greenlandic Inuit seal trade, and therefore, proposed amendments to the EU seal trade ban.

For Inuit, the revenue from the seal trade is necessary in order to continue the hunt. Colonization of the Arctic forced the majority of the nomadic people to move to formal settlements. This, together with assimilating acts, introduced cultural, social and material changes to the Inuit livelihood. Contemporary Inuit seal hunt from the settlements requires travelling longer distances in less time and therefore, boats and four-wheel-drive vehicles have often replaced dog teams. Income is needed to cover the costs of the equipment, fuel and ammunition.

Seal hunting is significant to Inuit for cultural and socio-economic reasons, as well as for food security. A decrease in seal hunting affects all these aspects and therefore, it affects the resilience of the communities, while increasing dependence on imported food and jobs. In Chapter 5.3.3, we discussed Arctic Human Development Indicators. One indicator, *contact with nature*, is directly connected to harvesting and consuming local food, which highlights the importance of the seal hunt. However, one can consider the seal trade to also strengthen the following indicators:

- *Fate control: seal trading is an economic activity chosen by Inuit*
- *Cultural integrity: sharing seal meat strengthens social relations within the community*

- *Material wellbeing: seal is a significant source of food and the income from seal trading enables seal hunting*
- *Health and Population: Local food is healthier than imported food*

The results of the EU seal trade ban were similar to the results of the seal pup directive, which was ratified in 1983. There was no reason to believe that the impacts on Inuit would differ from the first ban, but still no effort was made by the EU to improve the visibility of the Inuit Exemption and ensure its function. Animal and environmental organizations have criticized the European Council for this, although they have not themselves taken action – aside from apologising – for the damage their campaigns have caused for the Inuit.

### *How do sustainability discourses define the Inuit seal trade?*

Claiming the superiority of modernity formed a tool, and a justification, for colonizing people, land and cultures. It led to the suppression of other knowledge systems, which perpetuates the dominant power structures and concept of knowledge.<sup>226</sup> Not only did modernity contribute to colonization, but coloniality also contributed to modernity. For instance, Modern economics could not have emerged without exploitation of the land and people of the 'discovered' continents. Because of this close relationship between modernity and coloniality, untangling them from global power structures is impossible if these structures are supported by colonial epistemology. Therefore, decolonizing power structures should begin from decolonizing knowledges.<sup>227</sup> The superiority of western knowledge is defuturing for the 'Other', the non-western, which coloniality/modernity placed as an object of knowledge and of development projects. In the EU seal trade ban case, the Inuit are the Others and Inuit sustainability is the Other in relation to western sustainability, which was in this case strongly defined by animal welfare organizations.

The sustainability and ethics of the Inuit seal hunt are acknowledged by all the stakeholders of the EU seal trade ban. However, the problem here is the attempt to define, from outside, a sustainable, subsistence hunt traditional to Inuit. The European council describes the Inuit exception in the following way: "It allows the placing on the Union market of seal products which result from hunts traditionally conducted by Inuit and other indigenous communities (...)".<sup>228</sup> The concern is that *traditional* can be interpreted as the hunting methods from the past<sup>229</sup>, which becomes an issue when we discuss living cultures, which have

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226 Eg. Dussel, 2000; Quijano, 2007; Mignolo, 2007; Fry, 2017

227 Eg. Quijano, 2007; Mignolo, 2007; Fry, 2017

228 EC, 2009

229 Porsanger, 2011

experienced major social and cultural changes in addition to the rapid environmental changes that affect the hunt. The material changes in the Inuit seal hunt are only adaptive strategies for these larger changes, while the qualities of the Inuit seal hunt are rooted deeper in the Inuit epistemologies and ontologies.

Another term that is connected to the acceptance of Inuit seal trade is *subsistence* hunt<sup>230</sup>. For Inuit, the seal hunt is a mix of subsistence activity and modern economy. The Inuit seal hunt can be considered a subsistence hunt, because the major reason for the hunt is food and the income gained from seal skin trading barely covers the expense of the hunt.<sup>231</sup> However, Inuit are part of modern economy, and the seal skin trade is necessary to continue the hunt. Therefore, Inuit are also commercial seal hunters, which according to Inuit seal trade activist Alethea Arnaquq-Baril is a less misleading term for Inuit seal hunting<sup>232</sup>. Defining the exception as concerning only subsistence hunting indicates a lack of trust towards the ethics and sustainability embedded in the Inuit seal hunt. The purpose of the EU seal ban is to protect seals from cruel hunting methods, so describing the Inuit seal hunt as a subsistence activity is not relevant. Instead, it makes the Inuit seal trade vulnerable to misinterpretations of subsistence activity.

For the European Council and animal and environmental organizations, the motivations for the EU seal trade ban are based on morals and sustainability. The animal welfare organizations' justifications for banning the seal trade transformed throughout the years, from protecting the seal population to being a moral issue<sup>233</sup>. Although Inuit have demonstrated excellent skills and knowledge for natural resource management in the Arctic, the animal welfare organizations have not indicated an interest in working with, or learning from, the Inuit.<sup>234</sup> In addition to the relation between these two knowledge systems, western estimates of the seal populations are often considered more accurate than the estimates made by indigenous people, despite Inuit daily observations on the environment. This can be explained by the myth of modernity – belief in the superiority of Modern knowledge. Modern and Indigenous epistemologies and ontologies are different, and therefore, the sustainabilities are also different. Often these two systems conflict, and the system with more power (modern) weakens the resilience of the other system. Therefore, I propose that the western concept of sustainability should adapt a notion of pluri-versity of knowledge into its agenda to ensure that it does not weaken other systems.

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230 IFAW, 2016

231 Eg. Wenzel, 2000; Dahl, 2000

232 David Peck Live, 2016

233 Wenzel, 2000

234 Cinema Politica, 2016

### *How can seal clothing contribute to decolonizing sustainability and knowledges?*

The history of design as a servant of modern economy established a connection between design and coloniality. The fading of the industrial era forced, or freed, designers to find and fill other occupations, which initiated a change in the role of the designer. This was the beginning of the shift from designing tangible objects to designing systems. According to Tony Fry, the designer can affect the Being of the user with design. This is based on an ontological design theory, which explains that the things we use define us. In the context of the EU seal trade ban, a relevant question for design practice is how the design of seal clothing could dismantle the otherness and coloniality of the seal trade and enable a pluri-versity of sustainabilities?

Seal clothing includes a number of associations. For Inuit, seal skins have enabled life in the Arctic for thousands of years; first in the form of clothing and canoes, and more recently in the form of income. The relationship with the material is a close one: seals and sealing are essential parts of the Inuit socio-economic system, accumulative knowledge and identity. For Finnish people, using seal as clothing is partially confusing. The endangered Saimaa ringed seal has gained a lot of attention in the Finnish media; this is likely connected to the questionnaire respondents' comments on the cuteness of seals, concern over the viability of the seal population and even anger over research into seal clothing. The majority of the respondents are not interested in wearing seal clothing. The results suggest that Finnish people's relationship with seals or seal clothing is distant, but emotional. I consider this both good and challenging for decolonial purposes. The challenge is to establish a cross-cultural connection over this highly emotional topic. On the other hand, I propose that because of these negative associations with seal clothing, the majority of Finnish people would not buy them without learning about the sustainability and ethics of the Inuit seal hunt. This means that the user acquires knowledge on another sustainability. The reason it is *another* sustainability, and not only a reformed concept of sustainability, is that these are connected to the location and culture: In Finland, some seal harvesting is conducted, but it cannot provide a sustainable livelihood to people, while for Inuit it is often the most sustainable form of livelihood in the Arctic. Therefore, I suggest that wearing seal clothing increases acceptance and awareness of the pluri-versity of sustainabilities and knowledges.

## 7.2 PROPOSALS FOR DECOLONIZING SEAL TRADE THROUGH DESIGN

According to the results of the questionnaire, Finnish citizens are significantly more interested in wearing seal clothing in nature, or in nature & the city, than only in the city. This may be connected to the functionality of seal clothing, or to the perception of fur as a luxury material and the discussions on the rights of fur animals. I consider the latter two options to be more significant, because these are also arguments represented by animal welfare organizations in the EU seal trade ban discussion and are therefore present in the seal trade discussion<sup>235</sup>, and because these themes appeared in the responses of the questionnaire. Therefore, I propose that the most prominent opportunities for ontological design are rebranding luxury and/or designing seal clothing to be used in nature. By rebranding luxury, I mean emphasizing the ethics and sustainability of the products. The customers already expect good quality and design from a luxury product. This is a strategy already applied by the Great Greenland furhouse, which refers to its products as 'sustainable luxury'. For a product catalogue which includes items that can be perceived as luxury, I consider this well-justified. However, 'luxury' always includes the notion of social inequality, especially when we talk about fur clothing. Separating this association from luxury fur coats can be a challenging task that may only be possible to achieve one coat at a time. Therefore, the desired change in the perception of seal clothing can be more easily attained through seal products that are not associated with luxury, but rather with functionality. Seal clothing to be used in nature or in nature & the city can be considered such a product. I consider this to be a promising opportunity for three reasons:

- *The results of the questionnaire indicate nature as the most desired purpose of use for seal clothing*
- *This redirects seal clothing away from the negative associations that people may have towards luxury furs.*
- *The market for high quality outdoor clothing has been developed towards natural materials, as reflected in the popularity of merino wool. Increased awareness of microplastics may speed up this trend.*

For these reasons, I propose designing seal clothing for nature as a direction to the ontological design of seal clothing. To define

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235 IFAW, 2009



the user group, we may again turn towards the results of the questionnaire. According to the responses, we may conclude that the most likely potential users can be identified according to their diet. I consider this to be the best course of action for reaching potential customers, instead of trying to change the minds of the most critical. Therefore, I suggest that the targeted user groups could be carnivores and conscious carnivores. Moreover, the conscious carnivores displayed an interest in sustainable and ethical products, which suggests that their values are already close to the values embedded in Inuit seal clothing. Vegetarians and vegans indicated little interest in using seal, or any animal products, and therefore they are not considered a primary target for seal products.

Another feasible direction for a designer is to design a borderland. For the seal ban case, this research helped me to create a concrete plan for a borderland, which takes the form of a photography exhibition on *seal clothing in Kalaallit Nunaat and Finland*. I have some prospective partners with whom to create the exhibition, although it has not yet been arranged. It is not an option for the author to photograph in Greenland, as this would only represent the Finnish point of view on Greenland. Of the themes for the exhibition which emerged from this research, the first is the meaning of *location* as a source of knowledge and as a place of function (a physical location). Secondly, diet proved to be an interesting connection in seal trade: among Finnish citizens it is connected to moral decisions, with Inuit it is connected to the culture, identity, knowledge and resilience. Thirdly, I aim to address the two faces of modernity, which appears differently to the colonizers and to the colonized. However, I am unable to plan in detail without partners in Greenland, and therefore these themes form a core to begin with, but are open to change. The process of creating a borderland must be documented and the impacts of the exhibition on the audience reviewed, for instance through interviews. Including that work in this research would have exceeded the time and workload limits of one 30-credit Master's thesis.

## 7.3 REVIEW OF THE RESEARCH PROCESS

The research process was stable, but time-consuming. No major obstacles appeared, although some new theories and cross-disciplinary information required time to be understood. The research questions were formed using the abductive model: preliminary research questions and hypotheses guided the direction, but the final research questions took shape after the solutions emerged. Also, from time to time, the work was carried out through intuition, which proved to be a useful tool to bring a holistic view of the research. Both intuition and simultaneous question/solution-forming are typical tools for a designer to use in the design process<sup>236</sup>. Choosing the method for the research was challenging, because of the critical, cross-cultural approach. Finally, I chose to apply Charles Peirce's trichotomic model, although leaving out the more specific semiotic theory, because I am not fully convinced that it would not conflict with our aim for pluri-versity of epistemologies. I acknowledge that there are inconsistencies in adopting only a part of the theory, but it seemed to be the most promising option in this case. Learning and understanding the decolonial theories was challenging and proceeded slowly, but it was also rewarding. Participating in Indigenous Studies courses at the University of Helsinki supported learning in this sector.

A few major shifts occurred during the research process. Initially, the plan was to conduct a questionnaire and then a workshop with selected questionnaire respondents. However, during the research, the workshop didn't suit the purpose of this research. I deliberately avoided interviews, out of interest in trying some other methods. Therefore, I chose to create a photography exhibition; this unfortunately couldn't maintain the same schedule with the research and therefore it cannot be reviewed here. Another significant change was 'discovering' decolonial theories, which initiated a process of decolonizing my knowledge.

The weakness of the research is, ironically, that no Inuit are directly involved in the research process. However, in the beginning of the research, a connection with the Inuit Sila organization was established, the research was explained and an opportunity to influence the research questions and cooperation was offered. However, I admit that I am not sure if this was understood clearly through the discussions, which started on Facebook and continued via e-mails. Had the questionnaire been conducted on Inuits' perception on seal hunting, then it would have been impossible

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236 Cross, 2011

to continue research without cooperation with Inuit. However, the questionnaire in this research created knowledge on Finnish citizens, and therefore I considered myself qualified to analyse the data. I am also aware that this research is located in Helsinki, Finland, and I acknowledge that the location matters. However, I aimed to overcome this by continuously evaluating the research process and the impact of location. I am not claiming that this research forms a uni-versal truth of the EU seal ban, but I see it as a one aspect of the story. Moreover, I consider this research to be futuring for all beings and the pluri-versity of knowledges.

## 7.4 CONCLUSION & FUTURE PROSPECTS

In this research, I have discussed Finnish citizens' perceptions of seal clothing, and the EU seal trade ban and its impact on Inuit. The research was structured with Charles S. Peirce's semiotic categories of Firstness, Secondness and Thirdness. Firstness consisted of Finnish citizens' (the questionnaire respondents') first impressions of seal clothing, Secondness discussed seal clothing, Inuit seal trade and the EU seal trade ban, and Thirdness established a connection between the Firstness and Secondness with the guidance of decolonial theories. This has provided us an understanding of the knowledge gap between the potential user of seal clothing, Inuit and the European Council, in the context of the EU seal trade ban. From the perspective of design, closing the gap can be approached from two directions: (i) Designing a borderland on seal products for the potential users and Inuit, and (ii) Designing Seal Clothing & branding that ontologically decolonizes the user. Both approaches are based on Tony Fry's proposal on the roles of design and the designer in decolonization of knowledges.

In conclusion, the designer's role in decolonizing seal hunt may vary from a problem-solver to a sense-maker. Designing seal clothing that ontologically cares, or decolonizes the users' concepts of sustainability and knowledge, proposes the designer's role to be located in problem-solving. Designing a borderland, instead, suggests the designer's role to be a facilitator of change.

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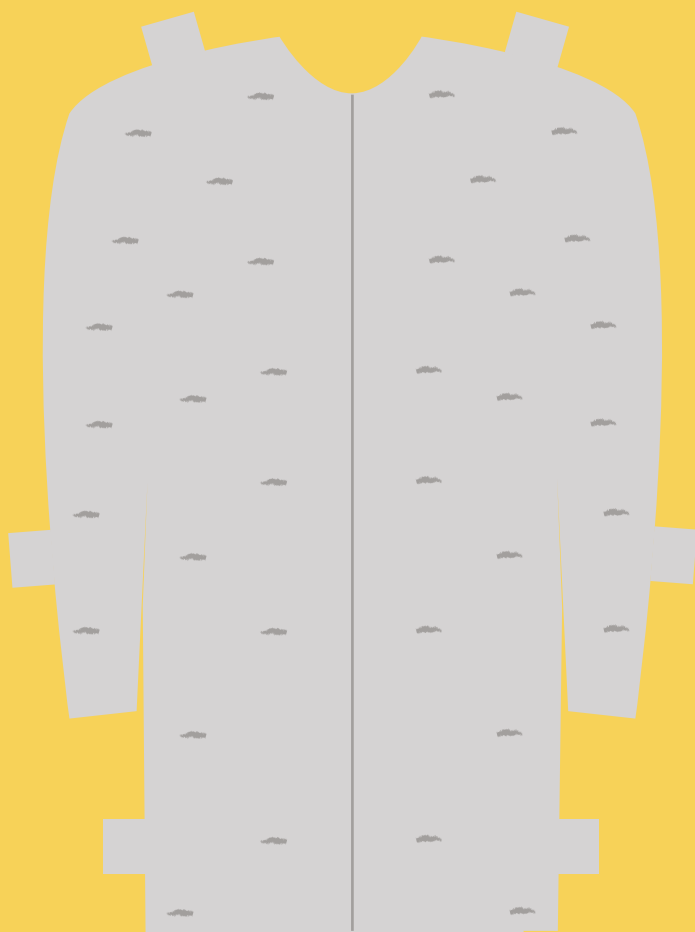
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