



# Welcome to the conference: NORDIC COLONIALISM IN THE ARCTIC AND THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' RESISTANCE

organised by the Nordic lecturers at the Centre for Scandinavian Studies

## Monday 17. October 2022

**11:00** Room 92. **Kirsten Thisted**, University of Copenhagen (DK) *Brand new Greenland*

**13:00** Room 92 (Online). **Åsa Össbo**, Umeå University (SE) *Back to the Colonial Future. Swedish Settler Colonialism and the Green Transition in Sápmi*

## Tuesday 18. October 2022

**09:00** Room 92. **Laura Junka-Aikio**, University of Lapland (FI) *Whose Settler Colonial State? The Arctic Railway Project, Changing State Space, and Settler Self-Indigenization in Northern Finland*

**13:00** Room 118. **Eva Maria Fjellheim**. Arctic University of Norway (NO) *Wind energy as green colonialism in Saepmie: The Fosen case*

**15:00** Room 92. *Panel discussion*. Moderator: **Atené Mendelyté**.

**All the events will be conducted in English.**

The arriving speakers and the Scandinavian Centre will meet live in the auditoriums (even for the online lecture).

Everyone is welcome to join us there or on zoom. Use QR code.

# Abstracts for the conference lectures

**Kirsten Thisted.** Department of Cross-Cultural and Regional Studies, University of Copenhagen (DK).

## ***BRAND NEW GREENLAND***

With the Act on Greenland Self-Government, implemented in 2009, a completely new framework was set for the relationship between Denmark, Greenland and the Faroe Islands. The three countries are henceforth perceived as equal parts of the Kingdom of Denmark. However, the Danish state still stands at the top. The presentation demonstrates how an economy of emotions is linked to the financial relations between Denmark and Greenland, which have their roots in colonial hierarchies and notions of 'civilisation', 'race' and 'culture'. Greenlanders therefore dream of a 'Stunde Null', a Zero Hour or new beginning in Greenlandic history, and strive for political and economic independence from Denmark. This includes a strong branding effort to promote the image of Greenland as an attractive destination for business investment and tourism. However, this requires a readiness for change in the population, which can prove to be just as far-reaching as the change to modernity and urbanity that took place after the incorporation into Denmark in 1953.

**Åsa Össbo.** Várdduo-Centre for Sámi Research, Umeå University (SE)

***BACK TO THE COLONIAL FUTURE. SWEDISH SETTLER COLONIALISM AND THE GREEN TRANSITION IN SÁPMI***

A couple of years ago, the city of Skellefteå won the competition to house a factory for the production of batteries for electric cars. Shortly afterwards, the state-owned mining company LKAB presented an investment in fossil-free steel production in Gällivare, another company with the same focus established itself in Boden. The arguments for the location were the proximity to renewable electricity production, that is hydropower and wind power. Since then, interest in the Norrland region as a 'land of the future' has grown enormously in Sweden. Once again.

The green transition and the industrialization that it entails carry many repetitions and traces of the past. In fact, a third settler colonial wave is currently sweeping across Sápmi, the Indigenous Sámi's traditional area. This presentation connects one of colonialisms major traits in the idea of the "Land of the Future" that has re-emerged in the wake of the green transition: the rhetoric of salvation through newness.

**Laura Junka-Aikio.** University of Lapland (FI)

***WHOSE SETTLER COLONIAL STATE? THE ARCTIC RAILWAY PROJECT, CHANGING STATE SPACE, AND SETTLER SELF-INDIGENIZATION IN NORTHERN FINLAND***

Today, many recognize that also the Nordic states may be considered and studied as settler colonial in their relationship to the Indigenous Sámi. The benefit of settler colonial theory is that it brings attention not only to the colonial past, but also to the continuity of colonial structures and practices in the present. What has received less attention, however, are the many ways in which also the settler colonial state has transformed over time, and how such changes might have affected the manifold relationships between the state, the settlers and the natives.

This lecture examines such trajectories of settler colonial change in Northern Finland, building on theories of state transformation and using the Arctic Railway project, a planned railroad that has been on the state's agenda repeatedly since the late 19th century, as its point of departure. The lecture shows that a central aspect of settler colonial change in Finland is the destabilization of the relationship between the state and the older settler communities, whose value as settlers can no longer be taken for granted. This has created space for new struggles over Sámi identity, which, in the context of Indigenous revitalization and rights, has come to appear increasingly desirable for a variety of different reasons.

**Eva Maria Fjellheim.** Centre for Saami Studies at the Arctic University of Norway, Tromsø (NO)

***WIND ENERGY AS GREEN COLONIALISM IN SAEPMIE: THE FOSEN CASE***

A global indigenous movement critique the hegemonic climate change mitigation discourse, as it fails to address the double burden indigenous carry due to colonization: climate change itself and its mitigation measures. In Saepmie, this critique is expressed as “green colonialism”. The Fosen case is an example of how Saami reindeer herders face this double burden through rapid temperature increase and expansion of wind energy. Recently, the Fosen Saami’s claim that the Fosen Vind project violates their indigenous rights was recognized by the Supreme Court, but an inevitable paradox remains: The Saami cultural landscape is already destroyed.