

Master Thesis

*The challenges and opportunities of ‘quasi-states’ in International Relations.
Greenlandic responses to the changing security environment in the Arctic.*



Own photo

Author: Sophia Natasha Bailey
Date of birth: 20th February 1997
Supervisor: James Rogers

Keystrokes: 145,660

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Summary

The Arctic region, including Greenland, has gained attention for its melting ice, accessible economic activities, and valuable resources. The geo-strategic significance of the Arctic as well as the revelation of important natural resources have made the region an object of interest for many countries, including Russia, China, and the US. In the centre of the region, lies Greenland, a semi-autonomous territory within the wider Kingdom of Denmark. The Government of Greenland have a comparatively high level of self-government as opposed to other entities, so much so many have coined Greenland as a 'quasi-state'. Greenland have long pushed for increasing degrees of independence from Denmark, with almost all parties in the Greenlandic parliament pursuing policies that will lie the foundation for future independence from Denmark. For example, Greenland have retained authority over several policy areas from Denmark, such as the departments of Resource and Energy as well as Digitalisation. Nevertheless, the increased attention on the Arctic creates a challenging new security environment for Greenland. In recent years, Greenland has been the victim of several cyber attacks which has severely comprised vital societal functions. Furthermore, the dual-use nature of the critical natural resources in Greenland pose difficult questions concerning their exploitation and the Greenlandic ability to obtain control over reassumed areas.

Overall, this thesis addresses the way the Greenlandic government leverages its resources and location to advance its policy goals, projecting itself as an independent actor, while silmutaneously addressing these security issues. The thesis utilises Securitisation Theory from the Copenhagen School as well as the concept of Sovereignty games to show how Greenland articulate themselves as an actor with independent agency vis a vis Denmark. This thesis will ultimately assess how the Greenlandic articulation of itself as more independent constitutes a small-state approach to new security issues in the region. In conclusion, the security landscape remains a significant challenge for Greenland in their ambitions to become independent, as Greenland still relies on Danish assistance in effectively addressing these issues. Nevertheless, the growing relationships with other partners, have given Greenland a foundation to make more demands for independent voice, as well as counter Danish assertions of authority on reassumed areas.

Research Questions

How has the increasing interest in Greenland's natural resources and strategic location impacted its ability to project itself as an independent non-state actor internationally?

How does the discourse used in relation to the new security challenges faced by Greenland reflect a small-state approach to addressing these challenges?

Motivation and Introduction

“Nothing about Greenland, without Greenland”

The current leader of Inuit Ataqatigiit (IA), Múte Bourup Egede and his party have embraced this motto, “Nothing about Greenland, without Greenland”, since he was elected as their leader in 2018, and later as Greenlandic Premier in 2021. As an autonomous country within the Kingdom of Denmark, Greenland enjoys a significantly large degree of autonomy in managing their own political affairs. However, negotiations on the issues and concerns pertaining to security and foreign policy in the entire realm are led from the relevant ministries in Copenhagen, as per Article 19 of the Danish Constitution:

“The King [Danish government] shall act on behalf of the Realm in international affairs. Provided that without the consent of the Folketing the King shall not undertake any act whereby the territory of the Realm will be increased or decreased, nor shall he enter into any obligation which for fulfilment requires the concurrence of the Folketing, or which otherwise is of major importance; nor shall the King, except with the consent of the Folketing, terminate any international treaty entered into with the consent of the Folketing”

In recent years, successive governments of Greenland have often challenged the traditional interpretation of the country's constitution, leading to conflicts with the government of Denmark on various policy issues, including uranium mining and Greenland's relationship with China. The Government of Greenland has sometimes felt that they were not included in negotiations on security and foreign policy matters in the Arctic and were overruled by the government of Denmark. This came to a head in 2014 when there were particularly heated disagreements on these issues.

The relationship between Denmark and Greenland has been multifaceted and complex throughout the countries' shared history of over 300 years. While Greenland is predominantly composed of ethnic Inuit with their own language, Kalaallisut, and distinct culture, Danish language proficiency is often a requirement for employment in institutions beyond traditional occupations such as hunting and fishing, and Danish remains the dominant language in higher secondary education and many workplaces, including the Government of Greenland. Additionally, many Greenlanders have mixed Greenlandic and Danish ancestry. Despite these

longstanding ties, the majority of political parties in Greenland advocate for the eventual independence of Greenland and the establishment of a sovereign state.

It is currently unclear how and when Greenland will achieve independence and what it will look like as a sovereign state. In recent years, but particularly since the 1970s, Greenland has actively sought to resist unwanted intervention and control from Denmark and has consistently presented itself as politically distinct from Denmark. This effort towards independence has included actions such as Greenland's withdrawal from the European Union in 1982, shortly after gaining home rule, and the establishment of five international representations in Copenhagen, Brussels/EU, Beijing, Washington D.C., and Reykjavik. Additionally, Greenland is currently negotiating its first independent trade agreement with the United Kingdom, focused specifically on fishing rights. These efforts demonstrate Greenland's desire to act independently on the international stage and lay the groundwork for its eventual independence.

Given its vast geographical span, as well as its geopolitical importance, Greenland faces unique challenges in terms of its own internal security. The territory has a low total population and lacks viable security infrastructure, which can make it difficult for policy makers to effectively address security concerns. In addition to these challenges, the introduction of new dual-use hybrid technologies to methods of warfare, as well as the drastic effects of climate change on local populations, add to the complexity of ensuring Greenland's security. The abundance of much-needed rare-earth minerals in Greenland further add to this complexity.

As a territory of Denmark, the Danish military has the primary responsibility for ensuring the sovereignty of the entire Kingdom including Greenland. The Danish constitution provides a clear legitimacy for the Danish presence in Greenland which is difficult to contest, and the sub-section of the Danish military responsible for hard security in the Arctic is the Arctic Command based in Nuuk. While the presence of the Danish military in Greenland is considered completely legitimate, it nevertheless is worth noting that, from a Greenlandic perspective, solutions to challenges within policy areas that are reassumed should be sought within Greenland rather than relying on external actors such as Denmark to manufacture solutions for them. This ambiguous nature of the security relationship between Greenland and Denmark has resulted in the creation of various "grey areas" that do not neatly fit within the clear legal framework governing this relationship. This creates a common dilemma for policy makers addressing security concerns in Greenland, as it is unclear which party (Greenland or Denmark) holds the necessary power and competency to ensure effective security solutions.

This thesis will discuss how the factors mentioned above support the need for tailored and locally-driven solutions to address the security challenges facing the territory. This is because it is important to consider the specific context and needs of the territory, as well as the preferences and perspectives of its residents. The main focus of this research is to examine the discourse used by the Government of Greenland, and other external actors in relation to these security challenges faced by Greenland. By analysing the recent discourse of these key actors, this thesis aims to shed light on the approaches taken by the Government of Greenland in addressing its sovereign ambitions beyond its relationship with Denmark, as well as the complex and multifaceted security issues facing the country. This thesis will assess how the Government of Greenland are building policies in the aim of creating a greater independent value for Greenland, independent of Denmark, using small-state political and diplomatic strategies.

Background

Having an understanding of the complex historical and modern dynamics of the relationship between Greenland and Denmark is imperative when discussing any aspect of the national political dialogue in Greenland, particularly in terms of Greenlandic national security.

Until 1953, Greenland was governed as a Danish colony and listed as a non-self governing territory in accordance with Chapter XI of the Charter of the United Nations. During this period, Greenland was a Danish colony run by an array of Colony wardens, who each had authority over separate regions within the vast territory. In this period, travel to Greenland was limited by strict entry regulations. Greenland had in the centuries prior remained largely undisturbed, but has continuously been inhabited by indigenous Inuit population since the 17th century. Denmark/Norway had up until 18th century made an unofficial claim on the territory of Greenland due the historic ties the Kingdom had with the area. The arrival of Danish-Norwegian state sent Christian missionary priest Hans Egede in the Nuuk Fjord in 1721 is often viewed as the first contact between the Danish State and the Local Inuit in Greenland. Counter claims to sovereignty over certain areas of were often made by the United States, particularly to the North of Greenland. Greenland is currently an autonomous country within the Union of the Realm (Dan: *Rigsfællesskabet*), a political and administrative union between the 3 countries making up the Danish Kingdom, Denmark the Faroe Islands and Greenland. Greenland has been apart of this Union since it was assumed as an equal part of the Danish Kingdom after a constitutional referendum in 1953.

The aim of assuming Greenland into the Danish realm in 1953 was to incorporate Greenland, along with the Faroe Islands, as equal parts of the wider Danish Kingdom. This led to a drastic modernisation of many aspects of the Greenlandic society, including the health system and working culture. This simultaneously meant that all Greenlanders became Danish citizens and were awarded the same legal rights and protections under the Danish constitution as the population in Denmark. Politically, Greenland was run largely from Copenhagen, firstly within the relevant institutions and later within the now defunct 'Ministry of Greenland'. Many saw this modernisation effort as a way to 'Danify' Greenland or simply, make Greenland a form of 'Northern Denmark'. Unsatisfied with the Danish administration of Greenland, Greenlandic politicians successfully campaigned to gain home-rule, along with an independent government (the *Naalakkersuisut*) and parliament (the *Inatsisartut*). Later in 2009, the enactment of the Act on Self-Rule broadened Greenlandic autonomy from Denmark.

The status of Greenland under International Law

Sovereignty is a concept that is constantly in flux and its scope is defined differently across theoretical paradigms. The concept of sovereignty is underlined by the principle of Westphalian sovereignty (the principle that each state has the exclusive authority over its territory), which has provided the foundation of the modern state system as we know it (Mazzar et al., 2016, p.10). Within international law, Sovereignty both describes the scope of the authority a polity has in geographic and material terms and politically in terms of the supremacy of the state's institutions and authority. The Montevideo Criteria provide the legal foundation underpinning the concept of the state and its characteristics. According to the criteria, the State must have *1) a permanent population 2) a defined territory 3) a government and 4) the capacity to enter into relations with other states* (Montevideo Convention on the Rights and Duties of States, 1939, Article 1).

Legally, Greenland is not internationally recognised an independent sovereign State under International Law, despite arguably possessing many of these required characteristics. In accordance with The Danish Constitutional amendment in 1953, Greenland (and the Faroe Islands) were assumed as equal parts of the Danish Kingdom in 1953, and are legally subject to overarching Danish authority. Thus, these countries are recognised internationally under the one unified State, the Kingdom of Denmark, with the the Danish monarch, currently Queen Margrethe II, as Head of State. The Union of the Realm represents the administrative and political union of this one unified State.

As a consequence of Greenland's constitutional status, Greenland has certain legal limits to how she can act internationally. For example, Greenland cannot become an independent member of the United Nations. As a unrecognised non-sovereign entity, Greenland cannot also not independently ratify International treaties. The Danish Constitution, similarly limits the Government of Greenland, *Naalakkersuisut*, to being subject to the authority of the greater Danish State when it comes to issues concerning foreign, defence and security policy (paragraph 19, litra 1). However, in recent years moves have been made by the Danish government, on the insistence of the Greenlandic government, to deepen the inclusion of Greenlandic civil servants in the negotiations concerning defence and security policy in the Arctic.

Greenlandic 'sovereignty' in praxis

In order to adequately assess Greenland's position within the International arena we have to consider Greenland's status as a self-governed territory within the Kingdom of Denmark. Particularly in relation to Greenland, the concept of sovereignty within international relations theory has been the subject of much debate, as there are differing interpretations of what it should entail. In international law, sovereignty is often based on the Westphalian conception of the state's primary authority to govern itself without interference (Paris, 2020, p.454). However, the concept of sovereignty has always been fluid and challenged in the case of Greenland (Rahbek-Clemmensen, 2020, p.177). The constraints on Greenland's agency as a non-sovereign entity within the existing domestic and international framework have been gradually eroded since it gained home rule in 1979. Some scholars have even referred to Greenland as a "quasi-state" due to these factors (Jacobsen, 2020, p.183). While Greenland is not legally able to act internationally as a state, and is not recognized as a sovereign state by the international community, it does possess many characteristics and powers of a sovereign state.

The devolved government of Greenland, the *Naalakkersuisut*, have been awarded a comparatively high level of autonomy and self-governing institutions- most of which are almost entirely removed from the interference of the Danish state. The *Naalakkersuisut* have since 1979 legally reclaimed authority over several specifically allocated policy areas from Denmark. For example, the Department of Fisheries is among many departments in the *Naalakkersuisut* whom have the competency to work entirely independent of Danish interference. On the international scene, the *Naalakkersuisut* have in several instances found

many ways to assert their authority to decide on certain issues, bypassing the constraints of its international agency, all within the current international and domestic legal frameworks. Greenland is currently internationally represented in 5 States with their own representations, and also possess seats alongside their Danish counterparts in some International Organisations, such as the Arctic Council. Greenland also have a largely independent relationship with the EU, since they opted independently to leave the union in 1982. The Naalakkersuisut have often acted within their own interests in treaties, by requesting territorial reservations to Denmark's ratification of treaties through the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, when they concern devolved political areas within their competency. For example, the Greenlandic parliament, *Inatsisartut*, only recently voted in favour of removing the Greenland territorial reservation in the Paris Agreement (Reuters, 2021), despite the fact that Denmark proper has been party since its inception in 2016.

History of Greenland's relationships with external partners

Despite its constitutional association with Denmark, other nations have demonstrated interest in Greenland, in particular the United States and the EU. The United States has had a long and complex history with Greenland. Greenland is geographically viewed as being apart of North America, despite being culturally and politically associated with Europe. Therefore, Greenland is viewed as a vital part of homeland security policy in the United States. The security relationship between Greenland the United States initially began during World War II. The United States established a military presence in Greenland to defend against potential attacks by the Axis powers. In the post-war period, the United States continued to maintain a military presence in Greenland, primarily through the Thule Air Base in the northwest region of the country. Some scholars have argued that this development has strengthened Denmark's position in U.S. foreign policy, calling it Denmark's 'Greenland-card' (*see* Rahbek-Clemmensen, 2017).

Greenland also has a valuable partnership with the EU, despite not formally being a member. Denmark and Greenland acceded to the European Communities, now known as the European Union, on January 1st, 1973. Despite the fact that a significant proportion of the Greenlandic population had rejected this move, they were forced to join due to their lack of representation and autonomy from Denmark. However, after obtaining home rule in 1979, the Greenlandic parliament, *Inatsisartut*, held a referendum on remaining in the European Communities. The decision to leave was largely influenced by concerns over fishing rights in

Greenlandic waters. The referendum was held in 1982, and after a majority vote in favour of leaving, Greenland officially withdrew from the European Communities on January 1st, 1985, becoming the first country to do so. Greenland subsequently became what is known within the EU as an 'Overseas Country and Territory' (OCT). Greenland is considered a unique case among the Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs) due to its special arrangements with the European Union (EU) regarding access to fishing quotas in its waters. While Greenland officially withdrew from the EU in 1985, it continues to have access to a significant amount of direct EU development funding through the fisheries partnership agreement and retains some of the benefits associated with being an OCT. The Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreements that Greenland negotiates with the EU are distinct within the EU-OCT and broader EU framework.

At the beginning of the century, a particularly important event in the future relations between Greenland and the U.S. occurred. The Defense Agreement with Denmark, which allowed the US to establish military bases and defense sites in Greenland, renewed in 1951 and again in 1991. The base, which was established in 1951, serves as a missile warning and space surveillance site and has been a source of tension between the US and Denmark, as well as with the indigenous Inuit population of Greenland. There have been concerns about the environmental impact of the base, including the potential contamination of the surrounding area with toxic chemicals, as well as the impact on the Inuit way of life. In 2002, the United States government made a request to the Danish government to improve Thule Airbase as part of their Missile Defense Project. This request was finalised in 2004 through the Igaliku Agreement, which granted the US permission to upgrade the Thule radar for missile defense purposes and established a commitment to consult each other "without undue delay" on any relevant issues (Igaliku Agreement, 2004, Article 3 litra c). The agreement also aimed to establish "broad and technical cooperation" between the US and Greenland.



Josef Motzfeldt, former Greenlandic premier, with the then US Secretary of State, Colin Powell (right), and Denmark's then Minister of Foreign Affairs, Per Stig Møller at Igaliku, August 2004 (Ivars Salis, Ritzau Scanpix, 2004) .

The agreement was viewed as a particular step in the relations not only between Greenland and Denmark, but also Greenland and the United States, independently of Denmark. It was the first time Greenland enforced its right, confirmed the year prior in the Itilleq Agreement with Denmark, to define issues of national security in Greenland and thus gain some influence on matters within their territory, and thus involve themselves actively in the agreement at Igaliku (see Itilleqerklæringen, 2003). However, since its enactment, the agreement has been cause for friction between Greenland and Denmark on one side, and the U.S. on the other. Successive governments in Greenland felt that the agreement to strengthen local cooperation between the U.S. and Greenland was rarely met, and that their presence negatively affected the local indigenous population in North Greenland. Moreover, they stressed the lack of concrete value (economic or symbolic) Greenland got out of hosting Thule Airbase for the U.S.

Nevertheless, in recent years, the United States has sought to strengthen its economic and diplomatic ties with Greenland. In 2019, the US and Greenland signed a memorandum of understanding to enhance cooperation on economic development, environmental protection, and scientific research (MOU, US Department of State, 2019). In 2020, the United States also opened a consulate in Greenland, the first time in over 60 years that the US has had a diplomatic presence in the country. A recent significant event in the relationship between Greenland and Denmark came when former President Donald Trump confirmed in passing his interest in purchasing Greenland in an essentially “large real-estate deal”. In August 2019, it was reported that President Donald Trump had expressed interest in purchasing Greenland for strategic and economic reasons. The idea was reportedly met with a mix of surprise and disbelief, and was

ultimately not pursued by the Trump administration. There are a number of reasons that have been suggested for why President Trump might have been interested in purchasing Greenland. One reason could be its strategic location, giving it potential military and security significance. Another reason could be its natural resources, such as minerals, oil, and natural gas, which could be of economic value. The Government of Greenland responded by stating, that while Greenland is not for sale, it is 'open for business'. The prime minister of Denmark, Mette Frederiksen, supported the statement, and made it clear that it has no intention of selling the territory to the United States. The idea of the United States purchasing Greenland was also not well-received by many Greenlanders, who value their autonomy and have expressed opposition to the idea. However, many agree that this statement projected Greenland to a media stage not previously seen in the country.

Overall, the relationship between the United States and Greenland has been complex and multifaceted, with military, economic, and diplomatic factors all playing a role in shaping the dynamic between the two countries. Similarly, the relationship Greenland has with the EU is also centred around economic and diplomatic factors, with the EU being a critical trade partner due to their fisheries agreement. Denmark does facilitate the connection between the EU and Greenland through their membership, however the relationship has evolved to reflect one of a more bilateral character than any other external partners. In concern of the United States, the United States and Denmark have had a long-standing alliance and have worked together on a range of issues, including security and economic cooperation which make up the key factors of the relationship with Greenland. They in particular revolve around the military presence of the United States in Greenland, as well as the fact that the United States has provided economic assistance to Greenland, including funding for infrastructure and development projects.

Theoretical Framework

Theories of the 'Small-State'

This thesis will apply theories of the so-called 'Small-State' in order to examine the Greenlandic approach to its foreign policy and security. While Greenland is not recognised in international law as a sovereign state, it possesses many independent authorities and powers within the Act on Self Rule (2009), as well as many characteristics of a sovereign state. Furthermore, as previously mentioned, Greenland is also a large and geostrategically important country, which can be argued to provide more foundation for Greenland in their ability to act independently of Denmark. This will be expanded upon in further sections. In this thesis, Greenland will be treated as a particular case, in which many aspects of small-state theories can be applied, despite its lack of legal sovereign recognition.

Traditionally, the focus of the study of International Relations has been on the role of the historical Great Powers in maintaining order. Traditional orders in the 19th and 20th century, such as Concert of Europe, were all founded on the principle of the powerful states balancing against each other. Therefore, it is understandable that studies prior to the end of the Second World War rarely addressed the role of the small, comparatively weaker states in the international system. However, after the break up of the empires of among others Great Britain in the years after WWII, the number of states in the international system has increased from 43 states in the last years of the League of Nations to 191 states in the United Nations in 2021 (Statista, 2022). Thus, the makeup of the international system has changed dramatically in the past 100 years.

The differing nature of the array of small states in the international system has made the definition of their characteristics extremely difficult for scholars to agree upon. There is still no agreed definition. Thus, the borders between categories such as 'micro state', 'small state, and 'middle power' are therefore usually blurry and arbitrary (Thorhallsson and Wivel, 2006, p. 652). (Bailes et al., 2016) suggest that while no universal definition exists, it makes sense that every case study selects its own definition(s) depending on which states are the subject of the study and why (p.3). Some studies argue in favour of a relational definition, in which the focus switches from the power the small state aggregately possesses to the power they exercise (Mouritzen and Wivel, 2005). Others use a definition based on both material and subjective factors (Thorhallsson and Wivel, 2006) an exclusive focus on how domestic and international actors perceive the power of the state in question; or a clearer focus on countries' domestic and international capabilities, reflected in the competence of their public

administration and foreign service (Bailes et al. 2016, p. 3). The approach of this thesis will be specifically related to the perception of and interaction with Greenland as a small state by other international actors in their inter-relations. In addition, this thesis will be focusing particularly on the discourse projected by the Greenlandic government, reflecting the power they exercise or wish to exercise in their relations with other states.

The international relations literature in general suggests that small states and entities must be aligned with a larger protecting power in order to heighten their own security, externally and internally, in order to survive within an anarchic international system. The anarchical view posits a negative view of inter-state relations as being inherently chaotic, that is, a self-help system marred by state-insecurity related to a constant suspicion of other states' intentions and interests, without an external order to limit them. Within the study of small state foreign policy there exist various positions as to why small states act in certain ways. Classical realist theorists would posit that small states, as entities that lack great material military capabilities as well as quantifiable and geographic determinants of power, such as a large territory or economy, are inherently vulnerable (Bailes et al., 2016, p.12).

These views on the nature of the international conflict in terms of understanding the actions of small states. In a situation of anarchy, it is argued that small states would seek to increase their security by increasing their relative power to resist domination by a preponderant other, often through building alliances (Bull, 1995). Alternatively, they would suggest that small states engage in so-called 'bandwagoning', in which a small, weaker state aligns with a stronger threatening state in order to strategically cut the losses associated with aligning against the power. In hierarchy, it would be argued that small states would legitimately subject themselves to the wishes of the greater power, trading off some degree of sovereign authority, in exchange of a desired security guarantee. Overall, these theories essentially provide the most extreme, that without power, small states lack the ability and strength to exercise any means to ensure their own security independent of the great powers within the international system.

The literature on small states theory shows that not all small states necessarily pursue similar foreign policies (Gigleux, 2016, p.27). Many scholars thus encourage analysts to move away from these generalist assumptions that as small states lack material capabilities, they are therefore all subject to the anarchic structure of the international system and react in the same way (Gigleux, 2016, p.27;). Furthermore, the position that the more powerful states are able to impose their preferences on weaker ones' does not always ring true. For example, small Pacific island states have successfully used 'weapons of the weak' vis-à-vis Australia, which has itself been unwilling to assert its power in the face of its smaller neighbours' resistance (Schultz,

2014). The small state Malta has also been able to achieve high income within the EU and internationally by leveraging her, among other things, geostrategic location in the middle of the Mediterranean and her educated and specialised workforce (Hillary Briffa, 2021).

Thorhallsson and Wivel (2016) argue that power understood in its material worth, will (without context) tell us very little about the behaviour of small states, the challenges they face, or the level of influence they possess (p.653). Instead, analysts should understand that the trajectory of small state foreign and security policy strategies are extremely nuanced, and are encouraged to focus on the explanation of why policy-makers adopt certain foreign policy trajectories. Power, in the context of small state studies, should be seen as tied to specific temporal context, not its lack of power as a general characteristic of the state: a state may be weak in one relation, but simultaneously powerful in another (Thorhallsson and Wivel, 2016, p. 654). As Nye (2011) famously argued, “it has been shown that when people define power as synonymous with the resources that (may) produce outcomes, they often encounter the paradox that those best endowed with power, do not always get the outcomes they want” (p. 12). Instead, emphasis may be put on, for example, the strategic significance of the geographic location of the smaller power, the degree of tension between leading powers in the region, or the historical record of relations between small state and nearest great power, among others (Thorhallsson and Wivel, 2016, p. 656).

While the international relations literature in general agrees that small states must in some way align with a larger power, these arguments would simultaneously suggest that small states will always act in certain ways in response to certain situations. According to Thorhallsson, states may seek ‘shelter’ themselves from external threats or perceived harms by avoiding certain actions or interactions with other states. In line with Thorhallsson’s depiction of the unique vulnerabilities of small states, they are dependent on the economic, political, and societal shelter provided by larger states and/or regional and international organisations. Sheltering can manifest in a number of ways, such as building up military defences, forming alliances, or avoiding diplomatic relations with certain countries. The theory suggests that states may take these actions in order to protect themselves from the possibility of experiencing external conflict or aggression. The quality of shelter varies depending upon the relationship between the sheltering and sheltered states. Shelter’s contractual nature means that not all shelter relationships are the same (Tidwell, 2021, p.14). It’s important to understand that sheltering behaviour can be a normal response to perceived threats in the international arena, but it can also be problematic. If not managed appropriately, it may lead to long-term

difficulties or escalations of conflicts, and can also lead to negative consequences such as increased tensions or arms races (Rogers, 2021, p.70).

Review: Literature, Sources and Conceptual Framework

The overarching phenomenon this thesis concerns itself is the concept of nation building within autonomous semi-dependent territories. Greenland is an example of an autonomous semi-dependent territory that has been seeking greater autonomy from the state proper, Denmark, with the aim of eventual accomplishing complete independence. The majority of the political parties in Greenland have political ambitions concerning eventual independence from Denmark. Greenland has been taking steps to assert its independence, such as developing its own legal and political systems, and increasing control over its natural resources, including oil, gas, minerals, and fish. It is clear that the country is making efforts to assert its sovereignty and gain more control over its own affairs. This thesis will consider the position of Greenland as a 'small-state' in the making, while taking into account the complexities of Greenland's current sovereign status, given that Denmark still holds ultimate authority over the territory's foreign affairs and defense/security issues.

In order to consider the Greenland's position in the wider international framework of States and state-like entities, it is worth considering the literature surrounding the establishment of such entities. In the post-war years, the concept of colonialism and empire became increasingly illegitimate and many colonial powers, including Denmark, faced pressure to dismantle their colonial relationships in accordance with the principle of self-determination. Many of these ex-colonial states have been internationally enfranchised and possess the same external rights and responsibilities as all other sovereign states: juridical statehood. At the same time, however, many such as Greenland have not yet been empowered domestically and consequently lack the institutional features of sovereign states as also defined by classical international law (Jackson, 1991, p. 21). Jackson (1991) argued for the notion of the 'quasi-state', a concept produced from the changes in the rules of membership and modes of operation of international society which were deliberately made to replace the institutions of European overseas colonialism (p.26).

Greenland has often been argued in the wider literature to represent a 'quasi-state' (Jacobsen, 2020; Gad, 2016; Gad 2014; Gad 2013). While many empires underwent the process of transferring sovereignty to its colonies, Greenland, instead of being awarded full sovereignty

in the post-war period was incorporated as an equal part of the Danish Realm. This is controversial in the shared Greenland-Danish history, as it has been argued to represent the attempt of the the Danish State to forego the international requirements of self-determination (*see* Hermann, 2021). Subsequently, Greenland was taken off the United Nations' list of non-self-governing territories in 1954, and the new constitution gave Greenland two seats in the Danish parliament (Kleist, 2016, p.248). One of the main issues surrounding quasi states concerns their independence and survival regardless of their arguably comparative lack of power and agency in an international system which also contains many 'real' states (Jackson, 1991, p.187). The democratic process Greenland has undergone since it was incorporated as part of the Danish Realm represents is argued to show how these states can increase their independent agency despite not being fully sovereign (Jacobsen, 2020). One can argue that this process can be understood from the lens provided by the concept of 'nation building', in which the is to inclusively unify the state through an alignment to median societal interests and the creation of infrastructure.

According to Jackson (2021), the correct level of analysis for understanding these problematical entities consequently is not the state as such but the states-system and particularly its new accommodating norms associated with it. The Union of the Realm is essentially a constitutional union between 3 countries governed by legal norms as well as praxis, which has changed dramatically over the years (Jacobsen, 2020, p.183). Therefore, the state-system between Greenland, Denmark and the Faroe Islands is somewhat unique in the international framework. For example, one cannot directly liken the constitutional makeup of for example the French or the Dutch Kingdoms, as they are governed by completely different legal and cultural principles. In the years since Greenland have retained many areas of competency from the Danish government, Greenland have embarked on a 'nation building' process of what Gad (2017) coined the dual processes of 'Greenlandisation' and 'modernisation' within the framework of the Union of the Realm. This process depicts essentially the array of different identity politics putting the Greenlandic identity and self-image in stark contrast with the regime of Danish colonisation and superiority, particularly in decision making (p.107). The articulation of the Greenlandic sovereign ambitions, contrasting identity as well as a form of 'anti-paternalism' (*see* Jackson, 1991) have largely characterised the Danish-Greenlandic relationship especially in the years post 2009.

The process of Greenlandisation is thus a process of identity building as an independent entity contrasting the Danish state. Greenlandic sovereignty has in turn become viewed as the highest articulation of that contrast. Nevertheless, subjectivity and sovereignty are not

interchangeable. Sovereignty within the Westphalian definition is a hard fact determined ultimately by the widespread international legal recognition as sovereign and its inseparability from the state. Here, sovereignty is a binary question that leaves no agency to hierarchically subordinated non-states such as Greenland (Jacobsen, 2020, p.172). Greenland has often been described as 'having a foot in both camps' due to its comparatively high degree of self-government (ibid.) as well as 'manoeuvring between dependency and self-determination'. It has been argued, particularly in the Greenlandic case how sovereignty' is a unique card that can be played for independent benefit (Adler-Nissan & Gad, 2012, p.9). This is known as the 'sovereignty game' and has been used extensively throughout studies on semi-dependent potentially sovereign polities. A sovereignty game depicts the strategic use of language to assert oneself as the primary authority, or competent to deal with an issue independently. It is argued, that Greenlandic representatives seek to expand the room for manoeuvre within foreign policy by utilising clever articulation and discursive processes that allude to being more state-like in Arctic international politics (Jacobsen, 2020m p,172). For example, Adler-Nissan & Gad (2012) have shown how Greenland have utilised this 'game' to create a large degree of independent value for themselves in the EU.

For Greenland, this process is valuable as it in many ways satisfies their own sovereign ambitions within the current constraints of the Danish constitution. Nonetheless, when this thesis deals with so-called 'grey areas', it alludes to specific policy areas which despite being legally recognised as reassumed by the Government of Greenland, often fall within the purview of the Danish government due to its inherent security characteristics. This creates a unique issue within the game, as when issues that are brought above the democratic control of the government of Greenland, they seemingly lose all ability to articulate 'sovereign competency' over them. This process is often associated with the concept of 'securitisation', which is a process in which a speech act can move certain societal issues away from the normal democratic institutions of political control and into a state of emergency with limited democratic control (Wæver, 1993). In the Greenlandic context, securitisation tactics will essentially move an issue from the competency of the Government of Greenland to the authorities in Denmark, as decided for in the constitution. On one hand, Greenlands move to independence can be understood to be politicised in the sense that anything that counteracts efforts made towards greater self-sufficiency can be understood as an existential threat to their national goals and their identity as an independent nation. On the other, issues of national security directly affecting citizens in Greenland as well as the sovereignty of the Danish state are also considered existential threats by Danish authorities. This creates the 'grey areas',

where Danish and Greenlandic officials often find it difficult to see eye to eye on certain issues, creating situations of supposed deadlock.

The position of the thesis in the literature

This thesis dissertation examines the ability of the Government of Greenland to establish autonomous value within the realms of political domains traditionally overseen by Denmark. Through utilising the lens of securitisation theory and the concept of sovereignty games, this study delves into the challenges faced by quasi-states such as Greenland when addressing security matters within these areas. By doing so, it aims to broaden the understanding of the international roles of quasi-states, which are often overlooked by mainstream international relations theory. The study employs the framework of securitisation developed by the Copenhagen School, which posits that the framing and construction of a threat occurs through speech acts by actors, creating a sense of impending danger that must be accepted by the population in order for it to be considered securitised (Buzan, 1998). The thesis explores how the Government of Greenland communicates and asserts a distinct Greenlandic identity as a sovereign state capable of addressing its own security needs amidst increasing demands for increased security in certain areas. In sum, this thesis will not only show how not-fully sovereign entities can gain independent agency and value, but will also address the challenges these entities face when doing so.

Methodology

Case Study

This thesis will be apply a case study research design examining the security implications of two policy areas that fall under the jurisdiction of the Government of Greenland: digitalisation and cybersecurity, as well as natural resources. Case studies are a research method that involves an in-depth, detailed examination of a specific subject, such as an individual, group, or organisation. They are typically used to investigate complex phenomena within their real-life context, and may involve a variety of methods, such as interviews, observations, and document analysis. A case study entails the detailed and intensive analysis of a single case, concerning itself particularly with the complexity and nature of the case in question (Bryman, 2012, p. 66). Case studies are useful for generating insights and understanding the perspectives, experiences, and behaviours of the subject being studied. They can also provide practical recommendations

for addressing real-world problems and issues. The decision to focus on these two policy areas is because they are fully governed by the Government of Greenland, and security issues within these areas can sometimes fall into a "grey zone" of security policy between Greenland and Denmark, which this thesis aims to explore.

Discourse analysis

In this thesis, the data will be analysed using discourse analysis. Discourse analysis is a research method that involves the systematic study of language and communication in social interactions. Discourse analysis differs from content analysis in that it does not solely focus on speech (Bryman, 2012, p.528).. Discourse analysis can instead be used in a variety of fields, including linguistics, sociology, anthropology, psychology, and communication studies, to shed light on issues related to social identity, power relations, cultural norms, and more. Discourse is much more than language as such: it is constitutive of the social world that is a focus of interest or concern (ibid.) It is used to examine how language is used to construct meaning as well as how power dynamics are played out through language. There is much less emphasis on naturally occurring talk, so that talk in research interviews can be a legitimate target for analysis (ibid.). This thesis will approach discourse analysis from a constructivist standpoint, focusing on the version of reality propounded by the members of the social setting being investigated and on the fashioning of that reality through their renditions of it (Bryman, 2012, p.529).

When one studies discourse, particularly in political settings, one sees language as performative and functional, and never treated as a neutral, transparent, means of communication (Rapley, 2021, p.2). In discourse analysis research, the researcher typically collects and analyses text data, such as written documents, transcripts of spoken conversations, or other forms of communication. It is recommended that the researcher uses a variety of techniques, such as close reading, coding, and thematic analysis, to interpret and analyse the data. This thesis will provide a discourse analysis of both primary and secondary sources, the first being in the form of conducted elite interviews, the latter policy papers and other official documents from among others the Government of Greenland. In this thesis, the conducted elite interviews provided a foundation guiding the research, as well as providing broad themes that lay the basis of the discourse analysis of the secondary documents. This led this thesis to expand and elucidate on the issues raised in the elite interviews. This will be expanded upon in the next sub-section.

The documents gathered for the research will be analysed using a method of stemming from the approach of grounded theory. Grounded theory is a commonly used approach to the analysis of qualitative data that applies an array of different analytical tools. Firstly, the documents are collected for analysis using a process of theoretical sampling in which one jointly collects, codes, and analyses data, later deciding what data to collect next and where to find them, in order to develop the theory as it emerges (Bryman, 2012, p.419). Secondly, documents are coded. Coding is a process giving labels (names) to component parts that seem to be of potential theoretical significance and/or that appear to be particularly salient within the social worlds of those being studied (ibid., p. 568). In this thesis, a process of selective coding using elements of thematic analysis has been applied, which is the procedure of selecting the core category, systematically relating it to other themes, validating those relationships, and filling in categories that need further refinement and development. A core theme is the central issue or focus around which all other categories are integrated (ibid., p.569). The outcome of this approach was the development of different categories or themes tying into the overarching analysis of sovereign articulation and small-state policies by the Government of Greenland.

Elite Interviews

In order to triangulate the data collected from the thematic document analysis, this thesis also utilises data taken from interviews conducted with Elite individuals in the field. Elite interviews, also known as elite or high-level interviews, are a qualitative research method that involves conducting in-depth interviews with individuals who hold positions of power, influence, or expertise within a particular social or organisational context. Elite interviews offer political scientists a rich, cost-effective vehicle for generating unique data to investigate the complexities of policy and politics (Beamer, 2002, p. 86). Elite interviews are typically used to gather detailed, and nuanced data about the perspectives, experiences, and opinions of these individuals. They can be an effective way to explore complex social, political, or organisational issues from the perspective of key stakeholders, and can provide insights that might not be obtained through other research methods.

There are several key considerations to keep in mind when conducting elite interviews for a thesis or dissertation (ibid.).

- Identify the appropriate interviewees: Elite interviews typically involve interviewing individuals who hold positions of power, influence, or expertise within a particular context. This might include politicians, business leaders, policymakers, academics, or other individuals who have the ability to shape the direction or outcomes of an issue. It is important to carefully consider who the most appropriate interviewees are for your research question, and to ensure that you have a diverse range of perspectives represented in your sample.

In connection with the research for this thesis, interviews were conducted with the following people:

- Member of Parliament for Inuit Ataqatigiit in the Danish Parliament, Aaja Chemnitz,
- Head of Greenland Representation to the EU in Brussels, Inuuteq Holm Olsen,
- Head of Section Department of Foreign Affairs in Nuuk, Hans Peder Kirkegaard,
- Former Head of Section at the Danish Ministry of Defence, Sami Carøe Moussa,
- Researcher of Arctic politics and governance at the Royal Danish Defence College Marc Jacobsen
- Researcher of Aquatic Ecology at the Danish Institute for Advanced Study, Karl Attard.

This thesis utilised a so-called ‘snowballing’ method of finding and selecting interview participants. Snowball samples can be used when a listing of the entire target population is unavailable, as is often the case with informal policy networks (ibid.). The participants of the study were asked if they could recommend any other relevant individuals that could expand on any particular issue. Firstly a representative from the Greenlandic ministry of foreign affairs was interviewed, secondly, a Greenlandic diplomat stationed in Brussels, and thirdly an elected Greenlandic politician to the Danish parliament based in Copenhagen. In addition, a representative from the Danish Ministry of Defence was interviewed, as well as 2 academic scholars specialising in Greenlandic security and Climate security respectively. Representatives of the U.S. government in Nuuk and Copenhagen were also contacted, however the application to interview these people was unsuccessful. These interview participants were selected due to their assumed knowledge on the topic, as well as personal insights on the development of the issue from within the relevant authorities who work with Greenlandic diplomacy every day. Scholars were chosen as supplementary interview

participants, in order to gather their perspectives from an 'outside' point of view, but also to gain further insight into their work, in particular concerning their data from their own research. The sample size is relative small due to lack of time to complete the interview process, but also a wish to have interviews play a more supplementary role in the analysis. All interview participants were provided with a written consent form and all participants consented to be recorded for the purpose of transcription.

- Develop a clear research question: Elite interviews are most effective when they are focused on a specific research question or issue. It is important to spend some time thinking about what you want to learn from the interviews, and to develop a clear and focused research question that will guide your data collection and analysis.
- Prepare for the interview: Before conducting an elite interview, it is important to carefully prepare. This might involve conducting background research on the interviewee and the context in which they operate, developing a list of questions or prompts to guide the conversation, and rehearsing the interview in advance.

The interviews took the form of a semi-structured in-depth interview, to allow flexibility as well as a natural flow to the interview. In addition, the questions posed to the participants were open ended, in order to encourage broad reflection on the topic discussed.

- Conduct the interview: Elite interviews typically involve conducting in-depth, semi-structured interviews with each participant. This means that while you will have a list of questions or prompts to guide the conversation, you will also allow for some flexibility and follow-up questions as the conversation unfolds. It is important to create a comfortable and relaxed atmosphere for the interview, and to use active listening skills to encourage the interviewee to share their thoughts and experiences.

Interviews were conducted largely in person, in order to influence natural flow in the conversation. One interview had to be conducted using Zoom due travel as well as financial constraints that did not allow for travel to Greenland. There were some disadvantages to this interview as opposed to the other interviews that were conducted in person. This interview was significantly shorter and was more structured than the other interviews. Nevertheless, whether this was entirely due to the online-aspect of the interview is unclear.

- Analyse and interpret the data: After the interviews are conducted, it is important to carefully analyse and interpret the data you have collected. This involves transcribing the interviews, coding the data, and looking for patterns and themes that emerge. It is also important to consider how the data you have collected relates to your research question and the broader context in which it was collected.

The interviews were ultimately all manually transcribed and sent to the interviewee for review. All agreed that the transcriptions sent to them could be used in the thesis, with one participant opting to review quotes in the finished thesis before it was turned in for examination.

Limitations

In any research study, there are certain limitations that must be acknowledged. It is important to include a discussion of limitations in a thesis as it allows the reader to understand the potential weaknesses of the research and to assess the validity of the conclusions drawn. In this thesis, a small sample size for interviews due to time constraints, as well as election period in Denmark postponing some interviews. A study that uses a small sample size may not be able to generalise its findings to a larger population. Additionally, limitations may also include any biases in the research design or any errors that occurred during data collection. For example in this thesis, two interview recordings were lost due to fault technology, namely the interview with Karl Attard and Inuuteq Holm Olsen. This was overcome using notes taken from the interview and the quotes were subsequently approved by the participant. An additional limitation can be that a study that only looks at one location may not be able to make conclusions about other similar regions. Given the unique situation of Greenland in comparison with other political unions, this study can be argued to only reflect the unique situations of Greenland within the Union of the Realm. However, it is a helpful addition to the wider body of small state literature, as the thesis details how so-called ‘quasi states’ can have independent agency in the international arena.

Analysis

This thesis endeavours to examine the strategies employed by the Greenlandic government in advancing its sovereignty beyond its relationship with Denmark, as well as to scrutinise the intricate and diverse security challenges faced by the country. The study will evaluate the methods by which the government is constructing policies aimed at enhancing Greenland's independence from Denmark through small-state political and diplomatic means. The analysis focuses on two policy domains that fall under the jurisdiction of the Greenlandic government: cyber security and resource/environmental security. The following section will detail the specific weaknesses and threats faced by Greenland in these areas. The argument presented in this section is that while Greenland asserts its competence in addressing security matters, it encounters difficulties in executing them effectively, particularly in the face of severe threats or when the Kingdom's core interests and international legal obligations must be upheld. Despite these challenges, it is evident that the government is striving to build independent capacities to address these issues in a future independent Greenland and will often utilise a liberal interpretation of its competencies within the current constitutional framework.

Case 1: Cyber Security

The first part of the analysis will examine the approach adopted by the Government of Greenland concerning the improvement of cyber security within the nation, taking into account the political objectives of retaining as many areas of governance within the exclusive jurisdiction of the self-governing Greenlandic government. Firstly, the current risks and regulations will be addressed. Secondly, an analysis of the approaches made will be presented. In this section of the analysis, the thesis will present the argument that the Government of Greenland plays a variety of different techniques within the sovereignty game concerning issue of Cyber security. However, in light of the severe threat of cyber attacks and the limited resources and expertise available in Greenland, the government may ultimately be forced to compromise and accept assistance from Denmark.

Risks and current regulation measures

The first thing to be addressed are what the concrete risks are to cyber security in Greenland. Greenland experiences some significant challenges in terms of cyber security. These include

threats to government institutions, critical infrastructure as well as threats to core industries and individuals. It is evident that the rapidly evolving global threat of cyber attacks also applies to Greenland. To start however, it is worth noting what the stance of the Danish government on cyber issues within the framework of international law in general, as well as how the Danish government view the intersection of cyber in both the military and civilian spheres. This is due to the fact that Denmark's position on matters is often mirrored by the Government of Greenland, and the ability to govern these matters in Greenland is constitutionally contingent upon Denmark's view on whether the issue is a question of the security of the Kingdom as a whole or not.

The legal status of attacks within cyber space as well as questions pertaining to which authority should manage them are debated nationally and internationally. When it comes to sovereignty in cyber space, Denmark, along with a number of other small states, have not publicly endorsed a particularly position. It is argued that this is due to the fact that small states are primarily preoccupied with defending against cyber attacks as opposed to actually conducting them (Heller, 2022, p.64). This is backed up by the content of the most recent Cyber and Information Security Strategy (CISS 2022-2024) that is primarily focused on defence related issues pertaining to cyber security in the Kingdom of Denmark. While the Government of Greenland have not themselves stated their position on this, one can reasonably assume that Greenland being a small, non-state entity, with limited resources for conducting cyber operations, is similarly not interested in anything but protecting against cyber attacks as opposed to conducting them.

The question of whether cyber defense should fall within the military or civilian domain is a complex one with varying perspectives. Some scholars and military analysts argue that cyber defense should be considered a military responsibility given the potential for cyber attacks to cause physical damage and disrupt critical infrastructure. Others argue that cyber defense should be a civilian responsibility, as it is primarily a matter of protecting sensitive data and networks, which is typically the purview of civilian agencies. In Denmark, most of the cyber defence agencies fall under the Ministry of Defence, however there are several national agencies that fall within civilian authorities, such as the Police Intelligence Service (PET). Thus, Denmark, like most countries, employs a combination of both military and civilian cyber defense organisations. The military is responsible for protecting national security networks and if necessary, conducting offensive cyber operations, while civilian agencies are responsible for protecting critical infrastructure and responding to cyber threats to the private

sector and general population. Some governments also have specialised cyber defense agencies that operate independently, but in coordination with the military and civilian agencies.

Given the escalating tensions in the Arctic region in recent years, Greenland is, as many other countries in the Arctic, exposed to the threat to severe breaches that have the potential to compromise vital infrastructure and operations. According to Jacob Herbst, CTO at Dubex and member of the Danish Cyber Security Council:

“Criminal and government hackers don’t care about borders, as long as they get what they’re looking for. That’s why they are just as likely to attack Greenland as they are to attack Denmark if they get the same information out of it [...] Fundamentally, the technical implementation of a threat to Greenland is the same as of a threat to Denmark. It’s therefore also by and large the same means that are used to attack and defend oneself”

(Lorenzen, ING, 2022)

One of the earliest notable cyber attacks on Greenland took place in 2015, when a fraudulent letter purporting to be from the former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Greenland, Ane Lone Bagger, to American Senator Tim Cotton circulated online. The letter depicted a hypothetical future in which Greenland gained independence and strengthened its partnership with the United States. The Danish Centre for Cybersecurity believed that the goal of disseminating this false information may have been to sow discord within the Danish Kingdom (CFCS, 2022b, p.23). In the last year, there has been a noticeable increase in cyber attacks on key governmental institutions in Greenland, including an attack on the government itself in March 2022, which necessitated the disconnection of the central administration server from the external internet in order to contain the threat (Lindkvist, Berlingske, 2022). This incident resulted in a significant impairment of the government's ability to perform essential tasks, including the distribution of benefits payments. In addition, the health care system in Greenland was severely impacted by a cyber attack which lasted for several months (Kristensen, Version2, 2022).

There are vulnerabilities in Greenland that are completely unique due to its geography and low population size. Greenland is at particularly at risk for cyber attacks such as malware infections, phishing scams, and network intrusions, a large part being due to lack of training of civil servants in the area. These attacks can be directed at individuals, businesses, or government agencies, and can have serious consequences such as data breaches, financial loss, as well as damage to reputation. A report from the Danish Police Intelligence Service (PET) published in 2022 specifically mentions the threat of so-called “influence operations and

espionage” against Greenlandic authorities, decision-makers, businesses and research institutions, and draws particular attention to China and Russia (PET, 2022, p.19). Furthermore, digital communication in Greenland is extremely important, due to the long distances between towns and settlements. For example, in the case of the Greenlandic healthcare system, there is a significant dependence on the transportation of acute patients to Nuuk, as many rural areas lack the resources, such as surgeons or anaesthetic nurses, required for conducting complex procedures. This dependence becomes particularly pronounced in instances where pregnant women require Caesarian section births, in which the large majority are transported to Nuuk. A cyber attack that disrupts supply chains or hinders transportation services could have dire consequences for Greenlandic communities, as they are heavily reliant on these services.

In terms of the human competency level to combat cyber threats in Greenland, the quality and quantity is very low. This is due to lack of personnel, in particular educated personnel whom possess the correct competencies to deal with cyber attacks. For example, the Digitalimik Sullissinermut Aqutsisoqarfik (Greenland’s Agency for Digitisation), only employees 4 people that are responsible for organising Greenland's cyber defence(Lorenzen, ING, 2022). As Carøe Moussa puts it:

“The general competency level in Greenland is fairly low, and that’s an issue when it comes to cyber security obviously, a its difficult to do something about that on the short term. They also lack the necessary infrastructure. Greenland has only two cables linking to it, [...] for example a few years back, one got severed and severely limited the internet speed”.

(Interview with Sami Carøe Moussa, Representative of the Ministry of Defence in Copenhagen)

The head of Greenland’s Agency for Digitisation, Katrine Nathanielsen, agreed with this statement in an interview to ING in 2022,

“If there is a Russian hacker that wants to get in, the risk of him succeeding is quite high [...] We have to assume that at some point there will be a breach. Then it’s more a question of how quickly we can shut it down, contain it, and get back into operation. That is the reality we have to live with” (Lorenzen, ING, 2022).

As both Carøe Moussa and Nathanielsen highlight, this lack of concrete expertise and personnel that can deal with prevention of cyber attacks makes Greenland particularly vulnerable in the event of an attack on Greenlandic businesses and institutions. Furthermore,

Greenland does not have specific legislation or regulations in place for addressing cyber threats. However, being a part of the Kingdom of Denmark, Greenland is in many instances subject to Danish laws and regulations.

In general, the regulation of cyber threats is a relatively recent development within the broader realm of national security. In 2014, Denmark enacted its first legislation addressing cyber threats, which placed the responsibility of addressing such threats under the purview of the military intelligence service. The law established the Centre for Cybersecurity (CFCS), a department within the military intelligence service tasked with providing surveillance, protection and analysis of cyber threats to Danish authorities and public companies (Law on the Centre for Cyber Security, 2014). The Center for Cyber Security is the national IT security authority and handles a number of issues and tasks of a preventive and remedial nature in Denmark, including e.g. counselling. CFCS notifies relevant authorities and companies of specific cyber threats, just as the center prepares national and sector-specific situational pictures and threat assessments (CISS 2022-2024, 2021, p.34)

However, while this legislation was put in force for Denmark, it did not automatically apply to Greenland, as the jurisdiction for matters related to cyber security had been assumed by the Greenlandic government and was managed independently by the Digitalisation agency in Nuuk. While there are clearly unique complexities surround cyber security in Greenland, it wasn't until recently that cyber security was given attention or prioritisation within the Government of Greenland. As Carøe Moussa explains:

“(...) when you have so few people, a lot of other policy areas are prioritised. [The Government of Greenland] prefer to invest in other areas. Particularly defence related policies, well, there isn't a lot of political value in it. Cyber is a bit more than the other, because it sounds cool politically, which is also part of the reason why its gotten so much money in Denmark. Nevertheless, it has nothing compared to investing in welfare. It doesn't carry the same kind of political value. If you don't have that same acute awareness of the threat, it easily becomes neglected. Greenland, well, they have other challenges”.

(Interview with Sami Carøe Moussa, Representative of the Ministry of Defence in Copenhagen)

The Government of Greenland has consistently adopted a stance of low tension and high cooperation in regards to defense matters in the Arctic, with both the government and the population of Greenland consistently expressing opposition to the establishment of military and defense infrastructure within the country. Carøe Moussa's statement implies that the

electorate in Greenland prioritise addressing pressing social issues, such as the high suicide rate, a significant incidence of child abuse, as well as the high prevalence of violent and alcohol-related crime, which are disproportionately prevalent in Greenlandic society. Additionally, due to limited resources and the high costs associated with establishing cyber defense infrastructure, it is evident why there has been a lack of political interest in this area.

Nevertheless, the Government of Greenland has recently sought to fundamentally change the critical infrastructure of the country and further developed cyber-connectivity and digitalised infrastructure, as well as facilitating foreign investments and loans for large scale projects (Olsvig, 2022, p.222). Greenland has only recently created their own legislation on cyber security, coming as a response to the increased number of attacks on critical infrastructure and government institutions in the last few years. In 2020, The Government of Greenland enacted a law similar to the Telecommunications law enacted by Denmark in 2014, allowing the Centre for Cyber Security to provide its services and protection for Greenland ('Bekendtgørelse for Grønland om tilslutning til Center for Cybersikkerheds netsikkerhedstjeneste'; Law on Centre for Cyber Security, 2019). The enactment of this law in Greenland means that the Centre for Cybersecurity department within the Foreign Intelligence Service is able to monitor, alert, and advise the Government of Greenland, in the particular the Digitalisation Agency, on issues related to cybersecurity, in the same way the centre monitors similar issues for Denmark (ibid.).

In October 2022 during the research for this thesis, the Greenlandic Agency for Digitisation made a cooperation agreement with the Danish Centre for Cyber Security, in which they agree they will meet regularly to exchange knowledge and experiences. The Government of Greenland opted to expand the role of the Centre for Cyber Security in Greenland, allowing the centre to provide training and share intelligence and experience with the aim of improving the Greenlandic competency on the area (CFCS, 2022a). As part of the agreement, the authorities committed themselves to, among other things, cooperate to strengthen competence development within cyber and information security in Greenland, where CFCS can assist with education and training for employees of the Digital Agency. In addition, CFCS will strengthen the general advisory efforts aimed at Greenland, including advice and guidance to the Digital Agency on cyber and information security (ibid.). A representative of the national Police Intelligence Service (PET) is also stationed in Greenland.

The Sovereignty Game- a successful securitisation?

Despite the fact that Greenland has attached themselves to the Danish regulation on the area concerning cyber security, the Government of Greenland has nevertheless been emphasised that the centre only plays an advisory role to Greenland's government institutions, thus de-facto supporting Greenlandic authority over the area (CFCS 2022a). In the next section, this thesis will show that this action of discursively retaining any form of sovereignty over a policy area is a part of the phenomena associated with subsequent Greenlandic governments, playing a so-called 'sovereignty game'. This thesis argues that the Government of Greenland do this in order to create separate agency in particular when it comes to foreign policy and security matters in Greenland.

While the Danish government may in some circumstances view certain threats as a matter of national security for the entire realm, and thus 'securitise' an issue, the Greenlandic government may choose to downplay the issue in order to maintain autonomy in foreign policy and security matters, an act coined as 'desecuritisation'. In general, the Government of Greenland often prefer to 'desecuritise' issues in order to legitimately assert its own competency over the area when possible. However, as this section will show, the Government sometimes have to acknowledge the acute lack of competency in the particular area of cyber security, and had to therefore bargain on issues that are not within their interest to desecuritize. In turn, the Government of Greenland accepts a loss of a degree of 'sovereignty' on the area in order to ensure immediate defence due to the acute nature of the threat. This reveals a critical weakness of Greenland to independently defend itself, in particular when it comes to acute threats that require immediate resources such as cyber. Nevertheless, this section will also show that despite an issue being successfully 'securitised', the Government of Greenland will continually challenge Danish competency on the area, even though it may only be largely symbolic.

As previously mentioned, the question of whether cyber should fall within the military or civilian domain is central to what political competency the Government of Greenland retains over the area. The dilemma of whether cyber security issues fall under the jurisdiction of the Greenlandic or Danish government is largely determined by how each party discursively frames and presents the issue in terms of national security, particularly in Copenhagen. This is due to the fact that all areas that fall within the category of military defence and protection of the sovereignty of the Realm is managed from the Ministry of Defence under the authority of the Danish government in Copenhagen, whereas practically all of the areas within the civilian

domain have been reassumed under the purview of the Government of Greenland, apart from the Justice Ministry and Police. The representative from the Danish Ministry of Defence Carøe Moussa depicted this exact phenomena when asked on how he views cyber security in Greenland:

“It’s a grey area. There are obviously security elements of it there. [Cyber] also has in of itself both a civilian and a military aspect. We also have that debate in Denmark of how to organise it, should it be within the Military intelligence service or should it be outside of it. The same thing pertains to Greenland. There will be security elements there, which should be decided on in Copenhagen. But at the same time, there also large civilian non-security policy aspects of it. The question is how to solve that. The history and relationship between Nuuk and Copenhagen complicates it [...]”.

(Interview with Sami Carøe Moussa, Representative of the Ministry of Defence in Copenhagen)

Framing an issue as a national security issue, as Carøe Moussa does here, allowed Denmark to insert itself in to the internal affairs of Greenland and thus influence any decisions that are made there. This is even when it is a policy area that has been reassumed by the Government of Greenland. It is obvious that it is in the interest of the Danish government that the provisions outlined in Paragraph 19 of the Danish Constitution be upheld in regards to matters pertaining to national security and foreign policy for the Kingdom. Nevertheless, Carøe Moussa highlights a obvious divergence in the relationship between Greenland and Denmark with regards to the manner in which various issues should be addressed. Further, he posits that the historical relationship between Nuuk and Copenhagen continues to complicate the process. Here, he implies that the previous colonial relationship between Greenland and Denmark, in which Denmark held all decision-making power, remains a crucial element of the current dynamic between the two parties. In interviews conducted for this thesis, this position was similarly confirmed on the Greenland side, as diplomat Inuuteq Holm Olsen explains:

“It often happens, that Greenland is not included in discussions that the Danish authorities have on issues that directly concern Greenland. There is often ignorance, and it happens regularly. There also still exists prejudice among civil servants towards the ability of Greenland to make their own decisions. They have been known to say, that when an area is within their competency given to them by the constitution, there is no direct reason to involve Greenland. This is the extreme conservative interpretation of the constitution. In Greenland

we have adopted a more liberal understanding. We will always challenge [the conservative interpretation], when it happens”.

(Interview with Inuuteq Holm Olsen, Head of Greenland Representation in Brussels)

Here, Holm Olsen depicts a reality for Greenlandic civil servants and diplomats, in which the relationship with Danish colleagues is still characterised by a still-existing ordinate-subordinate relationship between the two parties, particularly between those working within the relevant institutions. He explains, that this is part of the reason why the Government of Greenland has continually challenged Danish authority across different policy areas by asserting that issues specific to Greenland should be resolved by the Greenlandic people. It is no different when it comes to an area reassumed by the Greenlandic government. This more liberal approach to the interpretation of the Danish Constitution from subsequent governments since the enactment of the self-rule in 2009 has shifted the dynamic in the relationship between Greenland and Denmark significantly, as Hans Peder Kirkegaard, Head of Section at the Department of Foreign Affairs in Nuuk explains:

“I think the Greenlandic liberal understanding of the Danish constitution has always been there. What has changed is that now, the Danish government listen to our arguments [...] the ultimate argument against the Danish constitution is that it was put in effect on Greenland, we never voted for it, because Denmark was our colonial master, that’s a way to count the conversation. But it has changed, I think the importance of Greenland for the Danish government has also increased [...] The Danish government look more towards Greenland. They mention Paragraph 19 of the Danish constitution, but we have own Paragraph 21 of the self govt act. So therefore, it rarely becomes conversations purely on paragraphs, because Greenland won’t win in the end”.

(Interview with Hans Peder Kirkegaard, Head of Section Department of Foreign Affairs in Nuuk).

Kirkegaard provides some clarity on the development of the relationship with Denmark since the enactment of the Act on Self-Rule in 2009, explaining that Denmark have been more accommodating of the Greenlandic position. He refers specifically to paragraph 21 of the Act on Self-Rule, which confirms the Greenlandic ambition of independence and provides the legal foundation for a future referendum on the matter (Act on Self-Rule, 2009, §21). Kirkegaard notes that due to the fact that the importance of Greenland has increased for Denmark, the willingness to incorporate Greenlandic interests into how the Danish government approach

foreign policy in the Arctic has increased, because Greenland have the foundation to leave the Kingdom at any point. However, as previously mentioned, it is still underlined by the Danish representative from the Ministry of Defence, who was interviewed for this thesis, that the extent to which Greenland can exercise autonomy over a given issue is contingent upon the degree to which it is classified as a matter of national security in Copenhagen. This area of ambiguity, a so-called grey area such as the issue concerning cyber, often causes significant tensions between the two parties particularly in concern of how to interpret issues. As Carøe Moussa explains:

“It was evident when we did the telecommunications security law. We have been using hours and hours talking to Greenland and the Faroe Islands, trying to make them understand that when there is a security element, we have to come to an understanding. There is a tendency in Copenhagen to bend the rules as far as we can, while still remaining within the constraints of the constitution, to accommodate Greenland and Faroe Islands. You can say it’s Greenlandic and you can have your own law, but in praxis it should be the same. But how we speak about it and who the sender of the message is, matters less”.

(Interview with Sami Carøe Moussa, Representative of the Ministry of Defence in Copenhagen).

There are several elements of what Carøe Moussa is saying here that are interesting for a number of reasons. Firstly, when Carøe Moussa says ‘trying to make them understand that when there is a security element, we have to come to an understanding’, he directly assumes that the parts of the issue of cyber defence in Greenland is a national security issue for the entire realm, even though they may only affect Greenlandic institutions and society. This is an example of how Danish authorities may securitise an issue in order to assert competency over solving it. Secondly, Carøe Moussa states that ‘there is a tendency to bend the rules [of the constitution]’ in order to ‘accommodate’ Greenland and the Faroe Islands, but in praxis, a law on the area should be exactly the same as Denmark’s. This is an example of a reverse sovereignty game played by Denmark, as Carøe Moussa implies that a Greenlandic law passed on the issue is only of symbolic political value for Greenland. This is in order to satisfy its independent ambitions, but in reality, the law is and should be developed by Denmark, so things are done in the interests of the entire Kingdom.

There is clearly space for divergences on the interpretation of who should have the competency to deal with security and foreign policy matters within the Kingdom. Nevertheless, when it comes to the issue of cyber security in Greenland, the acute nature of the threat itself

to Greenlandic society has played a role in terms of how the issue has been dealt with. The country has seen a number of cyber attacks in recent years, which have had a significant impact on various institutions and aspects of daily life, highlighting the acute nature of the threat to Greenlandic society. As mentioned earlier in this section, the Government of Greenland have recently voted to join the Danish enacted law on the area and have in turn acceded the CFCS law, allowing for Danish authorities to monitor cyber activity in Greenland. When the Government of Greenland proposed that Greenland should accede the Danish Law on Cyber Security, they stated:

“The assessment of the Government of Greenland [Naalakkersuisut], that joining the Centre for Cyber Security’s security service provides the best protection for Greenland at the current time. The risk that our IT-systems can be completely compromised [...] is probably quite high, but if it happens, the effect would be massive and affect the Greenlandic society immensely, and the reparation costs for the Government would be significant. This must be compared to the fact that Greenland only has very few people with relevant skills in cyber and information security. The Government of Greenland therefore recommends that the Center for Cyber Security Act be put into effect for Greenland by royal decree” .

(Proposal for resolution in the Parliament of Greenland that Greenland's Self-Government agrees that the Act on the Center for Cyber Security is put into effect for Greenland by royal decree, August 20 2020 [unofficial translation])

It is clear with this statement that the Government of Greenland have accepted their lack of competency on this area at the current time, and have had to submit its regulation to the Danish authorities given the acute nature of the cyber threat to Greenland. Despite the fact that the Government of Greenland, as shown previously, often prefer to retain competency over areas that are reassumed, it is difficult for a country of this size and population to quickly and effectively establish the correct cyber defence infrastructure and authorities with the correct expertise. As a small country with very limited resources, Greenland is comparatively weak in this area, and therefore one can conclude that their interest is to heighten the defence of the IT systems and quickly and effectively as possible. Therefore, it is natural that the Government of Greenland look to Denmark as they are not only still apart of the Union of the Realm, but Danish authorities also have a comparatively high expertise in this area. As Marc Jacobsen explains:

“One thing is that Greenland has the will to undertake some of these requirements themselves, but its another thing to have the ability, and another thing is to have enough people to carry out these tasks. When you are a country of 56-57,000 people, then there are quite simply just too few people who have the expertise [...] I think its normal for Greenland to look to Denmark, because they are, in spite of appearances, still apart of Rigsfællesskabet [...] So I think they will still rely on them, but what is important is how it is communicated”.

(Interview with Marc Jacobsen, Researcher for the Danish Defence Academy)

As previously noted by Jacobsen, it is crucial for the Government of Greenland to effectively communicate their intentions to avoid giving the impression that they are solely dependent on Denmark. This was exemplified in the recent expansion of the CFCS access to Greenland in October 2022, where Premier Mute B. Egede emphasised the goal was to develop competencies in the field of cyber and information security within Greenland (Press Statement, CFCS, 2022a). Furthermore, the Premier referred to the agreement as a "cooperation agreement," indicating that the partnership is one of mutual benefit and that Greenland maintains autonomy in decision-making, within its own interest (ibid.). As Jacobsen states in the following, this approach is essential to establish Greenland's independence and self-sufficiency and accept that while there are areas they need assistance for, they still remain in full control of when and how that assistance is given:

“It is up to Greenland to communicate when they need help or expertise, and that is something that I get the impression of that they often do. I’m thinking specifically of the cyber agreement that came in to effect last month as an example. It is my impression that this is also in Greenland’s own interest. Otherwise they wouldn’t do it. They lack people with the correct knowledge, but also technological capacity”.

(Interview with Marc Jacobsen, Researcher for the Danish Defence Academy)

To conclude this section, it is clear that the Government of Greenland will take the opportunity to play the ‘sovereignty game’ in their favour, by asserting its competency to manage and decide upon how threats are dealt with in the country. The Government of Greenland have experienced rifts in their practical cooperation with Denmark in the past and present, and prefer to assert its authority to decide as opposed to negotiating it. Nonetheless, the Government have in the case of cyber security had to acknowledge the acute lack of competency to effectively deal with the threat, and therefore have no foundation or interest in legitimately ‘desecuritisising’

the issue. As an act of bargaining, the Government of Greenland have therefore accepted a loss of a degree of 'sovereignty' or 'competency' on the area in order to ensure immediate defence due to the acute nature of the threat. However, the way the Government of Greenland communicate their dependency is crucial, as it is important not only for the Government to communicate that any action taken is in the interest of a future independent Greenland, but also to ensure that Greenland becomes a more equal partner with Denmark.

Case 2: Environmental/Resource Security

The second area this thesis will present an analysis of sovereignty games and securitisation tactics related to 2 policy areas related to natural resources and environment: natural resource exploitation and fisheries. Despite its harsh climate, Greenland has a number of natural resources, including minerals, oil, and natural gas. Greenland's critical mineral resource potential is considered to be moderate to high for a number of rare earth minerals. The potential for the other commodities varies, but they will all have a potential for exploitation due to market conditions either within a short, medium, or long-term timeframe (Nathanielsen, Innovation Network, 2022). In addition, Greenland is home to a number of fish species, which provide a vital source of food for not only the indigenous population, but also the world at large. Fisheries in Greenland make up a significant amount of the export economy in Greenland (93%) (Grønlands Statistik, 2022). This section of the analysis will consider the potential for economic and cultural exploitation by larger states and the potential for disputes over fishing rights to escalate into conflicts. Additionally, the thesis will examine the challenges posed by the dual-use potential of certain natural resources and the ways in which the Government of Greenland addresses these security concerns.

Risks and current regulation measures

Fisheries in Greenland are a vital component of the country's economy and cultural identity. They constitute a significant portion of Greenland's exports, accounting for 93% of the country's export economy. The primary species caught in these fisheries include Arctic char, halibut, shrimp, and Greenland halibut. The fishing industry is primarily composed of small-scale, coastal operations, with some larger industrial-scale operations also present. The government of Greenland, through the Ministry of Fisheries and Hunting, regulates the industry

through quotas that ensure sustainable practices. Fisheries export make up a significant part of Greenland's trade with nations beyond Denmark. The majority of the fish caught in Greenland are exported to other countries, with the European Union being the largest market. It is widely viewed that while Greenland left the EU as a full member in 1985, they still had access to a wide array of direct EU development funding through a fisheries partnership agreement, which still exists today, known as 'The Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement'¹. The Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreements Greenland negotiates with the EU are thus somewhat unique in the wider EU framework.

There are several security related issues related to the fishing industry in Greenland, which have recently been recognised by the Government of Greenland. Firstly, given the significant role that fisheries play in the Greenlandic economy, it is essential to safeguard the sustainability of the industry. Thus, efficient fishing with a high return is important for a country where the return on the natural capital fish, both today and well into the future, is the most important source of income and thus also decisive for the development of welfare in the country (Andersen, 2021, p.41). It is especially the effect of climate change on the environment in Greenland that is expected to significantly effect the industry in the future. Firstly, the high levels of melting ice from the Greenland Ice Sheet have adverse affects on the currents in the oceans, making it increasingly more dangerous for fisheries to operate on the seas around Greenland. Thus, the need for increased surveillance and capacities for search and rescue (SAR) operations are becoming increasingly urgent in the Greenlandic society. Currently, the management of Search And Rescue service (SAR) in Greenland is divided between Joint Arctic Command (JACMD), the Air Rescue Coordination Center and the Commissioner of Police in Greenland. Joint Arctic Command and the Air Rescue Coordination Center are all based in the capital Nuuk, in an agreement with the Danish government.

Secondly, an under acknowledged affect of climate change are how increased ice melts will have an affect on the fish stocks around Greenland. As researcher Karl Attard explains:

“Sea ice that forms on the surface of the ocean in the Arctic is declining by about 12% on average per decade [...] as we have less sea ice in the Arctic, so we have more expanses of open water, and ecologically that's interesting because ice reflects a lot of sunlight, so when

¹See Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Union, of the one part, and the Government of Greenland and the Government of Denmark, of the other part', 2007-2012, 2013-2015, 2016-2020, 2021-2024, 18.5.2021, L175/3, (available at: [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legalcontent/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:22021A0518\(01\) from=EN](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legalcontent/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:22021A0518(01) from=EN))

you have open water, a lot of sunlight is going to enter the ocean, and that is going to stimulate photosynthesis because that's what photo-synthesisers need, they need sunlight. [...] The fish, they need to feed, they need to grow to build up their biomass, and they do that by feeding on plants on the lower trophic levels in the ocean. So ultimately, what it all depends on, is the amount of primary production through photosynthesis. [...] These form the foundations of the entire food chain. So this can affect the fisheries distribution in the future”.

(Interview with Karl Attard, Researcher for the Danish Institute for Advanced Study SDU)

While this particular phenomenon is yet to be fully researched, it is worth considering how it may or not have an effect on a small economy and country like Greenland. History has shown that disputes over fishing rights particularly in the North Atlantic can also lead to prolonged conflicts between states operating in these areas. With the outlook of fish stocks potentially expanding rapidly in Greenland, it will be important for the Government of Greenland to ensure its own cultural and economic rights to these stocks through exclusive quotas and not be overwhelmed by the potential of larger states acting in these areas. For example, the series of confrontations between the United Kingdom and Iceland that took place between the 1950s and 1970s, known as the ‘Cod Wars’, were centred around fishing rights in the North Atlantic. The conflicts resulted in several tense standoffs and a number of collisions between British and Icelandic vessels.

Despite the importance of fisheries to Greenland's economy, the country still remains largely dependent on the block grant of around 4 billion DKK from Denmark (expected 2023), counting for over half of Greenland's GDP. The block grant makes up In recent years, the government of Greenland has sought to diversify its economy and gain greater economic independence. In particular, there has been a growing interest from the Government of Greenland in issuing licenses for extracting and exporting the ample amounts of natural resources. The aim of this is to provide a foundation for economic development ((Nathanielsen, Innovation Network, 2022). As MP Aaja Chemnitz states:

“78% of the extractive industry, especially rare earth minerals that the EU are asking for, they can be found in Greenland. So I think it would be quite interesting for the EU to invest in Greenland”.

(Interview with Member of Parliament for Inuit Ataqatigiit Aaja Chemnitz, 2022)

Despite Greenlandic interest, there are several security related issues related to the extraction and export of, in particular, mineral resources in particular Uranium. Natural resources such as Uranium are among the most regulated elements due to their dual-use possibilities, and the access to many natural resources can lead to war and warlike conflicts (Barten & Mortensen, 2017, p.191). In addition, there can be political, social, and security consequences for Greenland when it comes to natural resource mining. Not only would active resource mines require significant influxes of foreign workers to Greenland (due to Greenland's low population size and low unemployment rate), the dual-use element of some natural resources can and have in the past created potent political issues when it comes to their distribution on the global market, particularly in relation to Greenland's constitutional relationship with Denmark (*see* Barten & Mortensen, 2017, Thomasen, 2017).

Additional concerns have been raised about the potential adverse environmental impact. Greenland is particularly vulnerable when it comes to the affects of climate change. Mining and extractive industries can have significant environmental impacts, including pollution, habitat destruction, and resource depletion. The extraction of natural resources in Greenland, such as minerals and oil, has the potential to harm the local environment and wildlife, and may also contribute to climate change through the release of greenhouse gases during the extraction and transportation of these resources. Additionally, the transport of these resources to markets may also increase risks, such as the risk of oil spills or accidents during shipping. Greenland and in particular the population living in coastal settlements are extremely vulnerable when it comes to the affects of natural resource mining (in particular mining of radioactive minerals), and the affects of climate change. This was part of the reason the Government of Greenland enforced a ban of uranium mining of deposits containing uranium concentrations more than 100 parts per million (specifically concerning the uranium deposits found at Kuannersuit [DAN: Kvanefjeld]) (*see* Walsh, The Guardian, 2017).

Historically, the Danish position concerning the abundance of Greenlandic uranium has been sensitive and problematic. Throughout most of the Cold War Denmark found itself in quite a nuclear predicament, and Greenland's uranium was a major dilemma for Denmark from the mid-1950s when the first discussions about a possible Danish membership of Euratom unfolded (Thomasen, 2021, p.399). Uranium was considered a scarce resource during WWII, and for the USA and the United Kingdom, and during and immediately after the war it became pressing to secure a steady supply of the material that provided for their shared nuclear monopoly (*ibid.*). Western Europe had few uranium resources and therefore the Euratom area was without sufficient uranium supplies. Greenland's uranium was thus one of very few

resources in the Euratom area. Nevertheless, it is argued that Denmark in many instances attempted to guard the amounts of Uranium available in Greenland internationally in order to remain neutral to the escalating nuclear conflict between the United States and the USSR. Denmark even issued a false statement claiming that it had no uranium resources on their territory (*see* UM to State Department, 15 Dec. 1955).

Nevertheless, Denmark sponsored exploration of the uranium potential of Kuannersuit [DAN Kvanefjeld] from the 1960s through the 1980s (Vestergaard & Thomasen, 2016). However, after the Danish Parliament resolved to renounce nuclear power as a domestic energy source in 1985, explorations paused (Johnstone, 2019, p.7). When the Inatsisartut (Parliament of Greenland) voted with a majority of a single vote in favour of overturning the (supposed) zero-tolerance policy on mining of radioactive materials in 2013, it reignited the divisions within Greenland and between the Greenland and Danish governments on this issue (Johnstone, 2019, p.7). In particular, it was this precise question about whose competency it is to decide on the regulations surrounding extraction of minerals from the Greenlandic earth that caused debate. Several articles from The Act on Self-Rule from 2009 directly address these issues concerning extraction of natural resources from the Greenlandic under earth. In particular, Article 7 states that assets stemming from areas assumed by the Government of Greenland accrue to them, and if these assets exceed the amount given to Greenland from the Danish block grant, it will subsequently be dismantled. However, the security issues surrounding the extraction caused a significant degree of tension, with the Danish government asserting competency over issues of national security, and the Greenlandic Government at the time counter-asserting competency from capabilities they awarded within this area in the the Act of Self-Rule. Former Greenlandic premier Aleqa Hammond was famously quoted at the time of the dispute telling Danish authorities to “mind their own business”, simultaneously underlining that Greenland has the primary authority and competency to deal with the development of the extractive industry as given to them in the Act on Self-Rule (Jyllands Posten, 2013).

A practical compromise was however reached in 2016. The agreement between Denmark and Greenland allows for Greenland to maintain decision-making power over extraction of uranium but the Kingdom of Denmark – as the state party to the international treaties and maintaining competence under constitutional law for ‘security’ issues has oversight over exports. The Danish Ministry for Foreign Affairs is the contact point for the IAEA. Exports may only go to states that are parties to the NPT and members of the IAEA. Exporters seek permission through the Greenland government but it is the Danish Business Authority in co-operation with the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Greenland government. The

Danish government, however, retains responsibility both under the domestic constitution and under international law for security issues, and it sees the extraction of uranium as a security matter (Johnstone, 2019; Vestergaard & Thomasen, 2016).

The Greenlandic Dream: New opportunities with the EU and the U.S?

It is clear that the fundamental objective underlying the interest in development of resource industries in Greenland, in particular natural resources and fisheries, is to ensure a stable and secure foundation for the country's economy. There is a clear correlation between economic growth and increased levels of welfare, and this is arguably one of the primary objectives of subsequent Greenlandic governments. When Greenland continues to be critically dependent on the block grant in order to carry out basic functions in its society, it will continue to serve as a basis for many arguments against Greenlandic independence. In essence, these resource industries provide a lot of potential for Greenland to consolidate its economy through negotiating trade agreements and issuing licensing agreements to external partners. As Aaja Chemnitz states:

“[it is important] that we are making sure [to make] the right decisions on actually interlinking the green agenda with the blue agenda, the blue agenda being business development. This will make sure that we will have more money and more funding for different welfare initiatives in the future. If its up to me, I would say 95% or 90% of the foreign affairs should be based on business development, so you should do free trade agreements, you should do a lot of different initiatives in order to make sure to make sure we point towards more business development- more tourism, but also a larger extractive industry in Greenland”.

(Interview with Member of Parliament for Inuit Ataqatigiit Aaja Chemnitz)

As Chemnitz states, it is important to expand in different industries in order to provide a solid basis for the Greenlandic economy, primarily to secure a certain level of welfare in the country. While government strategies pertaining to the development of the economy in Greenland are not disputed as falling within the purview of the Danish authorities, they have in many instances involved themselves in these issues. This has been particularly prevalent when Greenlandic representatives engage in negotiations with other states on business development.

An example of how Greenland have been particularly successful in this regard in concern of their relationship with the EU. The Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement Greenland

currently has with the EU dates back to the 1985 when Greenland left the EC, as the EU and Greenland shared the interest in EU vessels maintaining access to Greenlandic fishing waters. Therefore it was agreed as part of the withdrawal agreement that EU fishing vessels were to be given similar fishing quotas as prior to withdrawal, in exchange for the EU providing funds for the development of the Greenlandic education sector and other areas of interest to the EU, an agreement known as the Multi-Annual Indicative Programme (MIP). The amount provided by the EU in exchange for these quotas, equalling €225 million foreseen between 2021 and 2027 (EU Joint Communication on the Arctic, 2021, p.5), account for the next highest income for Greenland from external states, behind Denmark.

“The relationship we have with the EU is somewhat special and is something we strive for in all our relations with external partners. When I was responsible for establishing the Greenlandic Representation in Washington DC², I modelled our approach on this representation. When Greenland deal with the EU, particular in the Fisheries partnership, we deal with them as equal partners. Of course Denmark often wish to participate as observers, but it is the Government of Greenland who decide with the EU on how things are done”.

(Interview with Inuuteq Holm Olsen, Head of Greenland Representation in Brussels)

As Holm Olsen explains, the important thing for Greenland is to negotiate with external partners such as the EU as an equal partner. Precisely this relationship that Greenland has with the EU concerning fisheries has provided a relatively novel basis for Greenland to act independently of Denmark, despite not being formally sovereign. When there is nothing for the Danish government to legitimately ‘securitise’, particularly when the EU is known for being a reliable partner in this area, the Danish government will refrain. The Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreements had initially provided the foundation of the rationale behind the establishment of the Greenland Mission to the EU, which subsequently became the first permanent, and independent, Greenlandic Representation abroad. Greenland’s demand to retain an independent visual presence in Brussels (so much so, that the government of Greenland insisted on a separate entrance to the mission that didn’t go through the Danish EU Representation (Vesterbirk, 2018, p.4).

The newest development in the relationship between the EU and Greenland suggests a strengthening of Greenlands independent agency vis a vis the EU. The EU has recently released

² Inuuteq Holm Olsen is the former the Head of the Greenland Representation in Washington D.C immediately prior to being posted to Brussels.

its intention to establish a permanent representation in Nuuk. As stated in the EU's Joint Communication on the Arctic, published in 2021:

“A permanent presence of the EU in Greenland would be a strong signal to enhance our partnership and the visibility of EU actions on the ground, for example through the establishment of a European Commission office on Greenlandic territory”.

(EU Joint Communication on the Arctic, 2021, p.5)

From this statement, it is clear that the EU have the intention of being more visible in Greenland for the benefit of their bilateral relations and partnership with Greenland. Moreover, speaking of the territory as being ‘Greenlandic territory’ provides some clarity on the status of the EU position on Greenland, that Greenland is a territory in and of its right. This is significant for several reasons. Firstly, Greenland is treated here as an equal partner to that of any other state that may have relations with the EU, and is not treated as a simple entity within the Kingdom of Denmark. In fact, the Communication makes no mention of Denmark being involved in these negotiations. Secondly, by articulating the relationship in this way, it symbolises that the relationship is characterised in a more bilateral way, as opposed to the trilateral way including Denmark. This is a way for Greenland to play a sovereignty game, which in turn has turned out successful. Overall, it shows that Greenland, by exploiting its abundance of valuable resources, such as fish, is more than able to create meaningful value in its relations with other actors internationally, despite not having the formal sovereign recognition usually required to do so.

There are ongoing negotiations with external partners and the Government of Greenland which will expand this trade portfolio. Currently, there are negotiations with the United Kingdom on a new trade agreement focusing particularly on fisheries trade, which when finalised will be the first bilateral trade agreement made exclusively between the Government of Greenland and an external partner. The UK government released a press statement in connection with making the negotiations public:

“”This deal underlines our commitment to Greenland and the Arctic region. I was delighted to explore several areas of bilateral cooperation during my first visit to Nuuk and Ilulissat in September and look forward to deepening our partnership with Greenland”.

(Press Statement UK Government, January 2022).

“A deal with Greenland will be a boost for our fish and seafood processing sector – a key industry for Yorkshire and Scotland [...] Greenland also has a vital geo-strategic location in the Arctic, and as such, I look forward to bringing our two countries closer together”.

(Ibid.).

The statements released by the UK government echo somewhat the statements made by the EU towards Greenland. Similarly, Greenland is mentioned in a way that expresses the development of a relationship of bilateral character, rather than a trilateral character. Furthermore, the UK government also make reference to Greenland’s vital geo-strategic location in the Arctic as a important aspect of the rationale behind bringing these two countries closer together. The above mentioned examples show how the Government of Greenland can effectively create greater independent value in foreign affairs through industries related to policy areas that are reassumed. With the outlook of fish stocks increasing in Greenland, this can create much value supporting an eventual independence.

It is evident that the authorities in Greenland recognise the economic benefits they can reap from utilising their newly regained policy domains, including within the natural resources sector. However, the security aspects surrounding the exploitation of natural resources have ignited Great Power tensions in the Arctic. In recent years, there has been a marked emphasis on reinvigorating Greenland's relationship with the United States. This reached a climax in 2019 when former President Donald Trump made a widely publicised declaration of his intention to purchase Greenland from Denmark. Although the statement was denounced as "absurd" by the Danish Prime Minister and was not well received in Greenland, it did serve to underline the strategic significance of keeping Greenland within the sphere of influence of the U.S. The fear of Greenland sharing the mineral extraction and exploitation opportunities with nations that the U.S. considers hostile, such as China, has led the U.S. to take concrete action in the Arctic (Former Ambassador Sands, U.S. Embassy, 2020). Over the last three years since reopening their consulate, the U.S. has made substantial efforts to strengthen Greenland's economic and cultural ties to the U.S. For instance, in 2020, the U.S. development agency USAID committed \$12.1 million in economic support to Greenland, followed by an additional \$10 million pledge 1.5 years later (Krog, Altinget, 2021). This is a significant advancement in the relationship, as Hans Peder Kirkegaard notes:

“There is an interest in maintaining Greenland in the Western fold. Politicians are saying what they’ve always been saying, that economic development is important. If you want

to be helpful to us, then you have to help us with economic development. With the USAID investment US government has made by opening up their consulate here, this is the biggest signal to the world that the US is taking this seriously. Where maybe before [...] the U.S. did it was that they just kind of assumed that Greenland was part of the Western fold [...] There was no money involved, there was no action plan involved, it was very symbolic, there were no concrete projects, no concrete money given by congress, to further the coupling of Greenland to the U.S”.

(Interview with Hans Peder Kirkegaard, Head of Section Department of Foreign Affairs in Nuuk).

Here, Kirkegaard specifically references the 2004 Igaliku agreement previously discussed in the thesis, of which many in the Government of Greenland felt was not fully honoured by the U.S. Kirkegaard suggests that the U.S. failed to concretely demonstrate its commitment to Greenland by not fulfilling the terms of the agreement. This highlights the progress in that the Government of Greenland is now able to demand more concrete, rather than merely symbolic, actions from the U.S. in light of its possession of strategically important minerals and geo-strategic position. From the perspective of the U.S., Greenland constitutes a crucial aspect of its national security and hence, it is imperative that it not provide a foothold for hostile powers. Marc Jacobsen further elaborates on this issue:

“I am not in doubt about that it’s about winning the hearts and minds in Greenland. Greenland has gotten more of say in comparison to earlier, but the assessment is also that they assume Greenland will have even more to say in the future. So in order to maintain and expand their presence [...] It may be a very small amount for the US, but for the Greenlandic economy, it does have an impact [...] So there is no doubt that it is this that lays the foundations of improving the relationship between Greenland and the U.S, and create the legitimacy of the US being more present in Greenland in the future”.

(Interview with Marc Jacobsen, Researcher for the Danish Defence Academy)

Jacobsen suggests that winning over the support and trust of the people of Greenland is crucial for the U.S. in terms of maintaining and expanding their presence there, with the ultimate goal of improving the relationship between the two countries and lay the foundation for a more established U.S. presence in Greenland in the future. By making economic investments, such as providing economic support through the U.S. development agency USAID, it establishes a more positive relationship with Greenland and gain legitimacy for a greater U.S. presence in

the region. The cultural and economic value created for Greenland, while small for the U.S., has significant impact in such a small economy. While the rapid development of the ties between Greenland and the U.S. have and will continue to be valuable to Greenland, the views from Denmark contrast that assumption. Carøe Moussa noted:

“[...]from day to day it has complicated things, massively, that the US and Washington all of sudden took very great interest in Greenland without necessarily understanding anything there or what’s going on [...] it was cause for a lot of friction between Nuuk and Copenhagen on how to handle it. [...] But the main thing that the US has done, is to help the relation between Greenland and Denmark on security and foreign policy, because I think, for a lot of, not just politicians and people who are used to talking about foreign and security policy, but for the regular Greenlandic person, there’s been a tendency to regard Greenland as detached from the rest of the world. It makes sense because of where Greenland is and because of what the Danish colonial policy was basically to detach Greenland from the rest of the west [...] the interest that the US took in Greenland has helped the relation in that it has become clear that the world takes an interest in them”.

(Interview with Sami Carøe Moussa, Representative of the Ministry of Defence in Copenhagen).

As Carøe Moussa explains, this sudden interest has created complications and added work for the people of Greenland and the Ministry of Defence, as well as causing friction between Nuuk and Copenhagen in terms of handling the situation. However, Carøe Moussa makes an interesting comment, that he believes that the main benefit of the U.S. interest in Greenland is that it has improved the relationship between Greenland and Denmark in terms of security and foreign policy. He argues, that while Greenlanders have previously viewed their country as detached from the rest of the world, the U.S. interest in Greenland has brought attention to the country, making it clear that the world takes an interest in it and strengthening the relationship between Greenland and Denmark. Carøe Moussa implies, that as Greenland can now assert itself as a more equal partner in the Union with Denmark, it removes the superiority element that often tarnishes constructive dialogue. The outside interest provides as well as economic, also symbolic benefit for Greenland in its independent ambitions. As Marc Jacobsen explains:

“From a signalling perspective, then its about being present at more of these meetings. In time it will be about going from being called premier to being called prime minister of

Greenland, so nicer titles. And that means something when the world have to figure out if they should call Copenhagen or Nuuk. And then they might more often agree that they should call Nuuk. And that can act as some steps on the way to, not an independent state as such, as the Greenland economy cannot support that, but there are some steps on the way to that and one of those is portraying oneself as more independent on the foreign and security policy areas, as well as on the international scene”.

(Interview with Marc Jacobsen, Researcher for the Danish Defence Academy)

As Jacobsen describes, it is important for Greenland to symbolically assert itself as independent in its dealings with other states, and it is important to develop ties with nations that benefit the Greenlandic economy, in order to prepare the country well for independence. This is apart of the sovereignty game tactics Greenland plays in order to assert itself as independent vis a vis Denmark. The Government of Greenland as previously mentioned have also explored the options related to natural resources. As MP Aaja Chemnitz explains:

“78% of the extractive industry, especially rare earth, that the EU is asking for, it can be found in Greenland. I think it would be quite interesting for the EU to invest in Greenland, and maybe Greenland should give more demands I would say, for example when the US is opening a consulate in Greenland or EU is opening an office, I think we should be better at being much more clear on what are the demands that we have from the Greenlandic perspective”.

(Interview with Member of Parliament for Inuit Ataqatigiit Aaja Chemnitz)

Despite the evident interest in exploiting mineral resources in order to strengthen the Greenlandic economy, the security issues concerned with the development of the extractive industry in Greenland create challenges for Greenland to independently develop these industries without having some form of Danish interference. As previously explained, these minerals are among the most regulated in the world, and thus the ability of Denmark to highly securitise these issues allowing them to often assert its competency is unhindered. Moreover, Greenlandic authorities currently lack the expertise, financial capacities and equipment needed to provide the satisfactory services required to monitor and ensure safe procedures. The Representative from the Ministry of Defence Sami Carøe Moussa put it in this way:

“its very clear there is a security element there. Looking at the Danish constitution, [it] also says the security and foreign policy is made in Copenhagen and can't be transferred within the

constraints of the constitution. The issue occurs when we have more and more subjects or areas where it may be that if you look at the area isolated, sure it's a question of the area, but there will be a security element to it. For example, rare earth minerals and mining. That leads us to the sensitive question and issue of how do Greenland maintain their independence and right to decide on these matters for themselves, as they should, while still allowing the necessary role for Copenhagen to have their say on issues of security. I think specifically in relation to rare earth minerals it won't be an issue, since the issue here is to the interest of Greenland and Denmark as well".

(Interview with Sami Carøe Moussa, Representative of the Ministry of Defence in Copenhagen)

Carøe Moussa states that when a security issue is a shared interest between the Government of Greenland and the Government in Copenhagen, it often doesn't get discussed beyond that point. Greenland does have an interest in ensuring that mineral extraction in the country is done in a safe and sustainable way, as well as in accordance with international guidelines. With Denmark being the signatory of most binding international agreements concerning this matter, it is difficult for Greenland to dispute their role, as they are the party who will be deemed accountable, considering that Greenland is not recognised as sovereign. In sum, coupled with the lack of physical capabilities in the area, the security issues concerning natural resource extraction are solved in cooperation with Denmark. Nevertheless, permits and other elements falling outside the security elements associated with them fall under the purview of the Greenlandic government, and it is this phenomenon that Greenland can create independent value. As Hans Peder Kirkegaard explains:

"The ministries themselves [are] learning to navigate the legislative restrictions of the constitution of the kingdom. It has been important for us to know how we make agreements with other states on your own within the restrictions of the Kingdoms constitution. I think that has increased the ability to make this agreements. As we explore other ways of making agreements, it will increase [...] The Danish government look more towards Greenland as well. They mention Paragraph 19 of the Danish constitution, but we have own Paragraph 21 of the self govt act. So therefore, it rarely becomes conversations purely on paragraphs, because Greenland wont win in the end".

(Interview with Hans Peder Kirkegaard, Head of Section Department of Foreign Affairs in Nuuk).

Here, Kirkegaard describes the development of Greenlandic foreign policy, with representatives of the Government of Greenland slowly learning to navigate the restrictions of the constitution in order to exercise independent agency and create value for Greenland. This process underlines the Greenlandic liberal approach to the interpretation of their capabilities and legal competencies within the current state-structure in the Union with Denmark. Furthermore, Kirkegaard envisions that as the Government become more creative with their approaches, their capacity for independent agency will only continue to increase. Nonetheless, Kirkegaard does later imply that when issues are difficult to interpret beyond the core national interests of the Danish state, it is difficult for Greenland to argue against it, as ‘Greenland won’t win in the end’.

In conclusion, the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the EU and Greenland serves as an example of how the country has been successful in managing relationships with external actors. The relationship Greenland has with the EU is significant as it reveals how much independent agency such states can have when given the right circumstances. Despite the challenges, the relationship between the EU and Greenland serves as a positive example of how Greenland has successfully managed its relationship with external states within areas that are reassumed by the Government of Greenland. Furthermore, the U.S. has adjusted its policy towards Greenland and the Arctic, and moved from a symbolic approach to a more practical one, with concrete projects and funding from Congress to further the coupling of Greenland to the U.S. This relationship is recognised well by authorities in Greenland and there are many benefits of this strengthened relationship and the potential for economic development and increased independent agency. However, the exploitation of natural resources in the Arctic has sparked Great Power tensions and raises questions about security in the region. The development of mineral resources in Greenland is challenged by security issues and the need for expertise, financial capacities, and equipment to ensure safe procedures. This also creates a grey area within the Greenland Danish relationship, which makes it difficult for Greenland to develop this resource industry independently. This is the general challenge for Greenland in its dealings with external states.

Discussion

How has the increasing interest in Greenland's natural resources and strategic location impacted its ability to project itself as an independent non-state actor internationally?

To what extent does the discourse used in relation to the new security challenges faced by Greenland reflect a small-state approach to addressing these challenges?

Greenland's natural resources and strategic location have been attracting increasing attention in recent years, leading to a renewed interest in the island and its potential for independence. This growing interest has brought new security challenges for Greenland, providing challenges and opportunities for its ability to project itself as an independent non-state actor on the international stage. This thesis has explored the impact of the increasing interest in Greenland's resources and location on its ability to project independence and the extent to which the discourse used in relation to its security challenges reflects a small-state approach to these issues. In this section, the findings from the analysis of these issues will be discussed.

Resources play a crucial role in building a robust economy in Greenland, which is envisioned by the Government of Greenland to serve as the cornerstone for eventual independence from Denmark. A strong economy provides stability, generates jobs, and attracts investment, all of which are necessary for a nation to stand on its own feet. Access to natural resources such as minerals, oil, and gas are key contributors to a healthy economy and provide the means to fund essential services and infrastructure projects. As such, developing and utilising resources effectively is a crucial step towards establishing financial independence. The Government has historically used its established fisheries partnership with the EU to attract further investment and interest from the EU. By focusing on its geo-strategic importance in the Arctic, the Government has expanded its international partnerships beyond its traditional allies, including engaging in fisheries trade negotiations with the United Kingdom. Moreover, the interest from external partners in the vast abundance of mineral and natural resource potential in Greenland is similarly being taken advantage of by the Government of Greenland. This supports the view that Greenland is striving to develop its economic and diplomatic capacities as a foundation for future independence.

The Government of Greenland are aware of the economic benefits from exploiting their resources, including within the natural resources sector. However, the security concerns related

to exploiting these resources have heightened tensions not only between Greenland and Denmark, but also among major powers in the Arctic. The presence of in particular Uranium in Greenland have created issues for the Danish government, as they are primarily accountable for the upholding of international agreements on the area. Due to the dual-use nature of some of these resources making them among the most heavily regulated in the world, and therefore Greenland is often subject to the securitisation of the issue by Denmark. Greenland find it difficult to legitimately desecuritize the issue, and therefore employ other tactics to assert itself more independently, despite the obvious challenges.

It is clear from the research done for this thesis, the the Government of Greenland have struggled to find solutions to the acute issues within the cyber security domain beyond accepting the assistance from Denmark. With only a population of 56,000 people coupled with the extremely vast territory with lack of infrastructure, it is evident the country experiences significant challenges in this area. Moreover, the Government of Greenland also lack the independent financial means to establish such effective infrastructure, with almost 50% of their GDP coming from the Danish block grant. This shows the innate challenge of small and micro states and entities such as Greenland to quickly adapt to new security environments, with limited resources and personnel, as well as financial means. The Government of Greenland have made the assessment that the correct and most effective form of quick security is to rely on the expertise from Denmark, as opposed to introducing new partners. The government's choice could be due to their knowledge of Denmark's expertise in the area as well as the recognition that enhancing security benefits both Greenland and Denmark. Additionally, it is reasonable for Greenland to seek Denmark's support in the face of significant threats while it remains part of the Union of the Realm.

Nevertheless, the national political identity in Greenland is centred around the stronger interest in preserving and promoting Greenland's independence and identity within and ultimately beyond the Danish kingdom. Despite lacking resources in certain areas such as cyber security, the Government of Greenland often make sure to articulate the Greenlandic ambition of independence, while silmutaneously accepting these weaknesses. As shown in the case on cyber security, the Government of Greenland emphasise capacity building characterises the assistance agreement made with Copenhagen. The Danish position, which primarily focuses on increasing security within the Realm, lies in contrast to the Greenlandic position, which places its focus on building up independent capacities to independently deal with the issue in a future sovereign Greenland. This has in large part provided the rationale behind playing sovereignty games with the Danish state in order for Greenland to assert itself more

independently. Not only does it provide the basis for Greenland to reassume more policy areas, such as the areas of cybersecurity and natural resources, from Denmark, but it also allows Greenland to politically delegitimise Danish interference in their internal affairs through desecuritisation tactics. These processes have only become more apparent when taking the rapidly increased interest in the Arctic into account.

When looking at the two cases presented in these thesis, it is shown that the Government of Greenland have consistently attempted to address security issues within these areas as their own to solve. This policy played by the Greenlandic government have in turn forced the Danish government to bend the laws of the constitution significantly in order to accommodate Greenlandic interests. In addition, the Danish ability to legitimately securitise issues that fall within the purview of the Greenlandic government have decreased. As explained in the analysis, Denmark have become more aware of the Greenlandic political voice, knowing well that by placing a hard Danish hand over Greenlandic affairs could play out in a constitutional crisis for the Realm. This would become prevalent if Greenland chooses to respond by calling a referendum, a right given to them as part of the Act on Self-Rule. It is significant to stress, that this increased flexibility from Denmark in concern of Greenlandic ambitions doesn't only come from the simple interest to safeguard its sovereignty over the realm. It is also in a sense responding to the increasing interest from other actors in Greenland from Denmark, specifically the United States.

While the United States are historically linked with Greenland, their interest in Greenlandic affairs had waned up until the late 2010's. This is despite Greenland's strategic position in the Arctic and the presence of United States territory in the form of Thule Airbase in Greenland. However, in the last 10 years, the U.S. has somewhat awoken to the opportunity to secure its influence in the Arctic and counterbalance Russian and Chinese presence in the region through Greenland. As mentioned in the analysis, the U.S. are attempting to 'win the hearts and minds' in Greenland through cultural exchange and symbolical initiatives, something that became particularly prevalent with the re-opening of the consulate in 2020. As argued in the thesis, this reborn connection between Greenland and the United States somewhat inconveniences Denmark, as Greenland can often turn to the U.S. to accommodate their interests when Denmark won't, and the U.S. are arguably not always attentive in sharing the details of negotiations and agreements with Greenland with Denmark. It can be argued, that this relationship is developing much more bilaterally than trilaterally.

Interest from the European Union has also heightened, as evidenced by the announcement of the establishment of a dedicated EU office in Greenland in 2023. The

relationship between Greenland and the EU is particularly developed and is considered by many to be more bilateral in nature compared to other relationships that Greenland maintains with other nations. This relationship has resulted in the generation of economic and cultural benefits through a trade agreement on fisheries without much interference from Denmark. Furthermore, increased cultural exchange between the EU and Greenland is expected to further enrich the relationship in the future. It is therefore not surprising that Greenlandic politicians, such as Aaja Chemnitz, aim to derive further economic value from the relationship with the EU through proposed investments in natural resources in Greenland, which has been shown to lead to increased agency for Greenland. However, this is contingent upon the wider interests of the EU in exploiting natural resources, which often conflict with their environmental goals. The outcome of the trade agreement currently being negotiated with the United Kingdom is also yet to be determined. Despite these uncertainties, these developments demonstrate the efforts of the Government of Greenland to create and leverage independent value for the country through these reassumed areas.

However, positing that the discourse surrounding the policy areas addressed in this thesis indicates that the Government are adopting a "small-state" strategy in addressing the country's emerging security challenges may be too premature. The evaluation of whether this constitutes a small-state strategy is complicated due to Greenland's dependency on Denmark for various services within these areas. Firstly, Greenland is not a recognised state, and therefore do not possess full sovereignty over their own affairs, especially within foreign policy and security. The Government of Greenland are often obliged to align themselves with the Danish government strategies, and therefore do not have direct independent agency to decide wholly for themselves on these matters. For example, as this thesis has shown, many of the published foreign and security policy strategies are not Greenland's alone and are usually published jointly with Denmark (and the Faroe Islands). Nevertheless, employing strategies to expand dependencies for mutual benefit by leveraging unique export opportunities as well as geo-strategic importance is an important element of achieving shelter relationships with external powers. One can also argue that Greenland's existing relationship with the U.S. due to its vital importance to the U.S. homeland security already provides a basis to move shelter away from Denmark, especially when it concerns reassumed areas. The analysis has shown that the Government of Greenland have already succeeded in encouraging more active involvement from the U.S. in the country. However, U.S. involvement on issues concerning security is challenging, considering Denmark's authority to decide on foreign policy and security issues in Greenland.

Conclusion

The Arctic region, including Greenland, has in recent years garnered significant attention from external actors due to a range of factors. The rapid melting of the Arctic ice, attributed to rising global temperatures, has made the region more accessible for economic activities such as shipping, fishing, and resource extraction. Furthermore, the melting ice in Greenland has revealed vast reserves of valuable resources including oil, gas, and minerals. The Arctic's potential as a shortcut between Asia and Europe has elevated its strategic importance and has led to the claiming of sovereignty by countries like Russia, Canada, and the US. The Arctic region, including Greenland, has significant geo-strategic significance and is rich in valuable resources, making it an object of interest for numerous countries.

Overall, the Government of Greenland have been able to positively exploit the fact that Greenland is home to ample amounts of resources as well its geo-strategic importance in the Arctic region. The Government of Greenland has successfully leveraged its rich resources and strategic location in the Arctic region to advance its policy goals. The Government of Greenland in its dealings with external partners naturally focuses its efforts on independent recognition and being treated as an equal partner. The Government of Greenland consistently focus on projecting and articulating itself as an independent actor with independent agency, even within these policy areas where security issues are outsourced to Denmark. Moreover, as the importance of Greenland for Denmark has increased, the will to maintain Danish sovereignty over Greenland has become central for Danish foreign policy. Thus, the policies implemented by the Greenlandic government have necessitated the Danish government to make significant modifications to their constitutional laws in order to accommodate Greenlandic concerns. Furthermore, Denmark's capability to legally address issues that fall under the jurisdiction of the Greenlandic government has been diminished. As analysed, Denmark has become increasingly cognisant of the political influence of Greenland, recognising that exerting excessive control over Greenlandic affairs could result in a constitutional crisis for the Realm. This scenario could occur if Greenland decides to exercise its right to hold a referendum as granted by the Act on Self-Rule.

Danish sovereignty over Greenland provides the legitimacy of the Danish presence in the Arctic region. This sovereignty has granted Denmark legitimacy in the Arctic region, positioning the country as one of the core actors in the Arctic Council. Denmark holds a significant bargaining power in addressing issues related to the Arctic and beyond in its

dealings with other states, particularly the U.S.. While Greenland is taking important steps to assert itself more independently, it nevertheless experiences challenges when considering the security issues within these policy areas, it is clear that the Government of Greenland are still very much tied to as well as reliant on Danish assistance. When it comes to acute threats such as those within cyber security, there is a significant shortage of resources required to provide effective security in Greenland, including adequate infrastructure, specialised personnel, and financial means. As shown in the analysis of this issue, the Greenlandic government have made the assessment that the correct and most effective form of quick security is to rely on the expertise from Denmark, as opposed to introducing new partners to provide security for them. Concerning natural resources, the overarching competency to deal with international obligations lie ultimately with the Danish State. Furthermore, it seems that it is natural for the Government of Greenland to turn to Denmark in the face of acute threats while it is still a part of the Union of the Realm.

In sum, despite Greenland's recent assumption of control over several policy areas from Denmark, managing security issues remains a practical challenge at present. The security landscape is complex and requires specialised knowledge, resources, and capabilities. Greenland is still in the process of developing its own security infrastructure, which takes time, effort, and resources. Until it has the necessary capabilities and infrastructure in place, it will be difficult for Greenland to manage security issues on its own. This is why it is still necessary for Greenland to rely on assistance from Denmark in addressing security challenges. However, due to reignited interest from the U.S., as well as expanding relationships with other partners such as the UK and the EU, Greenland have been recently able to create symbolic value as an entity with a comparatively high degree of independent agency. This has given the Government of Greenland a foundation to make more demands to Denmark to have an independent voice on matters that concern them. While concrete economic value is yet to be created from current agreements, it is not unthinkable that this will materialise in future agreements. The Government are clearly pursuing the aim to derive more economic value from external partners through proposed investments in natural resources despite security concerns. These developments demonstrate the efforts of the Government of Greenland to create independent value for the country.

Further research:

The independent agency of semi-autonomous and not fully sovereign territories and entities are under-researched in the study of international relations. The case of Greenland is unique in the wider international relations literature due to their relatively high degree of self-government. Nevertheless, there are several areas which could be expanded upon based on the knowledge created in this thesis.

Options for further research on the topic could include a comparative case study of Greenland and another semi-autonomous entity, perhaps those constitutionally connected to another European state, in order to reveal the intrinsic details of how these relationship do or do not provide for independent agency on certain matters. One could also consider the concept of 'free association' and how that relationship affects agency in politically independent, but not fully sovereign entities. I would encourage those interested in the development relationship between the U.S. and Greenland to delve further into the concept of Greenlandic 'shelter' within the U.S. as opposed to Denmark. In particular, it would be interesting to further delve into the change in U.S. policy towards Greenland and what issues this creates in Denmark. A specific case could be to assess the significance of the newest Thule Airbase Maintenance agreement in the development of the relationship.

Afterwords:

In conclusion, writing this thesis has been a challenging but rewarding experience. The journey has allowed me to delve deep into the topic and expand my understanding of the challenges Greenland face. I am grateful for the opportunity to have worked on this project and to have had the support of my supervisor James Rogers, my family and fellow students throughout the process. I would like to extend my thanks to the individuals who participated in interviews for this thesis, for taking valuable time out of their schedules to speak with me about the issue.

I hope that the research and findings presented in this thesis will contribute to the advancement of knowledge in this field and inspire future studies. The knowledge and skills gained from writing this thesis will continue to serve me well in my future academic and professional endeavours. I would like to express my sincere thanks to everyone who has supported me throughout this journey. Your encouragement and guidance have been invaluable, and I am deeply grateful for your contributions. In closing, I look forward to the future with optimism and excitement as I continue to explore and build upon the ideas presented in this thesis.

*“Nunarput kusanaq unganarami, Arsaneqarpoq pavani ungasissumi.
Inornangaartut kusagiassavarput, Inuujunnaartut oqaluttauassaqarput”.*
Nunarput Kusanaq, ‘Our Beautiful Country’ - Nanook.

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