Ulrik Pram Gad

National Identity Politics and Postcolonial Sovereignty Games

Greenland, Denmark, and the European Union

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Postcolonial Sovereignty Games

We were not yet of age politically when Mother Denmark forcibly betrothed us to the EC in 1972. There was never any love in this relationship. Only money. We have now reached the age of majority, and we must decide for ourselves whether to break off the engagement, or whether to marry the old lady.

Finn Lynge, MEP for Greenland, 1982

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Danish Prime Minister Poul Nyrup Rasmussen, President of the European Commission Romano Prodi, and Greenlandic Prime Minister Jonathan Motzfeldt at Igaliku church ruin, July 2000**.** Photo: Peter Bertrand, Greenland Home Rule Government

The 1982 quote by Finn Lynge on the title page was replayed on Danish radio, on the show *P1 Morgen*, on 20 June 2016 at 8:23 AM. Available online at http://www.dr.dk/radio/ondemand/p1/p1-morgen-2016-06-12#!/02:14:30 (accessed 9 September 2016)

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for my former colleagues at 'Det Brune Punktum'

Chapter 1
The EU on Greenland's path to independence

> Today, in contrast to the nineteenth century, it would be almost inconceivable for a country readily to vote to become a colony.
>
> (Jepperson et al. 1996:36)

While this observation by a distinguished group of scholars concerning the role of norms in international relations holds considerable truth, if we turn to the margins of international society, we must include more nuanced stories: Stories that involve voting for creative ways of combining integration and independence, in effect slowing down full formal decolonization. Stories of making the colonizer work for the colony by facilitating its paradiplomacy; or rather, work for the *post*-colony. The colonial label hardly describes the redistributed agency of this new relation in an adequate manner. In short: Stories of how to play games with the concept of sovereignty. One instructive story of such sovereignty games in the margins is played out in the triangular relation between Greenland, Denmark, and the European Union. This story tells us that sovereignty is no longer what it perhaps never was.

In 1982, 53% of the population of Greenland voted to leave the European Community (what later became the European Union). Greenland had joined in 1973 as an integrated part of Denmark, despite 70% of Greenlanders voting against EC accession in the 1972 Danish referendum. Greenlanders had foreseen how control over their fisheries would move from distant Copenhagen to even-more-distant Brussels. These prospects were pivotal for the Greenlandic demands for home rule, which increased over the course of the 1970s. The Faroe Islands, another Danish dependency in the North Atlantic, were allowed a separate status outside the EU on account of the home rule arrangement that they acquired in 1948.

Home rule was introduced in Greenland following a 1978 referen-

dum in which 70% concurred. The opposition to the new arrangement was split between one minority favouring continued integration in Denmark and another that was critical of the limitations to the rights and recognition of the Greenlandic people in the Home Rule Act. In effect, the majority in the referendum voted to accept to remain under Danish sovereignty. Some 30 years later, a 75% majority in a referendum confirmed this acceptance in a vote on an enhanced version of home rule. Notably, however, the new 'self-government' enacted in 2009 explicitly laid out a road map for full formal sovereignty for Greenland.

The tidal wave of decolonization began with giant India immediately after World War II and petered out in the 1970s and 1980s as a number of small islands and archipelagos such as Dominica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Vanuatu, and Micronesia acquired independence. The wave left behind a number of *very* small polities in terms of population size (Baldacchino 2013). Small size poses specific challenges in terms of relying on external resources – human, financial, natural, industrially processed – which render independence particularly daunting (Nielsen 2000). But the less-than-rosy experiences of larger decolonized states possibly also add to the reluctance observed in these small polities (Grovogui 2013). Indeed, not all candidates have chosen the path of independence (Baldacchino & Milne 2008).

In 1985, when Greenland became the first territory ever to leave the EC, it opted for status as an 'overseas country or territory (OCT)'.[1] The EU treaty framework holds a special place for such 'imperial remnants': small, non-sovereign, 'non-European countries and territories which have special relations' to an EU member state (Lisbon Treaty Art. 198). The OCTs are not bound by EU legislation but associated in a manner that grants the islands and their citizens certain rights and benefits (Hannibal et al. 2013). Originally, the OCT arrangement was conceived as a way of beefing up the common market with the former French colonies (Hansen & Jonsson 2012). As most of the colonies in Africa and

1 For a long time, Greenland was the only EC territory to ever cede membership status. On 1 January 2012, the French Overseas Collectivity in the Caribbean, Saint-Barthélémy, followed the same path. A couple of the Dutch Caribbean islands and French Mayotte on the east coast of Africa are moving in the opposite direction: from OCT status to full inclusion under the EU *acquis*.

elsewhere opted to become sovereign states, only a dozen islands and archipelagos scattered around the globe remain in the OCT framework (Hannibal et al. 2013). Among the current OCTs, Greenland is the one most consistently working on acquiring its own sovereignty (Adler-Nissen & Gad 2013a:238–9).

More generally speaking, Greenland stands out in two regards among formally non-sovereign polities. First, Greenland combines a very large territory with a very small population – a large majority of which self-identifies as Greenlanders rather than Danes. This combination has given rise to peculiar games played by Denmark to maintain its sovereignty over Greenland. Hence, Greenland has a particular experience with the concept of sovereignty and with the Danish colonial projects that have shaped its postcoloniality. Second, these particular experiences have given Greenlandic political identity a distinctly transitional character. Even if Greenland was formally decolonized in 1953 by integration in Denmark and more substantially so by the introduction of home rule, it nevertheless continues to see itself as being on a road to independence.

On its way to independence, then, Greenland is framed in two relations that do not match the standard image of what a sovereign state should be: First, along with the Faroe Islands, Greenland is part of what is known as *Rigsfællesskabet,* the 'community of the realm' with Denmark. Second, Greenland enjoys a truly marginal position – neither inside nor outside – in relation to the EU, which already by itself embodies a novel way of sharing sovereignty.

The relationship with the EU offers a central example of how Greenland is deliberately seeking to diversify its external relations to ease its dependence on Denmark. Hence, the relations between Nuuk and Brussels can best be understood by exploring the development from Danish colonialism towards a future independent Greenlandic state. This development towards independence involves two important tensions: First, tension between the preference to decide for oneself *versus* the development towards being able to support oneself in terms of welfare. In relation to Denmark, this tension is observable in debates over how to prioritize the one over the other and over what role this leaves for Denmark. In relation to the EU, the first tension involves maintaining the cash flow from Brussels while returning as few fishing quotas as

possible and keeping sovereignty from 'going south'. Second, the development from colony to postcoloniality involves tension between two distinct approaches to gain recognition and subjectivity on the world scene: On the one hand, protecting practices deemed central to indigenous Inuit culture – specifically, the hunting and consumption of certain wild animals – even if Danish sovereignty must be utilized as a lever to achieve this end. On the other hand, posing as a polity in charge of its own business – despite formal Danish sovereignty.

The Greenlandic self-image as being on the path to sovereignty – and the tensions involved in it – structure the triangular EU–Greenland–Denmark relationship. The self-image developed in the relationship to the Danish colonizers leads Greenland towards conflict with Denmark on some occasions and facilitates cooperation on others. Decisive for cooperation and conflict are the ability and willingness to accept creative ways of engaging sovereignty in each of the three corners of the triangle. Denmark and Greenland alike are preparing for a future envisioned as involving climate change, intensive raw material extraction, new transportation corridors, and new claims to sovereignty over the Arctic. With a view to acquiring greater independent room to manoeuvre, Greenland uses this imagined future as a tool when cultivating relations beyond Copenhagen. This strategy has been particularly fruitful when dealing with the EU. But the very fact that Danish popular perceptions of Greenland – and therefore Danish perceptions of the role left for Denmark – have not kept up with Greenlandic realities and visions of the future is emerging as a crucial factor in deciding the future of the community of the realm.

The Government of Greenland has been creative when engaging the EU – and successful too, judging by the financial transfers involved and the attention that Greenland has been able to attract to itself. The manner in which Denmark has facilitated this creativity could very well be a model for the further diversification of Greenland's relations with (and dependency on) the rest of the world. In this way, Denmark is able to extend the expiry date of the community of the realm by effectively turning it into a vehicle for making itself functionally unnecessary – one of the few ways in which Denmark can demonstrate that it is no longer the imperial oppressor which it insists that it never *really* was.

1.1 Contributions: Sovereignty games between postcoloniality, paradiplomacy, and the EU

The book presents a detailed, theoretically informed study of Greenlandic foreign policy and national identity. Hence, it contributes to the emergent literature on Greenlandic foreign relations. Since theoretically informed, it also forms part of larger literatures on how sovereignty is played out in relation to postcoloniality and the EU, and to literatures on the legal status, socio-economic development, and paradiplomacy of non-sovereign polities.

Most basically, while Greenland's relations to the EU are not wholly uncharted territory, they are grossly understudied when considering the importance of the role that the EU has played in the diversification of Greenland's dependency on the outside world. This book contributes to filling this gap in the literature by submitting an analysis of the role of the EU in the ongoing decolonization of Greenland. The roles of the US and the UN in the sovereignty games played in and with Greenland by Denmark have – reasonably – been awarded ample attention (Beukel et al. 2010; Lidegaard 1999, 2003). But as an early and substantial part of the broader differentiation of Greenland's relations to the world, understanding how Greenland engages the EU is important. Hence, analysis of the triangular Nuuk–Copenhagen–Brussels relationship may help us understand the political identity of Greenland as it emerges from coloniality, thereby carrying important messages about the prospects of the community of the realm with Denmark.

Petersen (2006c) provides a fine overview of Greenlandic foreign policy, mainly provided by its practitioners (cf. also Motzfeldt 2003). Informed by postcolonial theory, Petersen (2006b) considers the challenges to the Danish ideal of a nation-state coming from both the EU and the 'community of the realm' – but does not relate the two challenges to one another. Loukacheva (2007) engages in a detailed review of the development of an independent Greenlandic foreign policy, including EU relations, mainly in legal terms. Chauvet (2014) provides an analysis that is parallel to this book in many ways. However, Chauvet's perspective remains somewhat limited; first, by its

reliance on only French and English language literature; second, by its departure from a top-down geopolitical perspective; and third and related, its blindness to the importance of indigenous identity narratives, colonial history, and the related postcolonial ambitions. The limitations of this otherwise nuanced perspective become clear when its account of recent Greenland–EU relations leaves out the debacle over the sealskin import ban, which appears central in the analysis submitted here.

Zooming out from Greenland, this book is equally unique as a case study of the relations to the EU of a non-sovereign 'Overseas Country or Territory'. Kochenov (2011) offers a comprehensive overview of the legal status of the EU OCTs and the legal issues involved, and Sutton (1991) provides an overview over the variety of organizational relations between the (then) EEC and a series of sovereign and non-sovereign Caribbean islands (later updated in separate articles). However, the present analysis engages political negotiations and diplomatic practice in addition to formalities. As such, it contributes to bringing together three academic literatures that do not relate as much as they ought to (Wæver & Tickner 2009:3), even if sovereignty is the absolutely central issue for each (Gad & Adler-Nissen 2013): postcoloniality, paradiplomacy, and EU studies.

Analyses of the *postcolonial* predicament basically come in two versions: Much Political Science and Sociology approaches postcolonial states as fundamentally lacking in their realization of a pre-given, European ideal nation-state. In contrast, a distinct strand of postcolonial theorizing takes its cue from Philosophy, Anthropology and Cultural Studies when exploring the conditions for the colonized to acquire independent subjectivity. Grovogui (2013) provides a fundamental criticism of the former in terms of the latter. A gold mine of studies on specific episodes of the Greenlandic colonial and postcolonial experience have been published by Danish and Greenlandic scholars in the humanities – but they are seldom brought to speak explicitly back to the theoretical or comparative literatures from which they are inspired. A pointer for how such a contextualizing analysis of Danish postcoloniality might look like can be found in Jensen (2012) and a basis for a more comprehensive engagement is recollected in Poddar et al. (2008). However, the unique lessons that can be drawn from Green-

land's slow-motion process of decolonization still needs to be discussed in relation to the mainstream of the postcoloniality literature.

Paradiplomacy is well-established as the label for the international activities of local and regional – i.e., non-sovereign – polities, at least since the comprehensive survey contributed by Aldecoa and Keating (1999). Baldacchino and Milne (2008) have since dealt with the experience of successful non-sovereign island jurisdictions from a variety of social science perspectives. Compared to other cases, however, Greenland has taken its paradiplomatic activities to new levels in intimate cooperation with the state formally in possession of its sovereignty – even as the very same paradiplomatic activities are directed towards acquiring its own full, formal sovereignty.

Finally, *EU studies* have developed into a distinct discipline because of the *sui generis* character of the object of study exactly when it comes to how sovereignty is organized. Whereas sovereignty is traditionally thought of as final authority over an area of land or sea, including whatever and whoever is in or on it; within the EU, sovereignty over various functions and issue areas within the same territory may be left to different authorities (cf. Gad & Adler-Nissen 2013; Mac Amhlaigh 2013). The present book unfolds the Greenlandic case study from a comparative project that draws these literatures on postcolonial subjectivity, paradiplomacy, and sovereignty the EU together.[2]

1.2 Theoretical basis: Identity politics in International Political Sociology

The contribution in hand is made from a vantage point in a tradition in International Political Sociology analysing foreign policy as the discursive and practical construction of national identity. This tradition developed not least as a tool to study what kind of European integration would be allowed by relevant national identity discourses (Neumann

2 The comparative project is reported in two publications, each of which contains parts of the analysis presented in this book (particularly in chapters 5 and 6): Adler-Nissen and Gad (2013b) compares the Overseas Countries and Territories formally linked to EU member states. Gad and Adler-Nissen (2014) compares the relations to EU of the Nordic micro-polities (Aaland, Faroes, Greenland, and Iceland).

1999; Rumelili 2007; Wæver 2000, 2002). In many national debates over the EU, sovereignty is a contentious concept: Should sovereignty remain with the member state? Should it be surrendered to the EU? Can it be pooled? Or split? Approaching the community of the realm from the same perspective has proven fruitful, not least because sovereignty takes up a similarly important place in many of the debates surrounding this constellation.

Within this theoretical tradition, identity is not approached as an essence that defines a person or a people once and for all and which may be more or less unfolded in practice. Within the human and social sciences, 'identity' is always shorthand for 'identity discourse' (cf. Frello 2003:5f); a discourse proceeding from the (often implicit) premise that someone or something is identical. Identity – who *I am* and who *we are* together – is created continuously through the stories we tell about who we are (Ricœur 1988:247). Hence, stories or narratives offer an efficient and effective means of structuring identity discourse. Identity is created continuously through our stories about our relationship with *others* (Ricœur 1988:248). On the one hand, any identity is constituted by being delimited by the difference of an other. If there was no difference, one could not meaningfully talk about identity. On the other hand, identity narratives seldom merely relate the identity of the self to *one* other; an entire cast of characters is usually involved (Gad 2010:38, 418; Hansen 2006:40), allowing a diversity of more or less severe differences. The stories told must be fairly consistent in order to be meaningful: If we behave in one way today and in a completely different way tomorrow, the stories of who we are will not appear credible. And they *need* to appear credible: They must make sense in our own heads but they also need to be accepted by others when we approach them in rhetorical exchanges and in practical interaction. In real life, then, even if constructed, basic elements of identities take on a rather solid character.

Identity *narratives* involving self and others play a part in constructing our individual identities – and they play an important part in constructing collective identities. Individual and collective identities are related since defining ourselves as part of – or in opposition to – various collective identities is an important element in the stories we tell about our individual identities. When it comes to collective identities, a recognizable 'canon' of concepts present themselves as building blocks for

the narratives: In the modern world, concepts such as state and nation are next to impossible to ignore when conceiving of a political collective (Wæver 2002). Even if ubiquitous, however, these concepts may assume different meaning when related to each other in different ways – or by being related strongly to yet other concepts (Wæver 2002). In postcolonial Greenland, culture, welfare, and democracy are among the most important concepts imbuing nation and state with supplemental meaning (Gad 2004, 2005), but processual elements like development and Greenlandization are also crucial (Gad 2005). Among such basic concepts, however, sovereignty appears to play a special, dual role in Greenland compared to other national identity discourses: Present sovereignty is unrightfully Danish – rightful Greenlandic sovereignty is postponed to the future. This leaves open a series of possible roles for 'other others', including not least the EU.

Identity *discourse* sets the frame for what narratives can legitimately and meaningfully tell about who 'we' are (Foucault 1972; Gad 2010; Laclau & Mouffe 1985). Nevertheless, it is possible for disagreement to exist within the framework of an identity discourse (Gad 2010; Wæver 2002). Disagreement opens up for agency; when a narrative structure is not complete – and it never is – different actors may promote the continuation they prefer by the means allowed by the discursive resources available to the position they each take up. Identity *politics* is all about clashes between identity narratives involving different visions of who 'we' are, where 'we' are going, and from where 'we' come (Gad 2010:39ff; cf. Connolly 1991:ix; 65). An identity discourse may be elaborate, setting up detailed demands for what must be included in a narrative to be legitimate. Or it may be sketchy, encompassing diverse narratives. We may agree that we share an important identity while disagreeing about everything else: We disagree about what this shared identity is, what it entails, and about the meaning of each of the concepts we use to describe and narrate the identity.

Alternative narratives of what purports to be the same national identity are found in all kinds of places. Debates in *institutionalized* political forums – in parliament, the media, etc. – inevitably articulate clashing narratives claiming to represent the same identity in ways that share some elements but divert in others. But identity politics also pop up in more mundane settings: When a girl in Nuuk comes home

from school and tells about her day in Danish and her dad responds in Greenlandic, they implicitly participate in a negotiation of what constitutes Greenlandic national identity. A similar conversation would not necessarily constitute identity politics in other parts of the world, where bilingualism is less charged. In the context of Greenlandic language policies, however, such a verbal exchange almost necessarily has political connotations.

Another layer of complication comes from how narratives of *different* identities interfere (Gad 2010:40), as when Greenlandic stories about the relation to Denmark meet Danish stories about the relation to Denmark. Or when a diplomat from the EU, Canada, or China – more or less used to playing games with formal sovereignty – tries to find out how and whether to talk to Greenland with or without Danish diplomats acting as chaperones. One option, of course, is a direct clash of narratives, identities, and practices. A telling example of this occurred when, at the margins of a UN General Assembly, Canadian diplomats tried to arrange a room for a bilateral meeting on Arctic policy between the Canadian and Danish Ministers for Foreign Affairs – while the Greenlanders, seconded by the Danes, struggled to squeeze in a third chair for the Greenlandic Minister (cf. chapter 5.3 below). But clashes are usually avoided or at least carefully measured. The meeting of two identities, represented in partially overlapping and clashing narratives, must be negotiated and managed in practice (Gad 2010:210–24; cf. Gad & Adler-Nissen 2013:15). Or rather in a *variety* of practices: When a Danish businessman arrives in Greenland, he might approach a Greenlandic counterpart as 'just another foreign partner' with whom to do business – or, for that matter, as 'just another guy from some remote Danish province'. The Greenlander may decide to play along but might also at some point choose to claim – im- or explicitly – that the new arrival is but the latest incarnation of the lengthy tradition of Danish imperialism. When a Danish high school teacher goes to work in Aasiaat, he might symbolically identify himself with the oppressed indigenous people by donning a *tupilak* necklace – but his students might insist on repositioning him as yet another Danish know-it-all. Or they might answer by explicitly shunning the same kind of 'traditional' symbols and articulating in its place the symbols of some globalized urban subculture: Goth mas-

cara and Canadian Goose jackets rather than whale bone figurines and *kamiit* boots.

Some of these negotiations may sediment into a standard repertoire of practices; of claims and counterclaims ritually adhered to – either to avoid conflict or to perform a form of conflict defused of most of its immediately destructive potential. A personal anecdote may serve as an example: When working in the home rule administration in Nuuk in the late 1990s, a colleague would regularly call me and begin our conversation by talking to me in Greenlandic. I would then routinely reply, '*Suli iluamik kalaallisut oqalusinanngilanga* [I don't speak Greenlandic – yet(!)]'. Having thus positioned our individual identities in a present, postcolonial hierarchy – and thereby in relation to the common past of our respective national identities; as well as in relation to our common future – we could proceed (in Danish) to whatever substantial business that had occasioned the phone call. In the EU, a union of very self-conscious nation states, languages and linguistic details likewise plays an important role in signalling recognition and hierarchy: When negotiating its terms of accession to the EU, Austria secured that every time an EU text mentions the word 'potato', the official German language version needs to include both '*Kartoffel*' (used in Germany) and '*Erdapfel*' (used in Austria). Austrian sovereignty is, hence, repetitiously confirmed in EU agricultural legislation (Neumann 1999:7).

Thus, an option particular to the institutionalized political system – parliament and government – is to explicitly codify and 'freeze' the outcome of such identity political negotiations in law (Gad & Adler-Nissen 2013:14). A basic, domestic example would be how *Inatsisartut*, the Greenlandic Parliament, has discussed for decades how to reform the law regulating the use of languages so that Greenlandic would become more prevalent in the public sphere and in official matters. The 2009 Act on Greenland Self-Government is an example of a more complex codification: On the one hand, the text is a law passed by the *Folketinget*, the Danish Parliament, taking upon itself to describe the relation between central aspects of Greenlandic and Danish political identities. On the other hand, the preamble to the law explains that the law is based on an agreement between the Danish Government and the Government of Greenland. The

Greenlandic title of the Government of Greenland, *Naalakkersuisut*, is used not only in the Greenlandic but also in the Danish version of the law, which could be taken to signal respect for the Greenlandic language (Thisted 2011:613). However, this trick is unnecessary in the Greenlandic version of the text. Here (i.a., in article 4) there are two *Naalakkersuisuts* – one of which, hence, needs a qualifier: '*Naalakkersuisut aamma Danmarkimi naalakkersuisut*'. In the Greenlandic version of the law, then, there is *the Naalakkersuisut* and the *Danish Naalakkersuisut* – whereas in the Danish version, there is the *Naalakkersuisut* and 'the government'; the point being that such linguistic games make it easier for the two different stories to co-exist on their respective sides of the Atlantic.

A separate point, however, is that when multiple languages – each promoted by a state – meet, it becomes difficult to uphold the games played bilaterally. Hence, the official English translation of the Self-Government Act explains by adding a translation in sharp parentheses and a qualifier; *Naalakkersuisut* literally means government whereas *the* government is Danish: '*Naalakkersuisut* [Greenland Government] and the Danish Government'. Bilateral games are sometimes undermined when nuances are lost in translation. Conversely, they are sometimes undermined by being overly exposed. Moreover, they might be re-interpreted to fall in line with the identity narratives supported by these new languages. For example, what kind of 'Greenland' is represented varies between the translations into the many official EU versions of the 2007 protocol to the fisheries agreement: The Danish version, of course, has '*Grønlands Landsstyre*', whereas the English text alternates between 'the Home Rule Government of Greenland' and 'the local Government of Greenland'. The latter would also count as the *ad verbatim* translation of the title employed in most of the remaining languages: '*místní vládou Grónska*', '*Lokalne vlade Grenlanda*', '*il governo locale della Groenlandia*', '*Grönlands lokala regering*', etc. In contrast, numerous translations use the more substantial label 'autonomy': '*el Gobierno Autónomo de Groenlandia*', '*le gouvernement autonome du Groenland*', '*l-Gvern Awtonomu ta' Greenland*', '*de autonome regering van Groenland*', etc. Finland stands alone in referring to the Greenlandic party as a 'provincial government' – '*Grönlannin maakuntahallituksen*' – mirroring the official Finnish label for

their own Aaland Islands, which enjoy a similar constitutional status. In the 2012 protocol, Greenland has moved from home rule to self-government – and the Government of Greenland is allowed this simple title in all languages. Even the Danish version has '*Grønlands Regering*' despite the linguistic games played in Danish law to avoid this label by employing the Greenlandic label '*Naalakkersuisut*'. However, this new protocol must still note that 'The European Community became the European Union on 1 December 2009 [and] The Home Rule Government of Greenland became the Government of Greenland on 21 June 2009'. So even when things get simpler, the complications of history live on in footnotes.

It should be clear from the brief examples provided above that both the past of colonial submission and visions of radically different future relations pop up im- and explicitly in the most diverse occasions in everyday life and in institutionalized politics in Greenland. Following Wittgenstein's notion of 'language games', these clashes, negotiations, management, and codifications may be read as 'sovereignty games': language games pertaining to sovereignty (Gad & Adler-Nissen 2013:9–10; cf. Aalberts 2004; Fierke & Nicholson 2001; Gammeltoft-Hansen & Adler-Nissen 2008; Sørensen 1999). That which distinguishes submission and freedom in the constitution of Greenlandic national identity in Greenlandic identity politics is *sovereignty*: you have it or you don't. Hence, all of these clashes, negotiations, management, and codifications all pertain to sovereignty: They are rendered possible – and even necessary – by the either/or concept of sovereignty (Gad & Adler-Nissen 2013:4).

Particularly when Greenland and Denmark together enter into relations with a third party, such as the EU, the precarious state of the 'bilateral' negotiations – codified or not – becomes clear (Gad & Adler-Nissen 2013:12f). On the one hand, this must be so when these three parties meet in the *international* arena – a society traditionally consisting of states only: In the international society, sovereignty counts as the only valid entrance ticket allowing subjectivity and independent agency (Gad & Adler-Nissen 2013:4; cf. Espersen et al. 2013:142; Morgenthau 1956; Waltz 1979:97). On the other hand, the EU is an unusual member of this society, itself organizing sovereignty in innovative ways (Mac Amhlaigh 2013) and, perhaps, therefore con-

ducive to other less-than-sovereign parties playing games. In such triangular relations, the meetings between different versions of the same identity narratives and between potentially clashing narratives of different identities must be carefully managed in diplomatic practice (Gad & Adler-Nissen 2013:15).

1.3 Methods and texts: Core concepts, debates, diplomatic practice, law, scenarios

The aim of this book is to understand the identity politics played out as sovereignty games in relation to the EU as a part of Greenland's slow-motion decolonization process. The games played in the triangular relation between Greenland, Denmark, and the EU are – in important ways – structured by the games played in the foundational, bilateral relationship between Greenland and Denmark. Hence, the analysis that follows tends first to the bilateral and then to the triangular games. The analysis begins by showing how the concept of sovereignty is central to sedimented ideas of what constitutes both Greenlandic and Danish political identities. On this basis, the analysis involves a further four analytical steps: The analysis observes sovereignty games as they are actively negotiated in political debate; as they are 'frozen' in law (constitutional, domestic, and international); and as they are managed in diplomatic practice. Finally, scenarios for the future are constructed on the basis of the sedimented constellations of identity concepts and the dynamics found in the sovereignty games currently played.

The point of departure for the analysis is the *identity discourses* delimiting what counts as legitimate stories about what Greenland and Denmark are and should be. These discourses are recollected by answering questions such as 'What kind of community are we?' and 'How should we develop to realize our true identity?' In both Greenland and Denmark, sovereignty is key to the narratives that answer these questions; but the specific place sovereignty holds in relation to other central concepts differs. The presentation of the basic constellations of concepts is primarily based on secondary literature analysing the construction of identities from historical, anthropological, socio-

logical, and political perspectives. What is presented does not claim to be the truth about Greenlandic or Danish identity or history. Rather, the analysis distils a series of truth claims forming narratives of these identities that are accepted as credible interventions in the respective Greenlandic and Danish debates. These rather structural images of national identity discourse form the background of the analyses of three kinds of primary material, all exhibiting the creative negotiation of the structures: Political debates, legal text, and diplomatic practice.[3]

Political debates – in parliament, in the media, in public meetings, in parliamentary reports – are interesting since politicians, on the one hand, must draw on sedimented truths to resonate with the broader public on whom they depend for support. Hence, their speech needs to make sense in terms of the established ideas of 'who we are' and 'whom we should become' (Wæver 2002:42). On the other hand, politicians must differentiate themselves from each other by telling the better story of who we are, whom we should become, and – not least – how we should proceed. In a debate, the parties are forced *both* to explicate articulations of sedimented truths but *also* argue why their narrative contains the best version of the future. Formal parliamentary debates are prime empirical material, particularly if they are heated; but the dynamics and formalities of political life might combine to place certain exchanges in broadcast or print media or other public settings.

Direct references to sovereignty, independent agency, and submission are structuring much of the political debate in Greenland, in the parliament *Inatsisartut*, and in the media. As shown in Figure 1, sovereignty-related questions constitute a separate axis, co-organizing parliamentarian and electoral politics along with the traditional, economic

3 An important reservation regarding the analysis must be addressed here: The author's language skills are not sufficient to analyse the debates and texts in the Greenlandic language. Formally, the problem is solved by the institutionalized simultaneous translations of parliamentary debates and the fact that much public debate (i.a., in the newspapers) is available in Danish – or interventions may have been formulated first in Danish and then translated into Greenlandic. For a discussion of the problems that nevertheless remain with this kind of discourse analysis, see Gad (2005:124f). All of the quotes from both the academic literature and empirical sources in Danish are translated by the author.

left–right axis. The fixation of the individual parties along the axes represents a rough approximation, as some have shifted considerably over time. On top of these tectonic movements, a more abrupt movement of individual politicians – even former party chairpersons – across parties has taken place, prompted by changing political priorities, personal

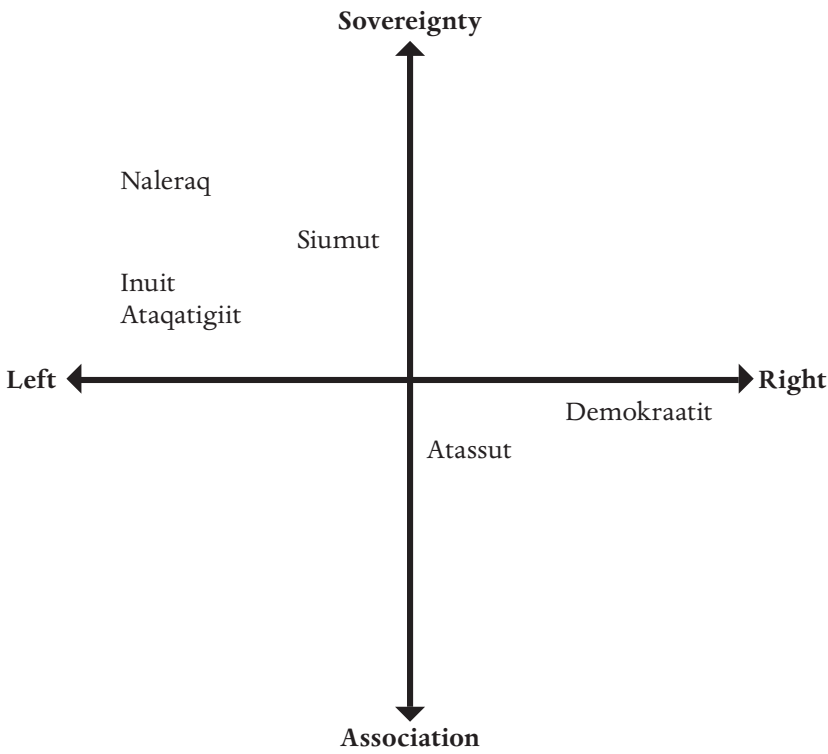


Figure 1. The party system in Greenland is organized along two distinct axes: X) a traditional economic right-left wing axis; and Y) an axis defined by the emphasis given to questions of sovereignty and national identity. Both axes are pragmatic summaries of various issues. Right–left may be defined in relation to the public ownership of businesses, to progressive taxation, or to redistribution of resources to remote areas; each definition would distribute parties differently. Likewise, the sovereignty–association axis would look slightly different if organized by the parties' attitudes to Denmark, to the EU, or to the definition of the Greenlandic nation as ethnic or civic.

alliances, and government coalitions. For the first 30 years of home rule, these changes always conspired to keep power from changing: having placed itself in the middle of both the traditional left–right axis and the pro-/anti-Denmark axis, the social democratic *Siumut* [Forward] party was always in charge, allying itself with varying partners. In 2009, however, a coalition government was formed to keep Siumut out of power. The coalition was led by the *Inuit Ataqatigiit* [Inuit Community] (IA) party, which originated in the left-wing youth rebellion against Danish rule and EC membership and included the most ardent proponents of re-entry into the EU: the liberal *Demokraatit* [Democrats]. The 2013 elections returned Siumut to power in a coalition with moderate *Atassut* [Link – i.e., to Denmark] party, and snap elections in 2014 confirmed the return to the old days as Siumut consolidated its position by including the Demokraatit in their coalition. Left in opposition was the IA along with the left-wing breakouts from Siumut in the *Naleraq* [Point of Orientation] *Party*.

In Denmark, debate on the community of the realm was limited for decades, not least in the Danish Parliament, the *Folketinget*. Basically, the introduction of home rule in 1979 meant that most of the political substance was Nuuk's business rather than Copenhagen's, so there are few formal occasions for debate. Moreover, a certain hesitance towards dealing with Denmark as a colonial power – and towards the risk of postcolonial criticism always involved in such discussions – may have contributed to a sense of reluctance amongst Danish politicians. As the Greenlandic demands for self-government were raised and negotiated from 1999 to 2008, debate in public and parliament was very limited. When the results of the negotiations were made into law by the Danish Parliament, only the Danish People's Party objected on nationalist grounds. Left-wing voices from the Socialist People's Party and the Red–Green Alliance now and then present the rudiments of a distinctly internationalist platform. In between these extremes, the mainstream of parties inside and outside of government – the Liberal Party, Conservative Party, the Social Liberal Party, and the Social Democrats – have generally been cautious when formulating their responses to Greenlandic wishes and problems in a respectful if time and again somewhat concerned manner. However, the lack of continuous 'rehearsal' of the arguments might explain the outburst

of rather bull-headed formulations every time Greenlandic themes resurface – particularly by government backbenchers and the parties that happen to be in opposition without access to the discursive resources of the government apparatus at the time of debate.

Legal texts offer legislators opportunity to codify their story of who we are and how we should proceed. When writing down legal text, however, many compromises are usually made: To get the necessary partners on board and to present a text that is acceptable to higher legal orders (constitutional law, international law), stories are blurred and formulations end up ambiguous and even paradoxical. Such blurring, ambiguities, and paradoxes may be read as 'frozen' sovereignty games.

Diplomatic practice is pivotal when handling the clashes that may occur between sedimented narratives and discourses when two collective identities meet; when the blurring, ambiguities, and paradoxes of legal text must be converted into concrete actions. The confidentiality surrounding much diplomatic practice is in many ways a prerequisite for the manoeuvres involved. But some diplomatic practices result in publicly available texts – statements from a single party or joint, negotiated texts. The EU is comparably transparent on this account. Nevertheless, the most important source of data on diplomatic practice for this book has been qualitative interviews with politicians, diplomats, and other public servants involved in handling the triangular relation between Greenland, Denmark, and the EU.

The analyses in this book represent sovereignty games as found in select political debates, legal texts, and renditions of diplomatic practices from the 20 years from 1995 to 2015. The book does not report a systematic analysis of all parliamentary or public debates touching upon the relations between Greenland, Denmark, and the EU within this timespan, let alone all of the diplomatic activities. Rather, specific debates have been selected for analysis. Either because they were 'monumental' (Andersen 1994:50) in the sense that they initiated and set the parameters for later discussions (the 2003 report of the unilateral Greenlandic Commission on Self-Government and the ensuing parliamentary debate in Greenland; and the 2008 and 2013 debates in the Danish Parliament on social problems in Greenland and large-scale mining projects, respectively) or because they were in fact the

only explicit, focused debate on a relevant issue (the 2007 debate of the Greenlandic Parliament on the EU). Interviews conducted on the diplomatic activities in relation to the EU focused both on the handling of specific, high-profile affairs and on day-to-day diplomatic activities.

The approach to concepts and discourses chosen – analysing some elements as more sedimented and thus less likely to change – has the advantage of allowing a structured way of building *scenarios* for how a relationship may evolve in the future (cf. Wæver 2000:286f). The construction of scenarios is a useful tool when aiming to remove mental barriers; when scenarios appear in the plural, they serve to open up for more trains of thought and more avenues of action (Galer & v.d. Heijden 2001:849). This emphasizes the political nature of any construction of scenarios. As Neumann and Øverland aptly put it, 'scenarios are in a sense always formulated for a purpose, from a situated present position which must deny other present positions' (2001:393; cf. Wilkinson 1996).

The political point of building scenarios in this book is primarily to raise attention to how a number of the specific ways in which the Denmark–Greenland relationship is talked about and practiced can probably not be combined in the end. Political debates in Copenhagen are routinely transmitted to Nuuk, and the reverse happens more frequently than in the past. Diplomacy, particularly involving the EU, has become more transparent to enquiries from the press than ever before. In other words, constructive ambiguities and outright hypocrisy is becoming increasingly difficult to uphold as a basis for the community of the realm. The scenarios presented in this book are therefore basically built in two steps: First, by identifying which basic discursive assumptions allowing the present ways of talking about the community of the realm could conceivably be altered and to what effect. And second, by projecting what is likely to happen if nothing changes, with the exception of one thing: that the present ways of talking about the community of the realm in different settings (to audiences in Greenland, in Denmark, and across the EU) are confronted with each other even more intensely than is the case at present. Thus, the analysis is not built on any normative preference for or against the continuation of the community of the realm as such, nor on an *à priori*

embrace of Danish benevolence or Greenlandic resistance. Rather, the normative project is to facilitate and qualify political agency on both sides of the North Atlantic by alerting Greenlanders and Danes alike to the implicit foundations of the stories they tell about the community of the realm and the dynamics resulting from the paradoxes and incompatibilities between them. In other words, if the community of the realm is going to end, then let it; but let it be the result of deliberate decisions, not inconsideration.

Primarily, a Greenlandic perspective is taken: Most of the analysis presented pertains to texts, speech, and actors from Greenland. However, as Greenlandic perspectives, positions, and strategies have been shaped in and by the mutual relations to Copenhagen and Brussels, the Danish and EU perspectives necessarily come into view. While the present analysis is produced from an academic position in metropole Denmark, it could not have been made without years as a 'participant observer' in Nuuk working for the Government of Greenland, including work with the relations to Denmark and the EU. Having first (as a young civil servant imported from Denmark) immersed myself in the perspective and discussions of the Greenlandic foreign policy elite, I have since revisited the same material (and approached what my former bosses and colleagues have since produced), adding theoretical perspectives. Theories of international relations – even explicitly anti-imperialist theories – have been chastised for being Eurocentric, and rightly so (Hobson 2012). However, people and peoples 'out there' have read Eurocentric theories and taken their concepts upon themselves. To a certain degree, both we and they now understand and perform identities in terms originating in theories (Briggs 1996) conceived to make sense of Europe and of the world on European terms. Analysing this predicament, attention must be paid to how those European concepts are employed by non-Europeans. When reading this book, if Greenlanders, Danes, and EU's foreign policy practitioners recognize themselves – but recognize themselves in a way that they did not anticipate – then the analysis has succeeded in putting those Eurocentric concepts and theories to use.

1.4 Organization of the book: From bilateral discourse to triangular practice

Analysing Greenland–EU relations only makes sense on the background of Greenland–Denmark relations. Before involving Brussels in a triangular relationship, chapters 2 and 3 therefore set the stage by analysing the conditions for a continued community of the realm between Greenland and Denmark in detail. For a couple of centuries, the central, inescapable other of Greenland has been Denmark. 'Greenlandic' and 'Danish' are both collective identities which define themselves, at least in substantial part, in terms of their relationships to states: To the present Danish state, which also includes Greenland – and to a potential, future Greenlandic state. Hence, the overall development of relations between Denmark and Greenland can best be understood by analysing how key concepts of state and nation are constituted in narratives about national identity – and what place these state-nation images leave for such a thing as the community of the realm (Gad 2008a). A stable community of the realm therefore requires two types of compatibility: Firstly, it should be possible for both Greenland and Denmark to construct a narrative of state, nation, and community of the realm that is meaningful in the national political tradition. Secondly, the images of the realm, appearing in the two national narratives, must be more or less compatible (cf. Wæver 2002).

The book therefore begins by asking what holds together the community of the realm between Denmark and Greenland? In order to identify the base and future of the community of the realm, chapters 2 and 3 pose and answer two parallel questions: Why does Denmark even bother with Greenland? And why does Greenland tolerate Denmark? These questions allow the chapters to characterize Danish and Greenlandic notions of what constitutes a state, what constitutes a nation – and what place the combination of Danish and Greenlandic ideas of the nation-state leaves for a community of the realm. The analysis brings together existing literature on Danish and Greenlandic

national identity with first-hand analysis of political debates and political compromises frozen in legal text.[4]

Chapter 4 opens up the bilateral Denmark–Greenland relationship to involve various third parties before focusing on one of them: the EU. First, the chapter steps back to take a historical perspective, telling a different story of how Greenland's experience with sovereignty as a part of the Danish empire has shaped national identity discourse. The stories regularly told in both Danish and Greenlandic discourses (recollected in chapters 2 and 3) present a bilateral relationship between Greenland and Denmark. The alternative version submitted in chapter 4 demonstrates how Danish actions and policies may be better understood as games to protect Danish sovereignty vis-à-vis third parties. Thus understood, Danish policies in Greenland appear more recognizably as (just) a variation of standard European imperialism rather than the particular maternal benevolence that dominates Danish discourse. Second, the chapter discusses how the gradual levelling out of what initially appears to be a distinctly hierarchical relationship – with Greenlandic foreign relations always processed by Copenhagen – has opened up for a sustained diversification of Greenlandic relations with the outside world. Or, alternatively, how Greenlandic national identity is becoming postcolonial even if sovereignty remains postponed to the future. The chapter pursues this opening-up of the bilateral relationship by surveying how various 'other others' (apart from Denmark) are featured in Greenlandic identity narratives. Finally, the chapter lays out in more detail how the Greenland–EU relationship has been interwoven with the Greenlandic movement towards independence in important ways.

Chapter 5 analyses how the Government of Greenland presents and handles its EU relations as part of leaving non-sovereignty behind. Particularly, it shows how Denmark is photoshopped out of the images of the triangular relation in various ways. First, Denmark is removed from images of the present when EU relations are discussed in the Parliament of Greenland. Second, Denmark is removed from images of the future when Greenland presents its visions to the European

4 For an analysis of Faroese debates and discourse informed by the same theoretical approach, cf. Flachs & Guttesen (2006).

Commission. Finally, the Danish presence is carefully calibrated in diplomatic practice in Brussels – and when practicing 'ministerial tourism' in Greenland.

Chapter 6 contrasts this image of Greenland going alone with the practical games necessary behind the scenes to beef up the bureaucratic muscle of a fragile micro-state. Even if Greenland's approach has – pragmatically – been to utilize Danish EU membership as a platform for its relations to the EU, tensions between the development towards increasingly being able to support itself and towards self-government, and between indigeneity and statehood must be handled. The practical handling of relations to the EU has relied on an intricate relationship to Denmark. During the first decade of the new millennium, however, the practical handling of this relationship has been substantially 'Greenlandicized'.

Two sets of scenarios for the future are developed on the way to reaching the conclusions of this book. Chapter 7 discusses which current developments may conspire to terminate the community of the realm – and what changes may allow its continuation. The discussion reveals that a continuation of the community requires that the relationship can be presented as a joint and equal process, which, nevertheless, has Greenlandic independence as a goal. This conclusion is paradoxical in two ways: First, the community can best be maintained by being directed to its own dissolution. Secondly, the obvious asymmetry of power in the community must cancel itself out.

A brief concluding chapter warns that the visions of sovereign equality might create greater expectations – at home and in the EU – than Greenland will immediately be able to live up to. Conversely, as the realization of the expectations seems to be conditioned on the very building up of expectations, Greenlandic nationalism might ultimately prove able to drag itself up by its bootstraps. The representation of the Greenland–EU relationship as one of sovereign equality – present and future – might contribute to provoke the resources necessary to make the dream come true. In this situation, the best chance for prolonging the expiration date of the community of the realm might very well be to explicate and embrace the *Rigsfællesskabet* as an 'ever looser union'. However, some of the specific instruments for and implications of such

a redefinition involve their own paradoxes. And some of them may not be in the immediate interest of Greenland. As such, you don't always want to get what you demand.

Chapter 2
How Denmark makes room for a colony in a homogenous nation-state discourse

Historical and sociological research on nationalism has traditionally identified two distinct types of nations: a 'Western' political nation (typically: France) and an 'Eastern' cultural nation (typically: Germany). In the West, nations were grounded in a fundamentally political community around a state which then assumed a cultural character down the road; in the East, nations based upon a cultural base later managed to acquire their own state (Özkırımlı 2000:41).[5]

When Danes speak about what Denmark is, there is no *a priori* reason why the 'nation-state' would be a compound noun. Denmark and the Danes consider themselves the perfect nation-state: A natural, cultural, and social community in which the state is almost a part of the national culture and at least a precondition for and a part of the national community. The need for 'nation-state' as a compound word occurs only in contrast with other countries that are not fortunate enough to have drawn the state boundaries in the 'right' way; that is, to coincide with the borders of the nation. In Danish national identity discourse, in other words, the concepts of state and nation are so conceptually intertwined that it is difficult to imagine the one without the other (Haahr 2003:35, 37; Hansen 2002:60, 78).

The central concept of Danish identity is, in a sense, *folket* (the people): Danes first and foremost perceive themselves as belonging to a homogenous and solidary Danish people (Haahr 2003:27f;

5 A series of more detailed comparative studies soon provided nuance to this dichotomy (cf. Brubaker 1992; Wæver 2000).

Korsgaard 2004; cf. Hansen 2002:58; Neumann 2002:95). This people *is* the Danish nation. As such, the Danish concept of nation resembles the 'German' *Kulturnation* (Hansen 2002:51, 61); the nation perceives itself to be a cultural community arising out of members' fundamental sameness. At the same time, however, the intimate conceptual link between nation and state is close, as in the 'French' concept of nation: It is hard to imagine the nation without its state and the state without its nation (Hansen 2002:80), as the Danes have built the welfare state to nest the unfolding of the nation's inner qualities (cf. Hansen 2002:60, 69).

When the ideal of a culturally homogenous nation state is so sedimented that it appears to offer the natural starting point for all political discussion – how is there a meaningful place for a polity like Greenland as part of a community of the realm?

When Norwegian vicar Hans Egede embarked for Greenland in 1721, his mission on behalf of the Danish king was to re-establish commercial links and re-christen the small group of Norse who had colonized parts of Southern Greenland centuries earlier: the Lutheran reformation had never reached the Norse with whom the metropole had lost contact (Gad 1973:14). In other words, the aim was to re-integrate long-lost brethren in the Danish realm. Instead of the Norse, the missionaries found Inuit heathens, whom the colonizers took it upon themselves to baptize (Gad 1973:28–32). As the empire was meant to finance itself (Gad 1973: 32), The Royal Greenlandic Trade Company was established (Gad 1973:374–95; Marquardt, 2006:156). Over the centuries, the concerns of mission and trade clashed and conformed to form the pattern of settlements suggested to the Inuit: the trade initially supported a dispersed, nomadic population to harvest the sea for tradables (Gad 1973:345–6), while parts of the mission wanted to assemble people in the colonial settlements to hear the gospel (Gad 1973:323, 346). Later, when the demand for skin, blubber, and tooth declined, the trade saw the merits of concentrating the population to develop a fishing industry (Friis 1999:176–7; Sørensen 2006:38). Hence, in practical terms, the Danish engagement with Greenland fell within the parameters of colonialism: mission and civilization; trade and economic development; all under the auspices of the imperial overlords.

Since 1953, Greenland has been conceptualized as a part of a community of the realm rather than as a colony – an 'equal' part, even.

However, the ways in which equality has been conceived have varied over time. In Danish discourse, the 'community of the realm' is a concept that glues together meanings which point in different directions: Legally speaking, the concept was originally characterized as a nullity: legal theory (originally Alf Ross; see Harhoff 1993:73) insisted that the equality and voluntariness connoted by the concept of 'community' could not be established within the framework of the Danish Constitution. To the extent that the Danish State has accepted that it has performed an irreversible delegation of authority, as established by activist theory (Harhoff 1993), a hierarchical relationship remains between the state and the home rule government, even if it is no longer absolute.

However, the main way in which the concept of community of the realm can have a meaningful place in relation to the Danish nation state relates to Denmark's desire to change the world in its own image – combined with the colonial past, which renders the relationship with Greenland special. First, a central part of Danish self-understanding is that the world could learn a great deal from Denmark when it comes to how to organize a society (Gad 2010: ch. 5.7; Hansen 2002:76f). Or, as one observer notes regarding the establishment of Danish development aid after World War II, 'the national welfare state [must] be projected on the international level' (Henning Friis cited by Kaur-Pedersen 2008:74). The result has been a long tradition of development aid with a focus on poverty reduction, civil society development, human rights, and other soft values (Due-Nielsen & Petersen 2008:523ff; Hansen 2002:59, 68).

Conditionality has since been integrated to form the basis of much Danish development policy: Danish aid is granted on conditional requirements such as democratization, good governance, economic reform, and security cooperation (Bach 2008:472ff). In contrast, it seems much more difficult for Denmark to make demands of Greenland. The background for this difficulty is the second factor, which allows the community of the realm to be articulated to the homogenous Danish nation state: Denmark has incurred or assumed a unique historical responsibility for Greenland. There are many developing countries we would like to help – but Greenland is *our* developing country, which we have a special responsibility to develop. By virtue of its self-image (and its international image) of being a force for good (Lawler 2007), Den-

mark is extra-sensitive towards accusations of colonialism (Kristensen 2004).

Thisted (2002) finds that the figure of the Greenlander as the 'noble savage marginalized by modernization' resonates with Danish literature as well as with certain parts of the Danish public sphere. This image of Greenland allows Denmark the role of the protector: protecting the noble savage against the corruption of modernity. This division of roles might indeed have been integral to official policies for the first couple of centuries of the Danish colonization of Greenland (Gad 1973:345; Thomsen 1996:266). By the turn of millennium, however, Danish political discourse has almost rid itself of this imagery: If Denmark is to protect Greenland from something, it is not modernization as such. Denmark might have a role as protector against the worst side effects of modernization (in its current version: globalization), but the primary threat which Denmark may protect Greenland against consists of the mistakes that Greenlanders may themselves commit during a process of modernization which, as such, is not questioned. This slide of roles ends in a different, more emotional metaphor.

2.1 Family metaphors infantilizing Greenland

The Danish self-image of altruism is key to understanding why Danish politicians become irritated when presented with the possibility that Denmark profits from the community of the realm. Rather, they prefer to see the relationship as primarily emotional in nature (Lennert 2006:115).[6] They describe the link between Denmark and Greenland, firstly, as consisting of concrete family ties between specific people on both sides of the Atlantic and, secondly, these concrete ties sum up to a metaphorical kinship between two peoples through a common history.

The mother–child metaphor is well known from European imperial projects (Rud 2014b) and largely structured how Denmark saw its relationship with Greenland in the mid-20th century (Thomsen 1998:37ff).

6 Lennert (2006) embarks to investigate how Denmark benefits from the community of the realm with Greenland – and involves, apart from symbolic benefits, a series of more material benefits in a more speculative part of her analysis.

Princess Margrethe (now Queen Margrethe II), visiting Greenland in the 1960s.
© Allan Moe, Scanpix

At that time, an unequal economic and social relationship was metaphorically described as the relationship between a parent and a child. This imagery allowed Mother Denmark to take Greenland under her skirts without having to alter its self-image of a homogenous nation while at the same time protecting the Danish self-image as benevolent. Even today, both the community of the realm in general – and the block grant from Denmark to Greenland, which is part of the relationship, in particular – strengthen Denmark's self-perception as being benevolent (Lennert 2006:116–7). But the family relationship also binds Denmark in relation to a possible strategy of conditionality: A parent has an obligation to love and forgive her children, no matter how the child behaves.

This metaphor obviously 'infantilizes' Greenlanders, however, as Greenland is invariably placed in the role of the child who must be

helped to reach adulthood (Lennert 2006:75, 97f, 118). The flipside of this metaphor became clear to the Greenlanders already when debating and describing their place in the world as part of the *kalaaliussuseq* debate (on what it means to be a Greenlander) in the early years of the 20th century (Langgård 2003; cf. Thisted 2012b). Nevertheless, hierarchical family metaphors still haunt Danish debates on Greenland – only in evermore-convoluted forms.

While waiting in 2002–08 for the reports of, first, the unilateral Greenlandic Commission on Self-Government and, later, the Bilateral Commission, the Danish Parliament found occasion for (only) one (somewhat) principled debate on the relationship with Greenland in a public service broadcast documentary.[7] The feature, entitled 'The Escape from Greenland', contrasted, on the one hand, social problems in Greenland and the lack of desire amongst well-educated Greenlanders to return to Greenland after graduation in Denmark with, on the other hand, the preferences of home rule politicians for prestige projects and decisions for their own financial benefit. When reading this debate, it becomes clear that something happened to the metaphorical relationship: The parents now bicker about what kind of parenting ensures that the child is brought up to be a responsible adult. The self-image of Denmark has not changed – but the 'Greenland' found in Danish political debates seems to have grown and become a teenager.

In 2008, there were basically three positions represented in the debate among Danish MPs on the political and social situation in Greenland: the authoritarian parent, the resolutely trusting parent, and the anti-hierarchical parent. The individual parties and MPs generally adhered to one of these positions, even if there was some slippage between especially the last two positions. The three positions can all be contained within a basic metaphor for the Greenland–Denmark relationship – namely that of a relationship between a teenager and its parents. This metaphorical relationship is hierarchical, both in the sense that parents have something (authority, resources, knowledge) that the teen-

7 References to Danish parliamentary debates refer to *Folketingets Forhandlinger* in the format (DD Month YYYY HH:MM). Consecutive references to interventions in the same debate are only given in the format (HH:MM). Records are available at the *Folketinget* website ft.dk. Members of the *Folketinget* are referred to as MF to distinguish them from Members of the Greenlandic Parliament, *Inatsisartut/Landstinget* (MLT).

ager should accept and respect as well as in the sense that the parent serves as the model and goal for the teenager's development. In this particular debate, Denmark was taken to possess (unassailable) expertise in relation to solving social problems, but it could equally well have been expertise in relation to how to act as a responsible government in other areas. The difference between the positions pertained to which parenting strategy is found to be most appropriate and efficient given the goal of bringing up the teenager to become a responsible adult.

The right-wing nationalist Danish People's Party – mainly represented by MF Søren Espersen – took the position as *the authoritarian parent* when arguing that Greenland is too defiant when it comes to assuming the responsibility involved in acknowledging its own inadequacy and asking Denmark for help: 'The government [of Denmark] … does offer the expertise … The problem is that the home rule [government] of Greenland – out of pure national chauvinism … doesn't accept it [i.e., the expertise offered]' (FF 19 February 2008, 13:40). The teenager is behaving so irresponsibly that the parents must take responsibility: '[T]he social and educational situation in Greenland … is so wretched that the *Folketinget* [the Danish parliament] must intervene' (Espersen 13:12) – in the first instance by confiscating the pocket money (the block grant) which the teenager has at its disposal (13:34), perhaps ultimately by grounding the teenager (suspending the home rule arrangement) (13:34).

It is clear from the emotional expression that the position is rooted in an authoritarian conception of how to bring up children. The 'father' is so disappointed that he almost gets angry when met by what is perceived as a lack of gratitude:

> [T]he attitude of modern Greenlandic politicians when it comes to Denmark and the community of the realm [is] whining: a constant whining and complaining about how terribly Denmark has treated Greenland since the beginning of time … It often makes me want to grab them by the collar and say: 'Pull yourselves together!' (13:12)

However, most parties agreed to take the position of *the resolutely trusting parent* instead. This position was expressed nicely by MF Niels Helveg Petersen (Soc. Lib.) in contrast to the authoritarian position:

> [T]he cure prescribed [by MF Espersen is] worse than the disease in my opinion. I don't believe that reducing the responsibility of the Greenlandic politicians, the independent responsibility of the Greenlandic people for solving the problems, will be a solution … we would then see that the irresponsibility of the political authorities will spread … [S]ince we gave [sic] Greenland a greater responsibility, they also assumed a greater responsibility. (14:56)

And MF Line Barfoed (Red–Green) summarized the position of the resolutely trusting parent: 'One achieves more when people are responsible for their own situation' (14:11). If we want to achieve *our* goal – which is to get the teenager to behave responsibly – as parents we must keep a stiff upper lip and show the teenager that we trust them. But this banal point lifted from developmental psychology – that it is counterproductive to infantilize Greenland – still implies that Greenland is infantilized; as a teenager who needs to prove worthy of our trust. MF Per Ørum Jørgensen (Conservative) expressed this doubt, infused with care, about whether the teenager is a bit too eager to leave home by telling how he 'is a little afraid that … [the] independence movement … might have too much focus on the long term and doesn't really see what is happening just outside the door' (14:53).

The position of the resolutely trusting parent was occasionally replaced by the position of *the anti-hierarchical parent*, who has as an ideal for the relationship that parent and teenager ought to be good friends – with all of the connotations of equality and intimacy that friendship implies: 'A true friendship does not involve taboos … A good friendship between Denmark and Greenland should not just be based on politeness' (Per Ørum Jørgensen 14:41).

MF Mogens Jensen (Soc. Dem.) exemplified three common ways of constructing the relationship as equal: First, he explicitly insisted that the relationship *is* equal, as he described the community of the realm as 'a valuable community from which both parties benefits and for which both parties have a responsibility' (14:13). Secondly, he scaled down the Danish omnipotence, as he noted how 'some believe that Denmark can just come and solve all problems in a jiffy. We weren't able to do that before Greenland gained home rule' (14:13). Thirdly, he continued the sentence to identify 'their' problems as equal to 'ours':

'…and I have to admit that we can't even do that [solve all problems in a jiffy] here in Denmark, where social problems have not diminished' (14:13). Nevertheless, the image of a hierarchical relationship was maintained as Denmark was still presented as having something that Greenland does not have; something 'we' can give 'them': '[T]he solution is that … the experts – the people we have in Denmark in the social field – contribute and make their expertise and know-how available, just as it has been agreed between the home rule [government] and the [Danish] government' (14:21).

In most cases, however, the position of the anti-hierarchical parent was mobilized in support of the position as the resolutely trusting parent: insisting that the relationship *is* equal becomes a means through which confidence is displayed. Thus, the starting point for MF Kristen Touborg (Soc.) was that 'One should not re[sic]introduce Danish paternalism towards Greenland' (14:25); rather, the Greenland–Denmark relationship should be governed by mutual agreements (14:31). In turn, this means that it is okay for Greenland voluntarily to submit itself to Danish custodianship: '[I]f one has to intervene and earmark [parts of the block grant], this should [only] be done in accordance with the [expressed] wishes of the Greenlanders' (14:31).

Only in an extreme version, the anti-hierarchical parent insisted that equality existed in the present time, as when MF Line Barfoed (Red–Green) said that 'we don't want to join in saying that part of the block grant should be earmarked' (15:09). In her narrative, Denmark's *special* responsibility for Greenland disappeared: 'Of course, Danish politicians must be able to speak about conditions in Greenland, just as I hope that Greenlandic politicians will also speak on matters in Denmark … and exactly like we should try to influence conditions in Romania or elsewhere' (13:33). Or rather, the special responsibility *almost* disappeared, because, as Barfoed continued, we 'need to consider and bear in mind how the things one might say are perceived when one is a colonial power and has possessed colonies' (15:09). The colonial past has left its mark, the *post*colonial predicament is almost impossible to talk your way out of.

Barfoed was deliberately trying to rinse off the final traces left by the resolutely trusting parent in the position of the anti-hierarchical parent. In other words, she was preparing to leave all parenting behind

by refusing to imply a hierarchy in which Denmark can do something *for* Greenland (cf. 15:09). In order to further equalize the relationship, Barfoed listed a series of Greenland's contributions to the human rights work of the UN (15:09), which has had 'great importance for the community of the realm and for the world'. Barfoed implied that it was an effort that the community of the realm could not have made without Greenland. Conversely, one might say that the community of the realm could neither have made the same efforts without *Denmark*; only the community of the realm as exactly a collaborative relationship could (cf. Petersen 2001). To the extent that Denmark has had a role in relation to the human rights of indigenous peoples worldwide, it is as part of a 'we' capable of doing something *together*; a 'we' that includes Greenland on an equal basis and only acts on the initiative of Greenland.

Hierarchies are difficult to eliminate by volition. However, their ghosts are less noisy if the one dominated accepts the hierarchy voluntarily; that is, when the one cast as a rebellious teenager actually asks for help, as expressed by the two members of the Danish Parliament elected in Greenland. MF Juliane Henningsen (IA) conceded that '[O]ur home rule government [is] still young … The huge cultural shifts and dramatic social changes, which we … are still in the middle of, are not always easy to control … [T]he best that Denmark can do [would] be to support the home rule government' (15:24). Or in the somewhat convoluted words of MF Lars Emil Johansen (Siumut): 'Regarding our problems in Greenland in the social sector, we are eager to work … with anyone who can help us to enrich [sic] our political effort' (15:37).

Since the 2009 introduction of 'self-government', Danish politicians have grown even more careful when articulating the spectre of parental hierarchy: 'Denmark shall not be an authoritarian patriarch' (MF Anette Vilhelmsen, FF 16 April 2015, 14:13 (F36)). 'Equal partnership' is the preferred description of the community of the realm. Particularly the parties in government advocate restraint on the Danish side: 'One should not come with a know-it-all attitude and provide solutions for problems, which Greenland has not asked for and which they might not even see as problems' (MF Flemming Møller Mortensen (Soc. Dem.) in Jessen 2013). Helle Thorning-Schmidt (Soc. Dem.), then Danish prime

minister, noted in an op-ed on the occasion of the newly instated tradition of an annual parliamentary debate on the 'state of the community of the realm' that

> it has been a long time since the community of the realm has been facing so many and such large matters that we must solve together. To me, this shows that we have an active and living community of the realm. And moreover, we have a will to find common solutions in a constructive cooperation on equal footing.
>
> (Thorning-Schmidt 2014)

Her statement leaves it open whether the parties *are* on equal footing as they want to find common solutions – or if the equal footing is included in what the goodwill is directed towards.

Even so, the emotional commitment of family metaphors still seems appealing; but is it possible to have a family without hierarchy? The government party spokespersons appear to feel a need to explicitly deny hierarchy whenever mentioning the community of the realm: 'We must respect the Greenlandic Parliament and its decisions. We shall work together as brothers. Neither party should have the status as the older brother' (MF F.M. Mortensen (Soc. Dem.) in Jessen 2013).[8] But the same spokesperson nevertheless returns Greenland to problems related to early infancy when he – immediately after repeating the absence of hierarchy – states the goal for Greenland: 'So, we shall not have an older brother/younger brother relationship. We would really like to help Greenland to be able to stand on their own two feet' (FF 13 February 2013, 14:33). Likewise, a spokesperson for the leading opposition party at the time referred to Greenland in terms similar to how a parent refers to a child of two or three years who resists instruction: 'In recent years, Greenland has developed … an "I'll do it myself" attitude, which is actually impeding' (MF Kim Andersen (Lib.) in Hannestad 2014).

Even when self-reflecting on the adverse effects of infantilizing, the message is in effect infantilization. As when the Commander of the

8 Cf. spokespersons for the government parties in FF 13 February 2013 (F14).

Royal Danish Defence College, Rear Admiral Nils Wang, characterizes the community of the realm as

> reminiscent of the communication in a dysfunctional parental relation to an uncontrollable teenager. Everything one says can be misunderstood. I don't think that Greenland can be compared to an uncontrollable teenager. But the relationship between Denmark and Greenland has just evolved like that.
>
> (Wang in Andersen 2012; cf. Rud 2014b)

Or the result of explicitly discarding the strategy of the resolutely trusting parent is a confirmation of the need for parental intervention, as when MF Kristian Thulesen Dahl (DPP) criticizes the majority in the *Folketinget* for 'having treated Greenland as a teenager. Having been too reluctant for fear of getting told that one wanted to decide over Greenland. That's a bad thing if it means that you really don't get involved to the benefit of the Greenlanders' (Dahl in Vangkilde 2013).

Distancing oneself from earlier metaphors might be a phenomenon recurring at every change of formal status. Unfortunately, when compared to the post-self-government debates, the words of then prime minister Anker Jørgensen in a debate on the Home Rule Act in November 1978, suggest a certain circularity rather than progress towards equality: 'We should not function as a know-it-all, older brother any longer. Rather, Denmark will support a development towards greater right to decide for one self, a development towards also taking a responsibility' (Jørgensen in Breum et al. 2016).

Chapter 3
How Greenland makes room for a colonizer in a postcolonial discourse

The basic constellation of 'we' concepts in Greenlandic identity discourse resembles the Danish constellation on important points (cf. Thorleifsen 1992:26). Thus, a basic precondition for Greenlandic identity discourse is that modern concepts such as identity, culture, state, and nation are taken to represent existing phenomena. As these concepts are taken to refer to reality, they make sense; they convey meaning – and, notably, roughly the same meaning as in Danish identity discourse. The concept of culture adopted in Greenlandic identity is one of reified tradition rather than lived life (Sørensen 1994:169), and ethnicity is seen as something fundamentally inherent rather than socially constructed (cf. Sørensen 1994:168f). Finally, the idea that a national community is a natural way of organizing oneself culturally and politically has been adopted in Greenland (cf. Petersen 1991:20). To be a Greenlander requires, first, that you have at least one Greenlandic parent (Petersen 1991:17); second, Greenlandic identity has a necessary linguistic and cultural dimension (Sørensen 1994:109); third, Greenlandic identity is associated with a long-lasting, romantic, and intimate relationship to the land and sea (Sørensen 1994:108, 125ff). This eco-functionalism guarantees balance and harmony between the material conditions and indigenous culture (Sørensen 1994:103; cf. Langgård 2002:77ff). With these linkages between blood and soil taken into account, the concept of nation in Greenlandic identity discourse is (as is the corresponding Danish concept) decidedly more 'German' than 'French' (cf. Brubaker 1992: ch. 6; Hansen 2002:80). This is hardly surprising given Denmark's role as a colonial power and all that this

role has entailed, whether perceived as repression and indoctrination or as enlightenment and inspiration. Thisted summarizes the analysis aptly: 'Greenlandic nationalism was so to speak built-in as a logic in Danish nationalism' as conveyed to Greenlanders, schoolchildren, and grownups alike (2012b:475).

The emergence of a collective Greenlandic identity seems to have been provoked by the encounter with *qallunaat* – the Danes (Sørensen 1994:109). This contrast is still defining for Greenlandic identity, as Sørensen notes when concluding on his fieldwork in the housing projects of Nuuk: '[G]reenlandicness and Danishness are mutually experienced and applied as mutually negating each other in this ethno-political universe' (1991:48). Danes appear in Greenlandic identity discourse as those who first corrupted indigenous Greenlandic identity (Gad 2005:66ff) and now prevent its resurrection in the form of an independent nation state (2005:46f).

From the onset of colonization in 1721, identification was straightforward: Danes were those who took the decisions (they were *naalagat*), conducted trade, did the teaching, and lived in wooden or stone houses. In contrast, the Greenlanders were decided over, were taught, did the hunting, and lived in tents or turf huts (Seiding & Toft 2011:273–6). Moreover, the colonizers introduced regulations meant to keep the groups from mixing carnally (Seiding & Toft 2011). Nevertheless, a group of 'hybrids' emerged as the result of extra-marital activities and interracial marriages. This hybridity raised acute questions of identity (Seiding & Toft 2011): a boy with a Danish father had nobody to teach him hunting – instead he could take up a 'Danish' job in trade (Gad 1973:210, 358) or as a catechist in one of the settlements along the coast (Gad 1973:353).

In the same period, German romantic nationalism came to Greenland in a specifically Danish version developed by Lutheran theologian N.F.S. Grundtvig (Lundgreen-Nielsen 1992). Hence, while Greenlandic identity discourse bases itself on a contrast to Denmark and Danes, it is clear that the very same discourse largely takes place against a background of Western philosophical and social scientific concepts of culture, ethnicity, and nationality; mainly imported from Denmark. Our object of study has adopted its concepts from earlier scientific discourse (Eriksen 1993:15f). Hence, Greenlandic identity is

created on many levels simultaneously as a mirror- and counter-image of the colonial power.

Thuesen (1988) and Thomsen (1998: 27ff) describe a process whereby a Greenlandic national identity was deliberately cultivated in the early 20th century modelled after the Grundtvigian formula. In contrast to Danish national identity discourse, however, the central concept in the Grundtvigian discourse – 'the people' – has a different place in the basic Greenlandic conceptual constellation. In Denmark, 'the people' took possession of 'the state' after democratization. The past was reconstructed into a national history in which the same 'people' was previously in a relation to 'its' king. In Greenland, 'the state' has not been linked to the – Greenlandic – 'people', but rather to *naalagarsuit* (the great rulers); that is, Danes and Denmark. This distinction between authority and people has largely been ethnic: The local Danes *were* the State. In a very concrete way, they had the final say over the Greenlanders (cf. Thorleifsen 1999:229; Rud 2014a). In the 'lack' of 'their own' state, the basic constellation of concepts describing 'us' in Greenlandic identity discourse is completely dominated by the Greenlandic cultural nation; a political nation exists, albeit distinctly 'in the making'.

The Danes initially took upon themselves to construct the Greenlandic nation. Inspired by the breakthrough of popular sovereignty in Denmark – since 1910, the government needed to be based on a parliamentary majority; the King could no longer appoint whomever he preferred – MF Carl Th. Zahle (Soc. Lib.), later prime minister, told his colleagues that

> through the development of the national, self-governing institutions [we, i.e., Denmark] should seek to raise the Greenlanders to independence and higher culture, so that the time may come when the Greenlanders are an independent and fully self-governing people; so that they can stand on their own feet, and the monopoly trade can be repealed. They shall not remain children for whom we are custodians, but it shall be a nation which we seek to raise.
>
> (quoted in Lidegaard 1973:34)

The Grundtvigian version of romantic nationalism claimed that the true potential of any nation demands the enlightenment of common

people in their own language (Wilhjelm 1997:29). As enlightenment came from Denmark, however, interlocutors capable of both Danish and Greenlandic were necessary. Hence, the hybrid – hitherto employed in trade and as catechists – also found a place in the teacher's college established in 1845 (Wilhjelm 1997:32, 40, 116). Consequently, an independent Greenlandic elite was established (Thuesen 1988:63). This new elite engaged in the famous *kalaaliussuseq* debate (on what constitutes Greenlandic identity) played out in the Greenlandic newspapers in the early 20th century. They 'won' the debate in the sense that the old diachriticon – the 'national trade', hunting from kayak – was replaced by a new diachriticon: fluency in and affection for the Greenlandic language (Langgård 2003; Thomsen 1998). Thus elevated, the new elite proceeded to aspire to equality with the Danes.

But even as formal, legal equality was established in 1953 with the incorporation of Greenland in Denmark, the everyday experience remained one of a clear ethnic hierarchy (Larsen 1992:387; Thomsen 1996:271–2). Scores of Danish workers were literally building a new Greenland – new housing, modern infrastructure – while Greenlanders felt left to watch as bystanders. Priority was given to Danish language at all levels – to allow Danes to develop Greenland and to allow Greenlanders further education in Denmark. The strategy of assimilation, in other words, did not lead to equality (Lidegaard 1973; Petersen 1992:185). Hence, it became increasingly clear to most Greenlanders that they *ought* to be in charge of their own affairs. Only in that way could they become a true people, a real nation. The result was a full-fledged Greenlandic nationalism (Langgård 2002:79), which was and remains formulated against and in contrast to Denmark. At the same time, it is formed around conceptual images of the ideal nation state which mirror the 'perfect' coincidence of state, nation, culture, and language that (after a series of lost wars) constitutes the Danish self-image.

Greenlandic nationalism basically claims that Greenlanders *ought* to have their own state. This 'ought' is an indication of how essential elements in the basic concept constellation in Greenlandic identity discourse are dynamic. 'Greenlandization' is one such dynamic concept that is essential in any conception of the future of Greenland. The *raison d'être* of the home rule arrangement was processual: to facilitate the

'repatriation' of responsibility for the future of Greenland (Tobiassen 1995:40f). But this entails more than merely moving decision-making geographically from Copenhagen to Nuuk. The decisions themselves must also be 'Greenlandicized', meaning that the starting point for decisions must be the 'specific Greenlandic conditions', as leading nationalist Moses Olsen famously insisted, appropriating the very formula used by the Danish authorities to exempt Greenland from standard Danish legislation, equality, or not (Poppel & Stenbæk 2005:1577). More specifically, how is it possible to identify these specific Greenlandic conditions? Obviously, decisions must be made by Greenlanders. But who qualifies as a Greenlander? Does it also mean that decisions must be made in the Greenlandic language? Or is it the case that not even the Greenlandic language guarantees that the substance of the decisions corresponds with 'the particular Greenlandic way of thinking'? 'Greenlandization' is an essential concept in Greenlandic national identity discourse, but it is also dynamic. In a word, it is an empty signifier (compare Tobiassen 1995:52ff with Laclau 1996). The concept is, thus, an ideal label to summarize attempts at reconciling the process of modernization which everyone considers necessary for the realization of an independent Greenland (Gad 2005:180–99) with the fact that it is the very same modernization mediated in Danish which initially brought Greenland into a dominated position (2005:45–7, 199).

The name of the home rule arrangement – *Namminersornerullutik Oqartussat* – is itself dynamic. In Greenlandic, the name points – in two diverging translations – towards two different dynamics. One translation could read 'those moving towards governing themselves', implying a move towards state sovereignty. Another translation could read 'those moving towards standing on their own feet and thus (being capable of) governing'. In this second translation, the crucial dynamic is shifted to the issue of increasingly being able to support itself economically.[9] These two dynamics point out two foci for the debate on independence: First, a debate on Greenland's (legal) *right* to independence. For quite some time, Greenlanders and activist legal theory have claimed that Greenland always had this right (Selvstyrekommissionen 2003:27; cf. Harhoff 1993: part 3) by virtue of its geographical location and eth-

9 Cf. Petersen (2003:207) for a related discussion of *Namminersornerullutik Oqartussat*.

nic and cultural distinctiveness. Nevertheless, the Danish Parliament only formally acknowledged this right in the 2009 Self-Government Act. Second, a debate on Greenland's *capacity* (in terms of finances and human resources) to support itself.[10] It has long been established that such a capacity is a goal which Greenland is working *towards* (Selvstyrekommissionen 2003:39ff) while acknowledging that success remains far off (Rosing et al. 2014).

However, these distinct requirements – that a future separate state of one's own must be Greenlandic, self-governing, and able to support itself – do not stand alone. As mentioned, the Greenlandic language is designated as a key element in Greenlandic identity. When reading the (heated) Greenlandic debate on language closely, however, it becomes clear that two additional elements are equally essential parts of modern Greenlandic identity: First, a self-governing Greenland must be democratic (Gad 2005:150–62). Second, the aim of being able to support itself in terms of resources becomes more demanding, since that which should be supported is not only an independent nation-state but an independent *welfare* state (2005:187–99) on the same level as its Danish model. This last requirement in particular is pivotal for establishing a – temporary – place for the community of the realm in Greenlandic identity discourse. Even if the ideal of a culturally homogenous nation-state is well sedimented, a temporary role for Denmark is created by the increased weight of the burden (welfare) which a sovereign Greenlandic nation state must carry: Being able to support itself

10 The terms used in Greenlandic and Danish, i.a. in the report of the Greenlandic Commission on Self-Government (2003), are grammatical variations of *imminut napatippoq* and *selvbærende*. The core meaning of the terms is to signal an intention to make Greenland able to pay for itself so that the block grant from Denmark can be reduced. In some instances, however, the ambition is extended to include the ambition to reduce the need to import human resources. For two distinct reasons, I have opted to use 'self-support' as a translation, even if this is not an established concept in English. First, many of the formulations come across as pretty clumsy already in Danish, particularly those involving the nominalization *selvbårenhed*. Second, alternative concepts in English (self-sufficiency, self-sustainability, self-sustenance) carry connotations which may distract the reader. Their meaning, partly established in economic theory or socio-cultural analysis, is too 'extremist', either in the sense that they convey an image of bare survival or that they signal an ambition to cut off all imports from the outside world (which is clearly beyond the ambition of any voices in Greenland).

economically is a tougher task with respect to the welfare state. Hence, as we will detail below, Danish assistance is required for an extended period.

So when Greenland characterizes itself today – that is, when those living in Greenland talk about what Greenland is and should be – diverse elements are articulated: On the one hand, Greenlandic identity has something to do with cultural roots. The Greenlandic language is pivotal. So is a close relationship to nature and a traditional material culture developed for survival in the High North. A series of practices involving the killing and consumption of wild animals must therefore be protected, as practiced along the coast (cf. Neumann 2002:110–5) and promoted abroad. On the other hand, the political debates make clear that modern phenomena such as democracy and welfare are equally indispensable elements in what Greenland is and ought to be: a Greenland which is not a democratic welfare state is inconceivable (Gad 2005:208).

In Greenlandic identity discourse, the national principle is what ties aboriginality and modernity together: Greenland *ought to be* an independent state to allow Greenlandic culture to flourish within a welfare society. Some deem this impossible, some view it as a perspective far away on the horizon, while yet others would declare independence soon. So in terms of Greenlandic discourse, the present situation is not as it ought to be: Greenland is not an independent nation-state. Hence, Greenlandic political identity is transitional: Greenland sees itself as somewhere on the way from colonial submission to future independence. In that sense, *becoming* independent is part of Greenlandic identity (Gad 2005, 2009a). And in that sense, most Greenlandic domestic politics are almost by definition postcolonial sovereignty games: Language games and practical games allowed by the concept of sovereignty, played while leaving coloniality behind. These domestic games serve to relate and prioritize the three goals: aboriginal cultural identity, legal self-government, and increasingly being able to support itself economically. Greenland must be allowed to govern itself and it must be able to support itself – all the while it needs to preserve symbolic elements of Inuit culture as an anchor for its identity. This conception of Greenlandic national identity – and the tensions involved in it – are illustrated in Figure 2.

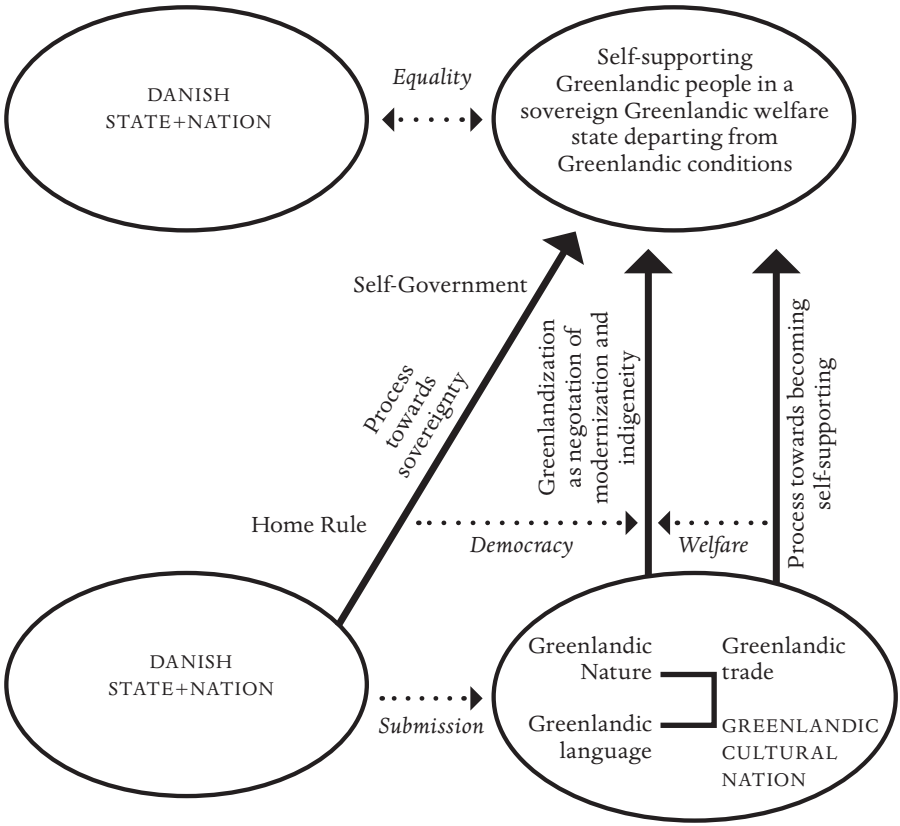


Figure 2. The basic constellation of concepts in Greenlandic identity discourse: A Greenlandic cultural nation (defined by its relation to iconic material practices of Inuit culture) seeks to perform a nationalist resurrection by combining three processes: a) a process towards self-government; b) a process towards self-supportedness; and c) a process of Greenlandization negotiating indigeneity and modernization. Central tensions involve the concept of democracy (ethnic or territorial) and welfare (self-support vs. traditional trade and dispersed settlement). Adapted from Gad 2005.

According to Greenlandic national identity discourse, Greenland ought to be an independent nation-state; but it is not. Instead, it is part of a Danish community of the realm. How is that a problem? Why does Greenland stay when it ought to go? And what needs to be done about

the situation? The answers to these questions have evolved from the time when Greenlandic politicians living under home rule debated visions of self-government to the time when a new generation of Greenlandic politicians living under self-government debate visions of independence.

3.1 Prioritizing self-government versus increasing self-support

As in Danish, the Greenlandic word for the community of the realm, *naalagaaffeqatigiinneq*, connotes an equal relation when read literally: *naalagaq* (the one who decides) is *qatigiinneq*, that is, something you do together with someone/others (Lennert 2006:1, n. 2). At the same time, it is obvious to Greenlandic politicians of all colours that the relationship to Denmark is anything but equal (Lennert 2006:76–80). Two inequalities in particular were central to the debates leading up to the 2009 Self-Government Act: An inequality of status related to self-government and an inequality of capabilities and resources.

In a process parallel to the one in the 1970s leading to home rule, representatives of all of the parties in the Greenlandic Parliament first prepared the home rule government's position in a unilateral Greenlandic Commission on Self-Government. After debating the conclusions of the unilateral commission, the home rule government requested that the Danish Parliament join them in a bilateral commission. As noted above, Danish parliamentarians rarely discussed the Greenland–Denmark relationship in principle or anything more than an ad hoc manner. Even more surprisingly, the proceedings of the commissions on self-government usually did not spill over into the deliberations of the Greenlandic Parliament. Particularly after the unilateral commission finished its work, the Greenlandic debate moved out of parliament – and for the most part also out of the media – to take place behind the closed doors of the bilateral commission. All that was left in the public debate were patchy responses to Danish proposals and the rare spillover from the most heated conflicts in the commission.

Nevertheless, general debate on the community of the realm did take place in 2003 on the occasion of the report submitted by the unilat-

eral Greenlandic Commission (Selvstyrekommissionen 2003).[11] Despite the very different formal occasions for the – scarce – principled debates on the community of the realm in the Greenlandic and Danish parliaments in the years when the commissions on self-government were working, the same themes were central: allocation of rights, duties, responsibilities, and benefits – between Denmark and Greenland and internally in Greenland. As laid out above, the debate in the Danish Parliament was organized as a discussion between distinct parental strategies. In the Greenlandic Parliament, the debate was organized around the prioritization of the two inequalities (in status and in capabilities) prompted by the report of the unilateral commission.

The importance of having Denmark recognize the Greenlanders as a formally equal people is clear from the manner in which the unilateral Greenlandic Commission on Self-Government supported its demand for the future relationship between Greenland and Denmark to be based in a 'Partnership Treaty on Greenland's Self-Government' (Selvstyrekommissionen 2003:28–30, 147–58). If self-government could not be based on a treaty establishing the two parties as equal, the commission issued the undisguised yet convoluted threat that the 'Necessity of unilateral decisions on the part of the Greenlanders may occur should the aforementioned negotiations not bear fruit' (2003:30).

The manner in which the unilateral commission handled the road to equality in terms of capabilities was drawn less sharply. But the need for partners to secure the country's development towards supporting itself was clear: 'The form of cooperation between Denmark and Greenland' was synthetized in 'the concept of *dependence economy*' (2003:39, italics in original). On the one hand, this resonates with the widespread impression in the Greenlandic public debate that part of the inequality of the community of the realm is that Denmark benefits in ways that Danes will not acknowledge openly (Lennert

11 References to Greenlandic parliamentary debates refer to *Landstingets Forhandlinger* (LTF) in the format (DD Month YYYY) and, if available, page number in the written version of the spokesperson's manuscript. Consecutive references to the same debate manuscript are only given in the format (Party YYYY, pp) and to the same manuscript only in the format (YYYY: pp). Records are available at inatsisartut.gl. Member of *Inatsiartut/Landstinget* is abbreviated MLT to distinguish them from Members of the Danish Parliament, the *Folketinget*.

2006:76–80), both from the trade patterns within the realm (Selvstyrekommissionen 2003:39) as well as from allowing the USA to maintain the Thule Air Base (Fleischer 2002). On the other hand, the report's section on economics and business development paid little attention to what sorts of benefits Denmark might have from current Greenlandic dependence; rather, the section merely described the negative consequences of dependence for Greenland. The report even distanced itself from the idea that possible Danish benefits from Greenlandic dependence have been decisive for establishing or upholding the dependence economy: 'Economic dependence is often dealt with by "blaming the others", but in this regard internal circumstances in Greenland have also been decisive for a continued dependence on trade with Denmark' (2003:39). The report subsequently paid greater attention to these 'internal conditions'. Finally, the need for 'a new form of cooperation in the community of the realm' and 'a new model of partnership' regarding the economy (2003:63) was specified in a recommendation for 'a new agreement on cooperation' with common goals and a clear division of labour (2003:64). Annexes to the report detailed how the main contribution of the Danish state would remain the annual block grant while adding specific tasks in relation to financing and the facilitation of commercial development in Greenland, particularly in terms of facilitating more equitable cooperation between Danish and Greenlandic companies and the establishment of a special status for Greenland in international trade regimes (2003:299–302).

In summary, when self-diagnosed by the unilateral commission in 2003, Greenland accepted that it requires Denmark on two fronts: Greenland needs Denmark to recognize Greenland as an equal and Danish support is necessary with respect to the development of Greenland. However, the relationship between these two Greenlandic processes towards independence (the process towards increased self-government and the process towards being better able to support itself economically) can be constructed and prioritized in different ways. Moreover, the roles envisioned for Denmark may be constructed and prioritized in different ways. The unilateral commission left open the question of prioritizing self-government relative to self-support. It did so, first, by delegating the questions of legal recognition and economic self-support to two distinct sub-commissions. Second, the commission as a whole

confined their editorial work on the reports of the sub-commissions to attaching the summaries of the contributions of the sub-commissions to the overall report with a paper clip without explicitly considering the relationship between them (2003:21–2). Consequently, the relations between and prioritization of these two goals was at the centre of the debate of the report of the unilateral commission in the Greenlandic Parliament.[12]

Three basic positions were presented in this debate. Directly opposed to each other were two positions: one according to which self-governance was a precondition for self-support and another according to which self-support was a precondition for self-governance. Between these positions, a third and more complex construction of 'self-supportedness' as a joint project shared by Greenland and Denmark meant that self-government would remain a gradual affair.

In 2003, IA presented self-government as a precondition for Greenland increasingly being able to support itself economically. Although the party spokesperson, MLT Ane Hansen, noted that 'independence will require more from us than hitherto' (LTF 19 November 2003, IA p. 1), the basic message was that self-government is a precondition for self-support. This was necessarily so, because the reason that '[w]e shall not realize independence by decreasing the living conditions of the population […is that] we can't achieve full independence when the inner strength of the people has not been awakened more than it is now' (2003:3). It is up to the Greenlanders themselves to find this strength, but recognition is required before they can do so: '[W]e have to develop and shape our everyday lives and the structure of our society taking radically into account those realities under which we live in this country. In this case we need to have clarified and be understood and accepted as the people we are' (2003:3–4).

Conversely, IA did not present self-support as a precondition for independence – not least because the definition of independence itself has proven malleable:

12 LTF 19 November 2003 (EM14). Party and government spokesperson's submissions available in the proceedings of the Parliament of Greenland via http://cms.inatsisartut.gl/groenlands_landsting/landstingssamlinger/em_2003/dgopkt_behdato/bf_landsstyret/14 (accessed 9 May 2016).

> In the 25 years which have passed since [IA was founded on the demand for independence], the understanding of the word 'independence' has changed among the people … Nowadays, when viewed in isolation, no state is fully independent in the sense that no states exist which do not, in one way or another, depend on other countries … Earlier, the term 'independent' was understood in this way, but in today's world … the meaning of the term is … *legal and political independence* … It is not a requirement under international law that an independent country must be able to do on its own, financially … When so many [countries] to a large degree depend on assistance, why should we be ashamed that our independent country receives, let's say, up to 20% of foreign aid?
>
> (2003:2–3, italics in original)

Even for IA, however, the long-term scenario involved Greenland increasingly being able to support itself: 'The aid should be used in such a manner that we can provide for ourselves; that is, to [help us] help ourselves; the aid is to be … used for the purpose of development' (2003:3).

The opposite position – that self-support is a precondition for independence – was taken up by the Parliament's centre-right parties, most vividly as expressed by MLT Per Berthelsen (Dem.):

> Is Greenland ready to plunge into the deep end of the pool? … One part of [the] population will easily be able to swim up to the poolside. Another – and no less important – part of the population will … need a lifejacket to get there together with thorough prior instruction and with continuous assistance … Yes, they may even need more assistance from outside if they're not to drown.
>
> (LTF 19 November 2003, Demokraatit, p. 1)

Berthelsen explicitly submits the key to understanding the metaphor:

> In this pictorial language, the lifejackets serve as a symbol of the block grant, and the assistance is the large number [of skilled workers and academics; *tilkaldte*] called [to work here], who are mainly recruited from Denmark. And the part of the strong group that is

> swimming to leave the weak group behind are those who decide to settle abroad, particularly in Denmark (2003:1).

And since 'we're dealing with cold and merciless waters in which you can't stay for very long if you want to survive' (2003:5), it is necessary 'to throw pride overboard … If there's opportunity to get help from outside, we shouldn't hesitate to accept it. Because we have to recognize that we can neither live nor merely survive on pride alone' (2003:2).

According to this reasoning, forcing the process towards self-governance to proceed prematurely is dangerous for two reasons: First, Denmark will insist on a direct connection between self-governance and self-support: 'The answer [from Copenhagen] thus far has been "freedom comes with responsibility", which … means gradual cuts to the block grant … Reducing the block grant will not make it easier to solve this task [the social problems]' (2003:1). And second, the process towards self-government is irreversible: '[W]hen we introduce self-government, we have to be sure that it will be a success because there will be no going back' (2003:2). Not even 'when we return to the humdrum of everyday life and the harsh realities emerge, making … most people [wish for] a return to security again' (2003:3). Self-government without self-support equals certain death; self-support only comes with assistance; and if we have 'self-governed' ourselves away from assistance, we will not have assistance back.

Between these two positions, Siumut, the largest party in the Parliament, sought to combine the goals of self-government and self-support without prioritizing the one clearly over the other. The result was a more complex delay and modulation of both processes. Self-support remained a goal, and '[a] self-supporting economy … means an economy where the block grant from the [Danish] state may eventually be re-considered and re-negotiated', explained MLT Jørgen Wæver Johansen, then minister for the self-government process, on behalf of the Government (LTF 19 November 2003, Government, p. 4). But it is indeed possible that the block grant would have to be *increased* before it can eventually be *reduced* – because, according to MLT Jonathan Motzfeldt speaking on behalf of Siumut,

> [you can't] equate increased self-government with a kind of automatic reduction of the block grant. Increased self-government for Greenland within the community of the realm could just as legitimately be considered to involve a need for an increased block grant. This depends entirely on the objectives of the self-government process and on the time horizon for the development of society that is anticipated to be necessary
>
> (LTF 19 November 2003, Siumut pp. 2–3).

Without explicitly stating that Greenland on its own cannot shoulder the task of its own development, Siumut asserted that the task is of such magnitude that it must be a joint venture for Denmark and Greenland: 'The changes needed are so radical and comprehensive that the tasks involved should be solved in close cooperation between the state and the home rule' (LTF 19 November 2003, Government, p. 6). And precisely by virtue of the *obligation* that is distinct to the community of the realm – compared to imaginable alternative arrangements – this joint task of developing Greenland to be able to provide for itself will be in the individual interest of each party:

> Regarding the economy, there must … be a consensus that the content of the partnership is an investment that benefits the process of making Greenland economically independent to the benefit of both Denmark and Greenland. If this goal can be achieved, it will mean a more self-supporting economy and a decisive element in the basis for self-government. (LTF 19 November 2003, Government, p. 6, cf. Selvstyrekommissionen 2003: 63)

The result of making the development towards *self*-support a *joint* task is a deferral – or rather: a processualization – of the goal of self-government. The point of departure might well be that '[f]or Siumut, our country becoming an independent nation has always been the natural end-goal' (LTF 19 November 2003, Siumut, p. 3) and that 'the introduction of home rule almost 25 years ago was the biggest step down this road so far. We've had a quarter of a century to accustom ourselves to an extensive degree of self-determination over our own matters'

(2003:1). In its statements in the 2003 parliamentary debate on the new self-government arrangements to be negotiated with the Danish government, however, Siumut extended this period of adaptation to a point indeterminately into the future by concluding that the party 'has also maintained that the goal [of independence] must be achieved through a well-considered and thorough development process so that one day we can look each other and our children in the eye and say "now we're ready"' (2003:3).

3.2 Formalities secured, back to substance

Apart from prioritizing the three basic processes towards independence – self-governance, self-support, and Greenlandization – the 2003 debate was partly occupied with the correct use of the words *namminiilivinneq* (independence), *namminersorneq* (home rule as self-determination), *nammineq aalajangiisinnaatitaaneq* (self-determination), and *imminut aqunnissaq* (home rule as managing one's own affairs). This discussion partly concerned the ambitions for a future scheme and partly the connection to international legal debate on self-determination through the description of the normative and factual reality. A decade later, this part of the debate already seems slightly outdated for two reasons: Everyone now agrees that independence is the end goal and nobody doubts the right to independence any longer. However, these clarifications have not settled the question of what the exact character of the relations to Denmark of an independent Greenland should be.

In her brief stint as prime minister in 2013–14, Aleqa Hammond (Siumut) caused some commotion in Denmark as she repeatedly stated her goal to be independence. The Danish surprise was only possible against a backdrop of general inattention to Greenlandic politics. The Greenlandic consensus on the long-term goal already became apparent in 2003, as reflected in the fact that this statement from Ane Hansen, speaking for IA, could go unchallenged in the debate: 'Now we have reached the point that all of the existing parties essentially support the idea of independence, and not least, that the majority of the population support this goal' (LTF 19 November 2003,

IA, p. 2). Even Atassut, the party originally founded to defend the link to Denmark against 'youthful experiments', and Demokraatit, a party whose unsentimental approach to Greenlandic socio-economic problems appeals to many Danes living in Greenland, now routinely pay allegiance to the long-term goal of independence. Already in the 2003 debate, even the Demokraatit spokesperson concluded that, after all, '[t]he sooner we improve social order and level of education, the sooner we can get rid of the lifejackets, the arm floats and the help from outside – and thus have a self-determining Greenland' (LTF 19 November 2003, Dem., p. 2).

When Kim Kielsen took over as Siumut chair and prime minister after Aleqa Hammond, he made some remarks intended for Japanese investors that were taken to mean that independence was no longer a goal (Kielsen in Krarup 2015). This time around, the commotion was caused in Greenland. To settle things, he finally had to confess at a press conference back in Nuuk:

> I feel the desire for independence burning in my heart like fresh snow on a sunny spring day … We're getting closer to independence all the time since introducing home rule and self-government. It takes place in high gear and in low gear. Right now we're in a situation where it's all about removing all the little obstacles for more independence which exist here and there.
>
> (Kielsen in Søndergaard 2015)

The Siumut Party ranges far and wide in terms of both time and people. When reading texts from the 1970s to today, it is possible to find prominent Siumut members occupying most of the available positions on independence. In the one extreme, long-time president of the Greenlandic labour union SIK earned some measure of notoriety by renouncing the ability to uphold a Scandinavian level of welfare as a precondition for independence, recollecting how he 'grew up with firing coal for heating and with a bucket to piss and shit in' and explaining that he was 'ready to live like that again if that is the price for Greenlandic independence' (Berthelsen in Bjerre & Nielsen 1998). In the opposite extreme, theologian, politician, and diplomat Finn Lynge and former top civil servant Kaj Kleist have advocated unspecified forms of a permanent 'protected

relationship' to Denmark (Kleist in Christiansen 2015; Lynge 1999). Today, only a very select handful of public intellectuals explicitly and actively defend the permanence of the community of the realm in the Greenlandic debate (Lynge 2014; Rosing 2014); no one who faces the Greenlandic electorate when running for office publicly denounces the goal of Greenlandic independence.

Moreover, the discussion related to international law has in effect been concluded. The preamble to the 2009 Self-Government Act (adopted by the Danish parliament) states that if Greenland wants to be independent, Denmark will not oppose it. The matter was actually already settled in the terms of reference for the bilateral Self-Government Commission, which included the same wording.[13] Greenland's relation to Denmark is, in that sense, 'free'. Greenland does not enjoy 'free association' in the legal sense prescribed by the UN, much discussed as an ideal legal situation in the theoretically most sophisticated corners of the Greenlandic and Faroese debate (Breum 2014: ch. 1; Skaale 2004). But Greenland is definitively free to withdraw from the community of the realm unilaterally.

The Greenlandic version of the 2009 Self-Government Act changed the title of the Greenlandic political apparatus from *Namminersornerullutik Oqartussat* to *Namminersorlutik Oqartussat* – leaving out the processual *-neq-* suffix: According to the Greenlandic version of the law, Greenlanders are now governing themselves. Neither this grammatical trick nor the recognition of the right to secede has ended the process towards full formal sovereignty. However, the underlying reality which it communicates – that the choice of full, formal sovereignty is now unilaterally in the hands of the Greenlanders – has changed the premises for the Greenlandic political debate. Denmark has acknowledged Greenland as equal in status at the most basic level: It has the same right to self-government. More demanding levels of equal status have yet to be achieved: First, Greenland's 'free association' with Denmark is not formalized in a UN-consistent manner – because the Danish government's constitutional lawyers (thus far) insist that changes to the Danish constitution would be necessary (which is deemed next to impossi-

13 Terms of reference included on p. 13 in the report from the commission (Grønlandsk-dansk selvstyrekommission 2008), cf. also the comments on the terms of reference in Danish Peoples Party's minority opinion pp.95ff.

Queen Margrethe II hands over the 2009 Self-Government Act to Tuusi Motzfeldt, chair of the Greenlandic Parliament, *Inatsisartut*. © Leiff Josefsen

ble to get through a referendum in Denmark no matter what specific change it may concern). Second, Greenland is not equally sovereign, because an agreement has materialized that self-support comes first. So the immediate consequence of securing the right to independence was that the centre of gravity of the Greenlandic political debate has shifted to the task of developing an increasingly self-supporting economy.

The 2009–13 IA/Demokraatit government consistently focused on Greenland increasingly being able to support itself through international investment in extractive industries – and refrained from problematizing Greenland's formal status. Then Prime Minister Kuupik Kleist (IA) even invited Danish investors to play a larger role – on market terms (Kleist & Rosing 2012). The 2013 election campaigns basically pivoted around who had the best strategy for getting the most out of these – still hypothetical – mines. Even if rhetorically steadfast, Siumut's Aleqa Hammond as prime minister in substance wavered

between which of the two processes towards independence she was prioritizing: self-government or self-support. In most instances, Hammond has indeed been talking at length about sovereignty: 'I've always said that I will live to experience the day when Greenland is declared independent via the UN; where we will sing the national anthem and our flag will be raised all over the world – because as a small people, you can't have a better goal' (Hammond in Søndergaard 2013; cf. Petersen 2013). Even if she has claimed the contrary: 'I myself never use the word independence, but rather state. Because it is the formation of a state, we are working towards' (Hammond in Qvist 2014). Nevertheless, she also noted that

> final equality between us will only come when Greenland and the Faroes are economically self-supporting … [I]t's my vision that Greenland will be independent in my time … it's a vision of liberation from all of the bonds that make it difficult for us to feel as equal partners … I have no visions involving cooperation in the community of the realm coming to an end when Greenland is economically self-supporting.
>
> (Hammond 2014)

So the course of Greenland has actually been consistent since 2009: First self-support, then sovereignty, and finally equal cooperation in a revised version of a community of the realm. Nevertheless, what constitutes 'equal cooperation' is rarely discussed in detail.

The bottom line in the present situation is that it has become difficult to demand substantial steps of devolution on the road towards independence. Particularly since the 2009 law stipulates that the Government of Greenland must itself pay for every new issue area 'taken home'[14] from Denmark – as opposed to the 1978 law, which provided for an increase in the annual block grant equalling the amount the Danish state had spent thus far on the issue. Hence, in a general debate on the community of the realm, MF Sara Olsvig – elected in Greenland for IA and party chairperson since 2014 – challenged neither the new

14 Official Danish legal jargon has accepted this way – originally coined in Greenlandic nationalist discourse – of characterizing the transfer of competencies from Denmark to the home rule governments in Greenland and the Faroe Islands.

formal status of Greenland nor the division of labour between Copenhagen and Nuuk. Rather she insisted that the Act on Self-Government commits Denmark beyond what she witnesses: '[I would also like to see] the Danish members of parliament display greater engagement and greater interest in pre-empting the many problems that we see in areas such as the justice and prison systems and other issue areas still under Danish responsibility' (FF 29 April 2014, 17:56).

Nevertheless, when opinion polls foresaw that Greenlandic and Faroese mandates could be decisive for which government could be formed in Copenhagen after the 2015 parliamentary elections, one demand for equality resurfaced: The demand for a separate Greenlandic – and a separate Faroese – *Grundlov*; that is, a constitution, or, literally: a basic law (Sermitsiaq 2015). Even if the ambition is to devise a text which would work both within and without the community of the realm, this project will make it necessary for Greenlandic politicians to be more nuanced when describing the nature of the relationship to Denmark they prefer *after* formal Greenlandic independence. And the process will most likely – as we shall see in chapter 7 – once again put the basic narratives legitimizing the community of the realm on a collision course.

Substantially, the decades since the introduction of home rule have consisted not least of a series of deliberate attempts at seeking new solutions to Greenlandic problems to replace old Danish solutions. In some cases, new solutions have been sought by introspection; by discussing what a truly Greenlandic solution would be. In other cases, assistance has been sought elsewhere in the world in order to be relieved of the Danish connection. The following chapters are about these attempts at postcolonial diversification – and particularly about one of them: The relations to what is today the EU. In the two final chapters, the stories about the role left by Danish and Greenlandic national identities for the community of the realm are brought together with the lessons to be learned from the sovereignty games played in relation to the EU.

Chapter 4
Greenland's experience and experiments with sovereignty

Greenlandic national identity, including a concept of sovereignty as something worth striving for, is in important ways a product of the bilateral Greenland–Denmark relationship: The Greenlandic ideas of what constitutes an ideal nation state is shaped by Danish ideas promoted in Greenland. Nevertheless, Greenlandic and Danish self-images has – so far – been sufficiently compatible to allow the continuation of the community of the realm: The basic way of legitimizing constitutional and economic dependency on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean is an agreement that Greenland needs assistance to develop towards self-government and towards being able to support itself economically

However, this analysis of the bilateral Greenland–Denmark relationship – as laid out in chapters 2 and 3 – does not include the whole picture. Denmark surely qualifies as Greenland's significant other, but Greenlandic identity discourse does indeed involve a wider cast of characters – some linked intimately to certain elements in the conceptualization of what it means to be Greenlandic, some linked to other elements. Some cast in positive terms, some in negative terms. If a purely bilateral story is all that is told, the result is too reverent to Danish imperial projects and the 'reservation' policies pursued for lengthy periods. And crucially; such a story betrays the broader horizons engaged in Greenlandic identity politics. This chapter therefore re-tells the story of the Greenland–Denmark relationship while including in it various third parties. The roles allowed to these 'other others' have varied dramatically over time, with a fundamental change taking place following

World War II. Since the beginning of colonization, Denmark has taken control of Greenland's relations to the outside world. This monopoly broke down during World War II – and since the introduction of home rule in 1979, the diversification of Greenland's external relations has accelerated, notably with Greenlanders increasingly taking the initiative.

The first section of this chapter demonstrates how Danish concerns with protecting its sovereignty over Greenland against outsiders have framed 'domestic' games played within the bilateral relationship. The strategies employed have changed as old-style colonialism has been deligitimized – but the Danish aim of protecting sovereignty has remained constant. This is important because the consistent claim of Denmark's shifting imperial projects has been that Danish sovereignty over Greenland has always been altruistic; generally to the benefit of the Greenlanders; and consistently preferable to the imaginable alternatives, judged by how other European empires treated their colonial subjects (Høiriis 1986:29, 71–2, 226; Thisted 2014; cf. Manniche 2000). If the games Denmark played to keep sovereignty over Greenland cancelled out the supposed benefits for Greenland, the weight of this claim is weakened when seen from a Greenlandic perspective.

The second section provides a brief overview of how characters other than Denmark have been cast in different roles in Greenlandic identity narratives. Particularly since 1979, the home rule authorities have worked consistently to relieve the dependence on Denmark by diversifying it; seeking solidarity, recognition, knowledge, organizational solutions, trade, and investment elsewhere. Finally, a section focuses on how the Greenland–EU relationship has specifically been intimately interwoven with the Greenlandic move towards independence. Somewhat paradoxically, the sovereignty games played by Denmark in relation to the EU have empowered Greenland on its road to independence. What initially appeared to be a hierarchical and bilateral relationship – with Greenlandic foreign relations always processed by Copenhagen – has been opened up and levelled out. In effect, Greenland has transformed to a postcolonial predicament, even if sovereignty remains put off to the future. In other words, to allow the continuation of the community of the realm, sovereignty has been articulated in creative ways on both sides of the Atlantic. The following chapters analyse

in greater detail the games that are ultimately made possible – but also made necessary – by the either/or concept of sovereignty.

4.1 Denmark playing games to protect sovereignty

In 1749, the Danish King granted monopoly over trade with Greenland to the precursor of the Royal Greenlandic Trade Company. The context of the trade monopoly was, of course, competition. Specifically, Dutch and Basque whalers traded with the Inuit (Gad 1973:187 et passim; Marquardt 2006:146–7, 153–4). Danish authorities explained monopoly to be best for the Greenlanders: primitive people colonized by Europeans had been exterminated in the process, if not literally then at least culturally – but Danes were uniquely equipped to do better (Rink 1862; cf. Høiriis 1986:29; Marquardt 2009). However, the monopoly also secured the supply of tradables provided by the traditional hunters meant to finance colonization (Gad 1973:345; Thomsen 1996:266). Hence, Denmark engaged in what may count as a core colonial sovereignty game; employing sovereignty to protect the extraction of resources. The final round of the traditional version of this game was played in the early decades of the 20th century, when Norwegian hunters foraged remote parts of East Greenland, later claimed by Norway. To bolster Danish sovereignty (Frederiksen 2015), a small group of Inuit was moved a few hundred kilometres up the east coast to Scoresby Sound to establish a permanent presence at Ittoqqortoormiit. Norway ultimately lost their case at the International Court in the Hague in 1933 (Sørensen 2006:54). In a parallel move, Danish–Greenlandic explorer Knud Rasmussen established the Thule trading post in remote north-west Greenland in 1910, partly in order to pre-empt competing US and Norwegian claims to the territory (Müntzberg & Simonsen 1996; cf. Lidegaard 2003:177–83). While initially established on a private basis, the trading post was later taken over by the Danish state and integrated in the colonial administration of Greenland (Gilberg 1977; Petersen 1996).

During and after World War II, Denmark found itself in a second and third sovereignty game; a geostrategic game and the game of global decolonization. As Germany occupied Denmark, the Danish ambassador to Washington and the Danish governors of Greenland 'upheld'

Danish sovereignty over Greenland by allowing the US to protect the island (Lidegaard 1999:179–88, 334–5). This involved the construction of huge air force bases – operations which effectively annulled the Danish policy of keeping Greenland sealed to protect the Greenlanders (Sørensen 2006:62–95). After re-establishing connections to Copenhagen in 1945, the US – having considered buying the island – formally recognized Danish sovereignty in the 1951 Defence Agreement in return for substantially free hands in utilizing Greenlandic territory for defence purposes (Lidegaard 1999:179–88, 334–5, 407). Essentially, then, Denmark adjusted to the new rules of the superpower-centred geostrategic sovereignty games and maintained formal sovereignty over Greenland by emptying the concept of any content, at least when it comes to military affairs. After the war, it was impossible to re-establish Greenland as a closed reservation – and with the universal delegitimization of colonialism, Denmark felt it necessary to change the formal status of Greenland (Beukel et al. 2010). The 1953 integration of Greenland as a formally equal part of Denmark kept the UN from supervising decolonization (Alfredsson 2004). By awarding the Greenlanders a formally equal share in Danish sovereignty over their island, international authority was kept from interfering in the game on behalf of a potential, independent Greenlandic sovereignty.

The Danish moves in these three sovereignty games – resource extraction, geostrategy, and decolonization – combined to produce one of the most contested episodes in Greenlandic colonial history. Since the establishment of the Thule trading post, the local Inuit (called *Inughuit*) had largely settled to form a town. This settlement was increasingly getting in the way of the expanding US Air Base at Thule. In the very last months before the 1953 Danish constitution would award civil rights to Greenlanders, the Danish authorities moved the population from their permanent residence to form a tent village some 100 kilometres north (Brøsted & Fægteborg 1987; Eastern High Court 2002:63).

In these earlier sovereignty games, Denmark combined two basic strategies: Sovereignty was asserted vis-à-vis the Greenlanders by forcefully producing the physical realities deemed expedient, and sovereignty was legitimized vis-à-vis third parties by paternalistically acting on behalf of the colonial subject. Today, both strategies are difficult

to pursue for reasons pertaining both to the past and to the future: The history of colonialism and the future of imagined alternatives.

First, the increasing recognition of past imperialist wrongdoings has delegitimized the paternalist pretensions of colonialism globally, leading to the decolonization process exploding the number of UN member states. In Greenland, the results of the two population transfers mentioned above are constant reminders of the colonial sovereignty games that formed them. The tiny towns of Ittoqqortoormiit in East Greenland and Qaanaaq at Thule are among the most fragile communities in Greenland. They are among the most impoverished communities in the country and suffer from a broad range of deep and extensive social problems.[15] As part of the 2009 transfer to self-government, Denmark formally acknowledged that Greenland has the right to secede should it wish to do so. And as the following will show in relation to the EU, Denmark is only able to secure sovereignty over Greenland by placing the self-same sovereignty not just at but in the service of Greenland. This is a delicate task, likely destined to fail in the long run: It does not merely hinge on securing the compatibility of Greenlandic and Danish national identity discourses, it also hinges on which future alternatives are imagined.

Second, the past Danish strategies are impossible to pursue because a widespread vision of the future of the Arctic awards Greenland better access to alternatives to engaging exclusively with Denmark. A new sovereignty game is taking shape as many observers imagine an Arctic opening up to new players as the ice melts (i.a., Sale & Potapov 2010; Emmerson 2010). On one dimension, this is a traditional horizontal sovereignty game between the five Arctic states (Russia, Canada, the US, Norway, and Denmark), each seeking to secure the largest share of the Arctic Ocean by submitting geological evidence of continental continuity in accordance with the UN Convention on the Law of the Seas (UNCLOS) (Strandsbjerg 2011) – and with massive corporations ready to step in to extract resources (Refsnes 2011). On another dimension,

15 The official recruitment material for the Greenlandic medical service organization states that 'Ittoqqortoormiit is not a place to flee to solve one's owns problems. Ittoqqortoormiit is a place to go to if you have energy to share' (Bendtsen 2012: 55). Concerning Qaanaaq, cf. the social and medical statistics in Bjerregaard and Dahl-Petersen (2011). Not all of the hardship of the two towns can be blamed on imperialism; Nuuk's national project has in certain ways aggravated problems (Gad 2016).

the either/or concept of sovereignty implied in the claims of the 'Arctic 5' – the five states with sovereignty over coasts bordering with the Arctic Ocean – is challenged: First, it is challenged by indigenous peoples submitting claims for sovereignty, which structures space differently (Gerhardt 2011; Shadian 2010). Second, it is challenged by environmentalists and non-Artic states proposing further international regulation to protect the environment or allocate resources differently. In this game, Denmark's strategy has focused on keeping Russia in particular committed to the UNCLOS and on promoting the Arctic Council as the relevant body of governance. Both elements of the strategy are designed to escape the 'realist' version of a sovereignty game pivoting around sovereignty as an either/or question determined by the raw *power* to protect sovereignty. The Arctic Council is the regional embodiment of the traditional 'legal positivist' version of a sovereignty game: international lawyers also see sovereignty as an either/or question – but determined by the *right* of the member states to have sovereignty rather than by power (cf. Gad & Adler-Nissen 2013:4). The Arctic Council uniquely claims extra legitimacy by granting a special status as 'permanent participants' to a number of indigenous peoples (Young 2009:76). As when Denmark fought Norway in the Hague, Greenlandic politicians are backing Denmark in these manoeuvres, even if Kuupik Kleist as prime minister briefly flirted with the idea of leaving the North Pole as an internationally protected area like Antarctica (Breum 2011).

In sum, in the course of the 20th century, Denmark has engaged in games to protect its sovereignty over Greenland by employing practical strategies at the expense of Greenlandic individuals and groups – all the while rhetorical strategies were employed to persuade both Greenlanders and outsiders that Denmark exercised its sovereignty to benefit and protect the Greenlanders: Greenlanders were better taken care of by a benevolent Danish mother than by alternative authoritarian fathers. Relocating groups of Greenlanders served to secure Danish sovereignty; firstly under international law in the Hague and secondly by allowing superpower utilization of the territory formally secured. However, historical shifts in which sovereignty games are deemed legitimate at the global level have rendered the continuation of such strategies self-defeating: Constitutional incorporation in 1953 initially served to defer self-government by dodging the global decolonization

process. Nevertheless, the wrongs committed under and to protect colonial sovereignty have contributed to delegitimize Danish sovereignty over Greenland. And Danish maternalism today comes across as almost as offensive as standard imperialist paternalism. As we shall see in chapter 7, the Greenlandic political debate does not really accept the distinction. Consequently, formal Greenlandic sovereignty is merely a matter of Greenland choosing to claim it. Meanwhile, prognoses continue to be issued claiming that the substantial resources deemed necessary for a future Greenlandic sovereignty to be more than an empty shell will be materializing as the Arctic ice continues to melt. The climate becomes less prohibitive for the extraction of Greenlandic minerals, and the accompanying interest from new business partners and rising powers conveys the impression that Greenland has alternatives to Denmark. Over the years, a large cast of characters has played a part in this diversification of relations to the outside world. Recently, China has been among the most debated in terms of potential, but the EU has long played a much more substantial role.

4.2 Diversifying the relations to the outside world[16]

Over the decades since the instigation of home rule in 1979, the Government of Greenland has increasingly engaged in foreign relations, seeking out a number of forums that would allow Greenlandic participation separately or as part of a Danish delegation (Petersen 2006a). At times, a rather indiscriminate approach seems to have been pursued: The main objective was to gain entrance to – and thereby recognition from – another forum rather than any particular substantial interest. Gradually, a more considered and prioritized approach has been developed.[17] Prioritized or not, the very insistence on diversifying dependency relations from one relation (Copenhagen) to a variety of relations may be

16 The thoughts in this section is developed in more detail in Jacobsen & Gad (forthcoming).

17 I.a., via the introduction of cost/benefit analyses in the annual Foreign Policy Reports presented by the Government of Greenland to the Parliament. Another step in this direction was taken when the IA led government presented a Foreign Policy *Strategy*.

counted as one way of moving Greenlandic identity into a postcolonial mode – even if this version of postcoloniality does not (yet) involve full, formal sovereignty.

One relation taken up well before home rule is the wider pan-Inuit identity. This other or secondary self is linked to one of the central discursive elements of Greenlandic identity, i.e., the notion that traditional culture is defining. Greenlanders play an active part in the global movement of indigenous peoples concentrating on the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPF). This forum is an important arena for sovereignty games in which colonized peoples seek to challenge both the individual states and the very system of sovereign states by appropriating and 'stretching' the language and tools of the very same states (Lindroth 2011). Specifically, the Government of Greenland is represented in the UNPF as part of the Danish delegation, while the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC)[18] is part of the caucus of indigenous NGOs. It is worth noting, however, that this central organizational vessel of pan-Inuit identity – while remaining intellectually in opposition to the *qallunaat* states that colonized Inuit – on occasions articulates its identity in a much more convoluted manner, which resists any clear-cut distinction between state and indigenous identity.

Challenging the indivisible sovereignties over the Arctic claimed by the Arctic states, the ICC in 2009 adopted a 'Circumpolar Inuit Declaration on Sovereignty in the Arctic (ICC 2009b; cf. Shadian 2010). While the challenge was based on the unique rights, history, and knowledge of the Inuit (ICC 2009b, Art. 3.4; 3.6), it was also based on the social constructivist observation that '[s]overeignty is a contested concept … and does not have a fixed meaning' (ICC 2009b, Art. 2.1). When including this second observation in the analysis along with other practices constituting the ICC, its claim appears based as much in strategic essentialism (Hall 1996) as in an essentially different life-world: The ICC is a transnational organization spanning four states involving people in Canada, Alaska, Chukotka, and Greenland who identify as Inuit. Organizationally, the ICC consists of four 'member parties', each representing Inuit in one of the four states and each organized

18 Originally Inuit Circumpolar *Conference*, but re-named to signal its more permanent structure.

according to the laws of these states. In Greenland, members include a range of civil society organizations. However, the Charter of the ICC was also acceded by *Inatsisartut*, the Parliament of Greenland established by law by the Danish Parliament as part of the Greenland home rule arrangement, which is territorially rather than ethnically defined. Accordingly, a handful of the members of the Greenlandic delegation to international ICC meetings are appointed by this parliament, lately including representatives from the Demokraatit party, who generally refrain from defining its political project in ethnic terms. Moreover, the annual budget of the *Naalakkersuisut*, the executive arm of the same legal extension of the Danish state, pays a substantial part of the annual expenses of the Greenlandic body of ICC. The involvement of the Danish state with the international level of the ICC became even more intimate when Crown Prince Frederik of Denmark was the official patron of its 2010 General Assembly taking place in Nuuk.

In popular discourse, Inuit in Canada, Alaska, and Chukotka are often mentioned as kinsmen – connoting not just linguistic and cultural ties but also blood ties (Sørensen 1994:125; cf. Dorais 1996:30; Kleivan 1999:103). Inuit identity, hence, is related to an aboriginal Greenlandic identity (Sejersen 1999:131), which may – in the extreme – be narrated as a past relict hindering modernization or, conversely, as a golden past which Greenlandic nationalism aims to resurrect (Gad 2005). This schism could be explicitly read from the succeeding versions of the *Greenland Home Rule policy in the area of Indigenous People* drafted by the internal Greenlandic Commission on Self-Government subcommittee on Foreign and Security Policy (2000, 2001, 2002): Those who would like Greenlanders to identify with a past Inuit community use categories such as 'indigenous' and 'Inuit' as positive references, while those who would like Greenlanders to see themselves as 'regular, modern people' distance themselves from the 'indigenous people' identity (cf. Christiansen 2000:67f). The status of the pan-Inuit identity in Greenland is in some senses parallel to the status of Nordic identity in Scandinavia (Dorais 1996:30f; cf. Hansen 2002:55, 57): A secondary 'we' that attracts – in some individuals – positive emotions as it symbolizes a romantic dream of a pure version of all of the positive aspects of our presence freed of the corrupting influence from outside – combined with a certain strategic use, as it grants access to specific rights at a

collective level (e.g., whaling) and resources at an individual level (e.g., jobs and airline tickets abroad) (Søbye 2013).

Nordic identity also plays a role in relation to Greenlandic identity narratives. Often it is mobilized as a lesser, more positive other (Lynge 1999:43). *Norden* – the Nordic region – enjoys an international image of being a homogenous, peaceful, successful, and benevolent alternative to standard Western capitalism (Archer 2000:109; Campbell et al. 2006; Katzenstein 1996; Kuisma 2007; Lawler 1997). Norden, thus, allows modernity to appear in more embracing, less dominating guises than when brought by the Danish other alone. As the Inuit, Norden is often presented within a family metaphor. It is not always clear, however, that the members of the family enjoy equal status. When newly elected prime minister Aleqa Hammond boycotted the 2013 Arctic Council Ministerial Meeting to protest that Greenland was not seated on equal terms with Denmark and the other member states at preparatory meetings, she followed up by appealing to a meeting in the Nordic Council of Ministers for support – but nothing ever came out of it (cf. Duus 2013).

Similarly, an identity as 'West-Nordic' – embodied by a series of smaller forums, containing only Greenland, the Faroes, and Iceland – is occasionally articulated, usually formally on the basis of common geography and common economic structures (fisheries and sheep farming). But the shared history as a Danish colony at times seems to be a significant driver behind both the positive identification between the three countries as well as the basis for arguing for Greenlandic and Faroese equality with the sovereign states in the Nordic forums.[19] In Figure 3, these lesser others are presented along with Greenland and Denmark, stretched between two central elements in Greenlandic identity discourse: Modernity as the result of development and indigenuity as a label for iconic traits of Inuit material culture.

In Greenland as elsewhere, Norden is often represented as a culturally and politically less brutal contrast to yet another other: the USA (cf. Adler-Nissen & Gad 2014; Hansen 2002:57). However, there is no agreement on what the role of the USA is in relation to Greenland. Immediately after the 9/11 attacks on the USA, the *Inatsisartut* debates

19 Cf. the press release from West Nordic Council following a joint meeting of the presidencies of West Nordic Council and Nordic Council (Vestnordisk råd 2009).

Figure 3. Greenlandic identity stretched out between modernity and indigeneity involving a series of lesser Others and secondary 'We's in a cast of characters which also includes the central Danish Other. Adapted from Gad 2005.

largely circled around emergency planning for a possible war. In one of these debates, MLT Daniel Skifte, then chair of the moderate Atassut party, brought his general point home by highlighting the fact that when the supply ships stopped coming from Denmark during WWII, the Americans stepped in as providers and protectors. However, competing representations of the USA – and the Thule Air Base in particular – involve casting the US as the neighbourhood bully, a threat (qua target for bombing in the case of war), and an everyday nuisance (since the base limits the locals' movement). Finally, the very existence of the base – sanctioned by Danish authorities without consulting Greenlanders (cf. above) – has been a symbol for the lack of recognition of Greenland as an actor in international politics. During the 1990s, the home rule government therefore repeatedly demanded that they be allowed to approach Washington directly without going via Copenhagen: A common iteration claimed that 'If only we could talk directly to the Americans, they would recognize our legitimate claims, but the Danes will not let us'. Since 2002, Greenlandic prime ministers and ministers of foreign affairs have participated in a series of meetings with the US, culminating in the trilateral 2004 *Igaliko Agreement* and the subsequent instigation of a Joint Committee mandated to promote US–Greenland cooperation.[20] In that sense, the US has increasingly played its part as a recognizer of an independent Greenlandic subjectivity.

However, little practical cooperation has come out of the Joint Committee. Rather, the main gain for Greenland from the negotiations

20 Cf. the presentation on the website of the US Embassy in Copenhagen (Embassy of the United States n.d.).

has come in relation to Denmark as a result of postcolonial politics of embarrassment: the series of Thule incidents – including most spectacularly the 1953 relocation of the *Inughuit* and the crash of an airplane armed with hydrogen bombs in 1968 – serve as a constant reminder of Denmark not always playing the benevolent, protective role it claims. The mere threat of public shaming for colonial wrongdoings serves as a bargaining chip for Greenland – but in relation to Denmark rather than to the US (Kristensen 2004). So apart from the *Igaliku Agreement* also involving the US, the substantial results of this strategy take from Denmark and give to Greenland: First, the Danish state formally delegated the right to conclude international agreements on issues already fully taken home by Greenland, provided that the specific issue in question does not also involve a separate Danish interest (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2005). And second: a separate airport was built at Qaanaaq, partly financed by the Danish state as a remedy for the forced removal of the *Inughuit* from Thule. Qaanaaq residents are now spared the helicopter tour to the US base when going to other parts of Greenland or Denmark (provided that they can pay for a ticket in the first place). Only when facing the risk of losing income from taxes and the profits paid by the Danish/Greenlandic contractors working at the Thule Air Base, Greenlandic political leaders have begun talking affirmatively about the revenue and labour market that follows with hosting the base (cf. Spiermann 2015:138). The competing constructions of the US other in Greenlandic identity discourse are outlined in Figure 4.

New others have been showing up on the radar. A structured analysis of how China is presented in Greenlandic debates would probably reveal an oscillation between radically different positions comparable to the description of the US: In the late 1990s, the Chinese were cast as the saviours of the Greenlandic national trade, sealing, as a home rule-sponsored business development project promised to turn surplus seal meat into cash by selling it as sausages in China. In 2001, the Greenlandic public took a soccer match as an occasion to identify with the Tibetans as another colonized people, thus positioning China as evil oppressors – alas triggering Chinese threats to the Greenlandic shrimp exports and cautious home rule government efforts to defuse the issue (Mortensen 2007). However, one unique point that informally might work in favour of the image of Chinese – and other Asians – in Green-

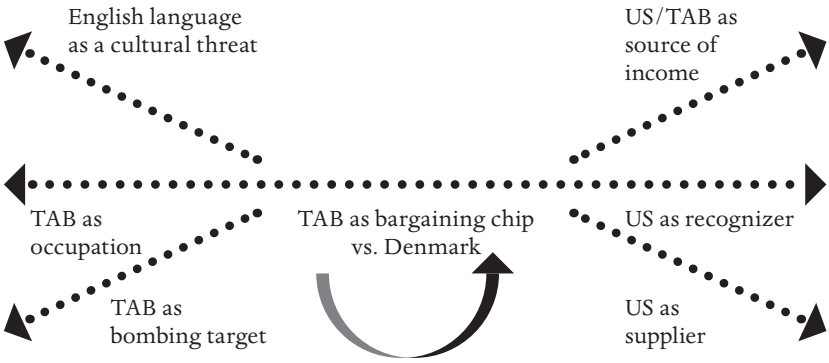


Figure 4. Competing roles for the US in Greenlandic identity narratives. Developed from Gad (2005).

land is phenotype: When Princess Alexandra – Danish Prince Joachim's first wife, who has a Chinese father – wore a Greenlandic national costume, she was extraordinarily popular, even by royalist Greenlandic standards (cf. Andersen 2013). After 2009, the Chinese are reappearing in their role as economic saviours *qua* possible investment in mineral extraction in Greenland. This time, alas, doubling as a threat to Greenlandic culture and the labour market, as the Chinese are prognosticated to come not just in cash but also as embodied in thousands of poorly paid workers (Jacobsen & Gad forthcoming; Lave & Holgersen 2014; Schriver 2013).

Among this line-up of 'other others', the EU has long assumed a special role in Greenlandic identity discourse. On the one hand, the casting of the EU has, like the US, been a point of contention in Greenlandic politics. Moreover, like the US entry on the scene, Danish accession to the EU has arguably been decisive for bringing Greenlandic aspirations a step towards self-government at a certain stage. On the other hand, a legal arrangement vis-à-vis the EU, which was settled shortly after the introduction of home rule, established an independent subjectivity for Greenland. Contrary to the US, in relation to whom Greenland only gained a direct voice after 2002, the EU has been conducive to

Greenlandic agency for a longer period. Greenland utilizes this platform for agency established long ago and has gradually expanded to further its position in the new games opened up by improved prospects for extracting resources from the Arctic.

4.3 The EU in the diversification of Greenland's dependency

The Greenland–EU relationship is itself the result of an intersection of different sovereignty games: Most basically, sovereignty in the EU is distributed not just territorially but also – and increasingly – functionally. Sovereignty is traditionally thought of as final authority over a piece of land or sea, including whatever and whomever is in it. Within the EU, sovereignty over various functions and issue areas on the same territory may be left to different authorities (Gad & Adler-Nissen 2013:5; Mac Amhlaigh 2013). This leads to 'constitutional battles', such as the one between the European Court of Justice in Luxembourg and national constitutional courts (most prominently the German) over who should ultimately decide. It also leads to complicated games of hide and seek; neither the EU nor its member states want to take responsibility for refugees drowning in the Mediterranean (Aalberts & Gammeltoft-Hansen 2014). More interesting for the issue at hand is that this way of organizing sovereignty may very well be particularly conducive to the kind of sovereignty games played by formally non-sovereign postcolonial entities engaging in paradiplomacy as one way towards independence: Within the EU, politicians and diplomats are used to pragmatically navigating the less-than-clear divisions of authority involved in alternative sovereignty arrangements.

A second sovereignty game at the heart of European integration is often overlooked: One important impetus for establishing the EEC was to facilitate the continuation of European empires in a period of global decolonization (Hansen & Jonsson 2012). Hence, the European treaties included special provisions for member states' colonies that did not seek independent sovereignty, opting instead to remain 'overseas countries and territories' (OCTs) of a member state (Gad & Adler-Nissen 2013). OCT status in relation to the EU does not imply

that the OCTs are covered by EU regulations (the *acquis*). Nevertheless, OCT status means freedom of movement for OCT inhabitants with citizenship in a member state; that is, they can move freely to Europe. OCTs enjoy access to project funding via most 'internal' EU programmes, and most OCTs (but not Greenland) are covered by the (external) European Development Fund. Most importantly, OCT status generally means tax- and quota-free access to the European Single Market. As Greenland revolted against Denmark bringing it into the EC, these OCT provisions came in handy – even if not all benefits were awarded without a price.

When Denmark joined the EC in 1973, Greenland had to follow suit. Like the other North Atlantic nations (Iceland and Norway), the EU debate in Greenland focused on fisheries. In the 1972 referendum campaign, the decisive argument boiled down to a claim that 'Now, Copenhagen decides who may catch our fish – in the future, the decisions will be taken even further away, in Brussels' (Skydsbjerg 1999:25). To allow for more – not less – independent Greenlandic agency, new legal arrangements were called for: The urge to leave the EC was so strong that it was decisive in the struggle for home rule (cf. Lauritzen 1997[1973]:15–21).

Greenlandic home rule was established in 1979 and Greenland was moved to the OCT arrangement in 1985 after complex negotiations on the unprecedented request to leave the EC.[21] The package deal made tax-free access for Greenlandic fisheries products to the European Single Market dependent on a fisheries agreement involving EC quotas in Greenlandic waters. Moreover, the agreement involved the EC paying a lump sum for the fishing quotas – a sum that matched the transfers Greenland had hitherto received from the social and structural funds (Skydsbjerg 1999:26). While the economic transfer resulting from the negotiation was so large that it even surprised some of those who had wanted to remain in the EC (Lauritzen 1997[1984]:289f), others argued that the fish sold would have produced more revenue had they been processed by the developing Greenlandic fisheries industry (Skydsbjerg 1999:26).

21 The protocol to the European treaties (known as 'The Greenland Treaty'), together with other documents that in conjunction comprise the legal relationship between Greenland and the EU, is available via Naalakkersuisut (n.d.).

The Greenlanders had already taken the fisheries policy home from Copenhagen as a home rule issue, and Copenhagen had left its fisheries policy to Brussels as part of the European sovereignty game. The bottom line is that since leaving the EC in 1985, Nuuk has had *de facto* sovereignty over fisheries; a sovereignty used to trade fish for cash with Brussels. But the cash stream soon appeared fragile and sovereignty did not in itself secure cultural identity. First, some of the fish sold were 'paper fish', which the European Commission had originally invented so that they could be redistributed in the on-going haggling over quotas both within the EC and with North Atlantic counterparts.[22] During the 1990s, the EU realized that the money spent on Greenlandic paper fish could be spent better on real fish along the coastlines of African states. In 2006, however, a separate partnership legitimized a budget line allowing the EU to fund Greenlandic sustainable development of human resources through education. The agreement foresees increased cooperation in a number of areas declared to be of interest to the EU, including minerals, transportation, and climate research. This result was reached in the face of the fact that Greenland is more affluent than the EU average, let alone the countries covered by the EU development programmes.[23]

Second and less immediately reparable, formal sovereignty did not immediately secure cultural identity: On the one hand, Greenlandic identity discourse involves care for a traditional culture – which is implied to require a distribution of the population in small settlements along the coastline, depending for their livelihood on small-scale fishing and hunting. On the other hand, Greenlandic identity discourse prescribes development towards being able to support itself economically in a globalizing world economy. This has implied the concentration of deep-sea fishing on a very limited number of boats controlled by very few people. On top of the concentration of fisheries, Western animal rights groups have attacked a series of indigenous hunting practices (whaling, sealing, trapping) which carry weight as they have become Inuit cultural icons. In a series of these cases, Greenland has tried to influence the EU to either change EU regulations threatening

22 Former Greenlandic official, interviewed in Copenhagen, 17 December 2010.

23 The partnership agreement was renewed in 2014 with the same level of financial transfers (Sermitsiaq 2014).

Greenlandic interests or to gain European support for preventing international regulations or challenging, for example, US regulations. As we shall see, these efforts have not been entirely successful. And more problematically: They have been dependent on Denmark.

In sum: Having experienced how Denmark conducted sovereignty games in the name of Greenland for a couple of hundred years, the home rule government has taken charge over the development of Greenland's external relations, aiming to diversify its dependence on the outside world. The relationship to the EU has been central in this regard for a number of reasons: Involuntary EC membership proved an important argument for home rule; Greenland–EC relations branched out from Danish membership comparatively early; the EU–Greenland relationship is material for both parties; and the EU has appeared open to dealing with Nuuk (rather than insisting on going through Copenhagen). However, Greenland has pursued the overall aim of achieving subjectivity in the international arena in rather paradoxical ways. While Greenland has insisted on its own sovereignty in certain matters, it has attempted to employ Danish sovereignty in others. Chapters 5 and 6 dig deeper into the rhetorical and practical sovereignty games played by Greenland.

Chapter 5
Greenlandic visions of sovereign equality with the EU

When interviewed for this project, Kuupik Kleist, then Prime Minister of Greenland, explained how Greenland, in contrast to the Faroes, has consciously chosen to 'use the Danish platform' when dealing with the EU.[24] The choice of metaphor is interesting: a platform is something you stand on to reach things you would otherwise not be able to reach. In terms of the metaphor, the Greenlanders are the active part doing their own thing, while the Danish platform is passive. As detailed in this chapter, this is very much in line with how Greenland likes to present itself in Brussels and how Greenlandic politicians like to present affairs at home. As the next chapter lays out, however, things are slightly more complicated in the practical games played in Brussels.

5.1 Photoshopping Denmark out of the picture

As described above, the fear of letting sovereignty over fisheries – as well as power over the future development of Greenland in general – go south to Brussels was decisive when Greenland voted against EC membership in referenda in 1972 and 1982. The Greenlandic self-image as a nation on its way to self-government made EU sovereignty over fisheries unbearable. Among the proponents of EU membership, however, the development of Greenland towards increasingly being able to support itself economically was at the top of the agenda – more specifi-

24 Kuupik Kleist (IA), interviewed by telephone, 28 March 2011.

cally; how to maintain EU contributions to the Greenlandic budget and to development projects in Greenland.

General debates on EU relations are infrequently scheduled in parliament, only to be cancelled due to one of the frequent Greenlandic changes in government. During the 2009–13 anti-Siumut coalition spanning the political spectrum, the parties agreed to not agree on EU membership – effectively killing the debate. In the parliamentary debate on the government's foreign policy strategy in the Autumn Session of 2011, this agreement was implemented by focusing debate on details in the development of the present arrangements rather than the overall relationship to the EU. Hence, the last principled debate in the Greenlandic parliament on the EU took place in 2007 (LTF 24 April 2007). Like the debates on the Greenland–Denmark relationship, this debate on the EU played out around two concerns: self-government and self-support. Proponents of EU membership limited their demands to asking for an investigation into alternatives to the present arrangements, which – as laid out in chapter 5 – amounts to OCT status supplemented by fishery and partnership agreements.

As for the pecuniary question, the claim of the membership proponents was that

> membership of the EU … will be able to accelerate the process towards an independent Greenland … It will be possible to introduce independence without a drop in the standard of living or the level of service, as Greenland will be able to obtain more funds from the EU than is the case today.
>
> (Palle Christiansen, Demokraatit)

The Minister for Foreign Affairs, Josef Motzfeldt (IA), rebuffed by reminding of the relative affluence of Greenland:

> [C]oncerning structural funds and social funds [it … sounds] like the purse is just open … [T]his is hardly correct. First, one has to apply … then one gets a share depending on the needs of the member states … Greenland [would be] number 10 or 11 [if inserted into the list of 27 EU member states] in terms of GDP pr. capita … so [we] should … not imagine that the purse is just open.

When it comes to the question of influence, the proponents of membership sought recourse in a trope well-known from Danish debates on EU membership:[25]

> [W]e will – so to speak – have a seat at the table. This will increase our possibilities for exercising influence on issues important to our country … The influence of the EU on legislation and regulation in Denmark as well as in Greenland – whether we want to admit it or not – is already rather great, and therefore … we might as well try to influence the decision-making process as much as possible. We can only do so via membership.
>
> (Palle Christiansen, Demokraatit)

In this case, the minister's reply began by recalling on whose lap Greenland would have to sit to be at the table:

> In the present constitutional situation, EU membership will only be possible as a part of Denmark … Greenland will not directly and automatically be guaranteed participation in meetings where questions of interest to Greenland are dealt with. In every single case, participation will have to follow an agreement with the Danish government and have to take place as part of a Danish delegation.
>
> (Josef Motzfeldt, IA)

Interestingly, this future-to-be-avoided (because it allows a disturbingly prominent role to Denmark) was contrasted to a present in which Denmark does not stand between Greenland and the EU:

> [T]he prescriptions for mutual dialogue in existing agreements [i.e. OCT, fisheries, partnership] are better at securing Greenlandic interests at direct meetings between the Commission and Greenland … [Now, w]e can have a direct dialogue with the EU, and if we become members, then we will have to be dragged around by Denmark inside the EU.
>
> (Josef Motzfeldt, IA)

25 Especially, when the Danish opt-outs from the Euro, Justice and Home Affairs, etc., are discussed (Adler-Nissen 2009).

So when explaining the benefits of the current relationship with the EU to a domestic audience, Denmark tends to disappear: Greenland and the EU have a direct – and in that sense equal – relationship. The narrative implies that Greenland's colonial other, Denmark, is cleared away so that Greenland's true identity can undisturbedly be recognized by a better other (in this case: the EU).[26] In this manner, a Greenland of the future is presented to its own people: a Greenland which has broken with the colonial dependency of the past and is already taking care of its own international relations. A Greenland which, for all practical purposes, enjoys sovereign equality in relation to the EU. By articulating the concept of sovereignty creatively, the government of Greenland may present a Greenland to its own citizens which is more attractive in the terms of Greenlandic identity discourse than formal legal analysis would suggest.

5.2 Inviting the EU to sovereign equality[27]

When communicating with the EU, Greenland also envisions sovereign equality by photoshopping Denmark out of the picture. Writing about the future of the relationship at the most abstract level, Greenland avails itself of the discourse about a future Arctic bonanza. It does so to describe itself as commanding unique resources, which it may choose to offer either to the EU or another party, depending on how forthcoming the partners prove themselves to be in relation to the Greenlandic need for cash flow and recognition of the symbolically important cultural practices involving the killing of wild animals. Most strikingly, Denmark is not even mentioned in the descriptions of this future. Consequently, Greenland presents itself as an independent subject capable of engaging in a traditional zero-sum sovereignty game with the EU.

A pertinent example may be found in 2008, when the European Commission prepared a green paper on how to revise the OCT arrangement (cf. Gad et al. 2011; Hannibal et al. 2013). The Govern-

26 A similar role was awarded to the USA in debates over the installation of Missile Defence equipment at Thule Air Base in 2001–02 (cf. above).

27 The analysis in this section draws heavily on Gad et al. (2011) and originates in the work of Hannibal and Holst (2010).

ment of Greenland took the consultations following the first draft of this green paper as an occasion to present its general view of the relationship to the EU. In the written submissions to this round of consultations, Greenland was the only OCT that included arguments suggesting that an OCT found its position strong enough to put pressure on the EU.[28] A crucial part of applying such rhetorical pressure was that Greenland presented itself as being on its way to equal terms with the EU: 'A future model [of the OCT–EU association] should take into account the European strategies *vis-à-vis* Greenland as an OCT *as well as a strategic partner*' (Greenland 2008:11, italics inserted) – a strategic partner which may demand that the EU 'enter into bilateral dialogue' (Greenland 2008:7).

This was supported by conjuring up a traditional zero-sum game: we have something that you want, you have something we want – if we don't get a fair deal, we'll go somewhere else. Greenland presented itself as possessing something that the EU wants – all the while Greenland implicitly placed itself in a position where one has alternative courses of action than just offering this to the EU.

First of all, this was done by presenting a game in which Greenland wants to be rewarded for its loyalty to the EU; for working with the EU rather than other parties, such as the USA.[29] This argument was implicitly presented when Greenland framed its response by – over a few pages – stressing the geostrategic importance of Greenland for the EU:

> Geo-politics
>
> *The strategic importance of Greenland to the EU as a whole* lies first and foremost in Greenland's geographical position as a stepping stone between Europe and North America. In that sense, Greenland poses a geopolitical opportunity for the EU.
>
> (Greenland 2008:3, italics in original.)

28 The Greenlandic response to the Commission was not co-ordinated with the Danish MFA (Danish official interviewed in Copenhagen, 14 September 2009).

29 Cf. Noel Parker's theoretical perspective on how 'marginal' polities may seek to obtain awards for placing their loyalty with one 'center' polity rather than another (Parker 2008:13).

Second, Greenland stressed the unique natural resources that it commands – resources to which the EU may only have access in Greenland: Greenland introduced itself as 'the laboratory in relation to the monitoring of the changing climate' (Greenland 2008:2, underlining in original.). Moreover, Greenland presented itself as 'partly the place to identify new possibilities that arise with the melting of the ice in terms of potential and future shipping routes and maritime traffic' (Greenland 2008:2). In parallel, Greenland argued to be in command of 'an unprecedented energy potential' awarding Greenland an undeniable subjectivity: 'In terms of energy security Greenland can be a future important player and can be a facilitator in this respect' (Greenland 2008:2). Notably, the value of those resources which Greenland commands will only materialize in the future.

Greenland asserted itself as an important player with whom the EU has an interest in upholding good relations – the importance of which will first become clear in the future. This self-representation allowed Greenland to pursue a strategy which involved threatening to offer its strategic resources to other potential collaborators (cf. Chauvet 2014:94). The threat of depriving the EU of the future resources was explicit: Greenland stressed its indignation over the EU ban on the import of sealskin. According to an EU regulation from 2009, sealskins can only be placed on the market when these products result from hunts traditionally conducted by Inuit and other indigenous communities to ensure their subsistence.[30] This issue was linked to how the EU in the future should consider how to act in relation to Greenland if it wants to maintain good relations and, thereby, access to the strategic resources of Greenland:

> This is for Greenland an issue of principles and will be the cause of strong reactions which will not be beneficial to the strong and constructive relationship between the EU and Greenland.
>
> (Greenland 2008:3)

Hence, Greenland attempted to achieve their demands by pressuring the EU and indirectly threatening to deprive the EU of its access

30 Regulation (EC) No 1007/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 September 2009 on trade in seal products. We will return to this in Chapter 6.

to Greenland's strategic resources, including influence in the Arctic which – it is explicitly argued – gains increasing strategic significance as the ice melts. This argument allowed Greenland to imply a future relationship of sovereign equality *vis-à-vis* the EU.[31]

When the Greenlandic government envisions the Greenland–EU relationship, a future sovereign Greenlandic state is inevitably involved. The basis for talks with Brussels is a Denmark-free future, as Greenland is inviting the EU into a relationship of sovereign equality. When referring to the Greenland–EU relationship at home, in the Greenlandic Parliament, non-membership is presented as a way of writing Denmark out of the existing Greenland–EU relationship, hence, writing a Greenland of the future into the present. A future membership, to the contrary, will imply that Denmark re-enters and turns the relationship into a *ménage à trois*, which sits uncomfortably with Greenlandic identity discourse. This tendency to photoshop Denmark out of the picture is also notable in how the relationship is dealt with in practical terms, which brings us to the next section.

5.3 Producing independent visibility in Brussels[32]

The 1978 Home Rule Act stipulated that '[t]he home rule authorities may demand that in countries in which Greenland has special commercial interest, Danish diplomatic missions employ officers specifically to attend to such interests' (section 16(1)). Since 1992, a Greenlandic repre-

31 This vision is picked up by a German EU analyst advocating for EU support to Greenlandic independence (Schymik 2009).

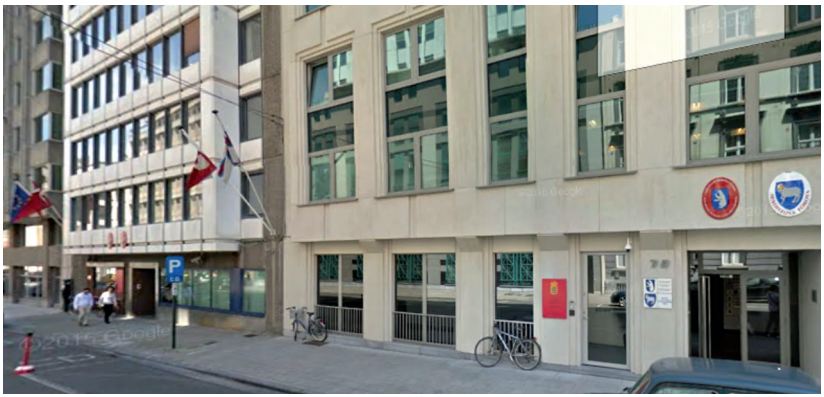
32 This section and the following chapter build on 19 formal interviews and a number of informal conversations with diplomats, bureaucrats, and politicians from Greenland, Denmark, and the EU, who were involved (at the time of the interviews or earlier) in handling the relations between the EU and Greenland. The interviews were conducted in Brussels, Copenhagen, and Nuuk in 2009–11, most face-to-face, a few via telephone. The reading of the interviews – as well as how they were conducted – was influenced by the 'field work' conducted by the author while employed in the home rule bureaucracy in 1998–2001 and 2004. All of the quotes have been anonymized to ensure the anonymity of those interviewees who put this as a condition for their participation. A number of the interviews were conducted by Ida Hannibal and Kristine Holst – I am grateful for being allowed to use their material and for being inspired by their analysis (2010). A couple of the interviews were conducted together with Rebecca Adler-Nissen.

sentative has worked in the Danish diplomatic mission in Brussels and held diplomatic status. Even if the arrangement began with the renewal of the fisheries agreement, what was described in the legal text as 'commercial' interests was immediately re-interpreted to be the 'full spectre' national interests of Greenland in relation to the EU (Vesterbirk 2006). Today, four persons work full-time in Brussels for Greenland, two of whom have (Danish) diplomatic passports. The 2009 Self-Government Act acknowledges both the expansion of the scope but also the diversion of the reference of the officers from Copenhagen to Nuuk, which had taken place over 30 years of practice: The Act stipulates that 'representatives of Naalakkersuisut shall be appointed to the diplomatic missions of the Kingdom of Denmark to attend to Greenland interests within fields of responsibility that have been entirely assumed by the Self-Government authorities' (Section 15).

One of the ways the first Greenlandic representative in Brussels interpreted the national interest of Greenland was to insist on an independent visual presence (cf. Vesterbirk 2006:131). This priority took a number of forms. One result was a separate entrance. Visitors to the representatives of Greenland or the Faroe Islands no longer have to enter through a door flanked by a Danish coat of arms and a Danish flag; rather, they can enter through a separate door guided by the respective Greenlandic and Faroese insignia. According to Greenlandic officials in Brussels, visitors from other self-governing micropolities are particularly aware of this arrangement.[33]

Decades later, renovations to the interior of the building have finally put an end to a flip side of this insistence of independent visibility: The demand for a separate entrance door outside the control of the Danish authorities meant that a security door had to be installed between the Greenlandic and Faroese representations on the one side and the Danish representation on the other. Unfortunately, no bathrooms or even running water were on the 'North Atlantic' side of the door. Employees could access the Danish facilities using a magnetic card – but visitors without security clearance, including Greenlandic goverment ministers, literally had to be escorted to a Danish bathroom. A couple of years after the introduction of self-government, a dignified solution

33 Greenlandic official, interviewed in Brussels, 24 March 2011.



Entering the Greenland representation in Brussels without passing Danish insignia. © Google Maps.

to this inconvenience was found when independent bathrooms were installed.[34] However, it may be much more difficult to find an equally efficient solution to a parallel issue with more serious repercussions: As the Greenlandic officials' computers are not connected to the (security-cleared) network of the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), certain classified information cannot be sent to them. This might have been of limited consequence were it not for the fact that the external status means that Greenland misses the other mails only circulated to insiders as well as the security-cleared mails.

There are two reasons for mentioning such seemingly trivial details. First, of course, the bathroom and the cut off e-mail circulation symbolize in an irresistible manner that independence has a price. Second, the bathroom anecdote in particular is the first in a series of examples of how Denmark is still around, even when Greenland is on its own in Brussels. Notably, however, the presence/absence of Denmark is carefully measured and explained – by Greenlanders and Danes alike – in different ways on different occasions. The elephant may be in the room.

34 Greenlandic official, interviewed in Brussels, 24 March 2011.

It may be right next door. Or it may turn into a mouse. But it is usually around somewhere.

Let us continue our narrative of a Greenlandic government minister visiting Brussels: A regular point on the programme is a visit to the Danish ambassador to receive a briefing on how Denmark handles current EU affairs of interest to Greenland.[35] Here, the distinction between the Greenlandic and Danish sides is upheld, but two hierarchies are constructed simultaneously: First, the colonial hierarchy is re-installed as the Greenlandic minister must go from 'his own' premises to those of the metropole. But second, a different hierarchy is constructed to cross-cut the colonial hierarchy as the ambassador briefs the minister; that between a civil servant and a political executive.

Back on the Greenlandic side of the door, Denmark's presence will continue to be felt even if only Greenlanders are present. When talking to the Greenlandic representatives, repeated references are made to 'our member state' or 'in there', usually accompanied by a nod in the direction of the Danish representation behind the wall.[36]

However, on one of the main points on the programme of a Greenlandic minister's visit to Brussels, Denmark tends to turn invisible: When a Greenlandic minister goes to talk to a Commissioner, Denmark does not interfere. There might be a junior Danish diplomat present in the room – they might be visible to the accompanying Greenlandic officials and perhaps to the Commission officials. But the Greenlandic minister would not necessarily notice.[37] Neither would the Commissioner notice, for that matter. Even if his staff would probably be most comfortable having identified the Danish diplomat – to secure that the Commission does not interfere in the constitutional arrangements of a member state.[38] Such a setup not only requires Danish acceptance but also acceptance from the third party: In this case, the EU facilitates the independent Greenlandic appearance.

In contrast to how the EU facilitates independent Greenlandic visibility, Greenlandic interviewees mention Canada as a counterpart with a much more sensitive approach to the diplomatic participation

35 Greenlandic official, interviewed in Brussels, 24 March 2011.

36 Greenlandic official, interviewed in Brussels, 24 March 2011.

37 Greenlandic official, interviewed in Copenhagen, 24 February 2011.

38 Commission official, interviewed in Brussels, 24 March 2011.

Greenland Prime Minister Kuupik Kleist with José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission, at the Berlaymont building in Brussels, 7 May 2012. © 2004–2014 The Council of the European Union.

of Greenland. At a meeting in the margins of a UN General Assembly, the Canadian sensitivity resulted in what was described as an awkward session of 'musical chairs': Canadian diplomats tried to arrange the room for a two-party meeting between the Canadian and the Danish MFA on Arctic policy and other questions of relevance to Greenland. In contrast, the Greenlanders seconded by the Danes tried to fit a third chair for the Greenlandic MFA into the set-up.[39] The Canadian sensitivity probably has to do with a fear of setting a precedence allowing Canada's own home ruled territories a foreign policy presence.

Just like in the physical meetings between EU officials and Greenlandic politicians, Denmark may gradually slip in and out of the legal texts regulating the relation. In the 2007 fisheries agreement, the parties to the agreement are initially described as 'The European Commu-

39 Two Greenlandic officials, interviewed in Copenhagen, 11 January 2011 and 24 February 2011.

nity, (hereafter referred to as "the Community"), and The Government of Denmark and the Home Rule Government of Greenland, (hereafter referred to as "Greenland")'. Thus declared, the text proceeds with 'Greenland' (and without 'Denmark'). In the end, however, Denmark pops up again as one of four signatories: two representing the EC (the Commission and the Council), one representing the Danish government, and one representing Greenland.

In one specific venue in Brussels, Greenlandization is already implemented 100%: Denmark never follows Greenland to meetings in the OCT Association (OCTA).[40] OCTA organizes the governments of the EU's overseas countries and territories with a permanent population,[41] all of which have self-government arrangements of various levels of ambition. The political leadership of the organization meets in annual ministerial meetings in one of the OCTs while the executive committee meets frequently in Brussels. Danish representatives remain present in tripartite meetings (the triangle consisting of the Commission, OCTs, and metropole member states) – but mainly to display symbolic support to Greenland. As two Danish officials explain independently of one another, the one repeating the other almost verbatim, Greenland usually behaves reasonably, so there is really no need to control them in detail.[42]

Most of the OCTA business relates to projects and programmes under the European Development Fund (EDF). However, Greenland has no access to the EDF – except as part of certain special, cross-cutting projects dedicated to the OCTs. Given that the economic interest of Greenland in the main working area of the OCTA is rather marginal,[43] why has Greenland become involved? And in leading roles, no less? Greenlandic officials explicitly refer to two very different reasons, and a third reason might be distilled from the subtext of the answers.

40 For an analysis of the role and inner workings of OCTA, cf. Hannibal et al (2013).

41 The Government of Bermuda only accepted the OCT status and entered the OCTA organization after the 2013 revision, even if Bermuda was listed as covered by earlier Overseas Association Decisions by the EU.

42 Four former and present Danish and Greenlandic officials, interviewed in Copenhagen and Brussels, 9 September 2009, 17 December 2010, 28 January 2011, and 24 March 2011.

43 Three Greenlandic officials, interviewed in Copenhagen, 17 December 2010, 12 January 2011, and 28 January 2011.

The first reason is that OCTA activities possibly boost the importance of Greenlandic concerns by being part of something larger: Whereas the fisheries agreements are solidly rooted in EU's interest in gaining access to Greenlandic fish stocks, the partnership agreement is much more fragilely anchored on the EU side. The development of Greenland appears a bit lonesome as a purpose when listed in the EU budget – but by inscribing itself as 'one of the OCTs' (even if a special one), a number of potential allies are obtained. Greenland might be special but Greenland is not alone. And in parallel; even if Greenland regards itself as relatively well-known in Brussels, OCTA is judged to be a valuable platform for gaining attention as worthy partners in issues such as climate change, because it casts light on how the Greenlandic concerns are part of a larger pattern that echoes in the OCTs of other member states.[44] As Josef Motzfeldt (IA), then Greenlandic Minister for Foreign Affairs, summed up in a parliamentary debate in 2007: 'OCTA has shown itself to have a much greater clout than the individual OCT countries can have' (LTF 24 April 2007). By contributing more work to OCTA than appears to be in Greenland's immediate self-interest, Greenland expects to gain general goodwill with other member states, which can be cashed in later in specific cases when needed.[45]

The second reason for engaging in OCTA initially appears to be much more mundane: It prepares Greenlandic officials for greater tasks. The work in the OCTA executive committee is explicitly described as a place where young Greenlandic diplomats learn the trade of international relations in practice. The organization is not terribly important for Greenland, but spending time and effort there

44 Two Greenlandic officials, interviewed in Copenhagen and Brussels, 28 January 2011 and 24 March 2011. One Commission official (interviewed in Brussels, 24 March 2011) mentions a related practical reason for prioritizing OCTA and the tripartite OCT Forums: It secures institutionalized face-time – and even leisure time, when Forums are annually held in one of the OCTs – with high-level Commission officials, including the Commissioner. This concern might not be as important for Greenland, however, due to how it excels in 'ministerial tourism', as described below.

45 Former and present Greenlandic officials, interviewed in Copenhagen, 17 December 2010 and 28 January 2011. This idea of earning abstract credit for cashing in later for helping others out has generally been perceived as a norm in the EU, particularly in the committees under the Council of Ministers (Adler-Nissen 2009).

is regarded as worthwhile because it provides experience that will be useful in other forums.[46]

When Greenlandic officials describe their experiences with the work in OCTA, however, it suggests that this rather mundane reason has extra dimensions to it: OCTA seems to be the ideal place to practice for sovereign equality. The first extra dimension to this argument is that the organization might have the same function for the Greenlandic ministers. Contrary to the OCT Forums, which are tripartite (Commission, OCTs, metropole member states), the Greenlandic ministers are on their own among equals in the OCTA ministerial meetings. In that sense, these meetings – with no authorities posing as superiors – are the perfect place to practice sovereign equality. Moreover, OCTA provides a space in which Greenland is not only equal but in many ways actually slightly superior – a point repeatedly mentioned by Greenlandic officials: Greenland may contribute to OCTA because it has more bureaucratic muscle (in Brussels and in general) than most OCTs[47] and – further along these lines – because Greenland has one of the most 'advanced' home rule arrangements.[48] As one leading Greenlandic official puts it, this obviously relates to the fact that 'not all of the OCTs have the same aspirations' for independent agency and, perhaps, for future formal sovereignty.[49]

Finally, the concern for visibility has also involved taking a number of individual EU counterparts to Greenland to let them see for themselves. A saying in the select circle of Greenlandic foreign policy bureaucrats is that 'the most profitable tourism in Greenland is ministerial tourism'. The point is that it is much easier to have it your way in negotiations if the politician presiding over the counterpart has experienced first-hand the hardship of survival in the High North – and marvelled over the beauty of the Ilulissat Icefiorth. The two aspects of the trips – knowledge-gathering and tourism – are stressed to var-

46 Two Greenlandic officials, interviewed in Copenhagen, 12 January 2011 and 28 January 2011.

47 Three former and present Greenlandic officials, interviewed in Copenhagen, 17 December 2010, 12 January 2011, and 28 January 2011.

48 Two leading Greenlandic officials, interviewed in Copenhagen, 12 January 2011, and 28 March 2011.

49 Leading Greenlandic official, interviewed in Copenhagen, 28 March 2011.

ying degrees by the Greenlandic officials interviewed. But most imply – sometimes by intonation or facial gestures – that the touristic aspect is not always insignificant. The whole business of inviting the right people to secure smooth negotiations seems to have become much more difficult, however, as the European Parliament is increasingly involved in approving the EU's international agreements. When negotiating the early generations of fisheries agreements, it was much clearer who constituted the chain of command in the European Commission, which was to be invited.[50]

It is difficult to determine whether organizing such trips really pays off, but Danish ministers also appear to be susceptible to the charms of inviting counterparts to Greenland: Where else is it possible, due to logistical necessities, to have the undivided attention of a member of the European Commission for days on end? Even if the protocols of the Dano–Greenlandic relationship generally demand that the Greenlandic third party is invited along. Under the 2000 visit of Romano Prodi, then president of the European Commission, everything seems to have formed a synthesis: personalities that hit it off, negotiations on Greenlandic agreements with the EU, a Danish Prime Minister preparing enlargements under an upcoming Danish presidency, a Commission president and his wife in a holiday mood. The logistics even failed at the perfect time: For hours, the party (including the VIPs) were isolated, way out of the reach of mobile phones, at the solitary ruins of the old Norse church at Hvalsey – and the Air Greenland helicopter only returned to pick them back up after a considerable delay. Considerable, that is, to the civil servants – the VIPs seemed to enjoy the break without making much of the fact that they were out of reach of the world and vice versa. The fact that the hosts of the final informal dinner at the sheep owners' annual gathering had become a bit tipsy when the honorary guests finally arrived only made everyone involved more positively spirited.[51]

Increased independent visibility appears to have paid off. Greenlandic officials stress that by 2010, it was a lot easier to get to business

50 Former Greenlandic official, interviewed in Copenhagen, 28 March 2011.

51 Former Greenlandic official, interviewed in Copenhagen, 28 March 2011. The photo on the cover of this book conveys the atmosphere. More photos available at: http://www.greenland-guide.gl/leif2000/day2day.htm.

in Brussels when needed than one or two decades earlier[52] – simply because there is now a higher degree of awareness that Greenland exists. The active promotion of Greenlandic visibility has been aided by increased interest in issues related to global warming and related visions of both increased access to natural resources in the Arctic and the potentially ensuing conflicts and environmental problems (Strandsbjerg et al. 2011): The EU has been gearing up its process to formulate an Arctic Policy (EEAS n.d.), and the Greenlandic officials in Brussels felt almost overwhelmed by invitations to present their positions, as everyone seems to want to arrange their own 'Arctic seminar'.[53]

52 Two former and current Greenlandic officials, interviewed in Copenhagen and Brussels, 17 December 2010, and 24 March 2011.

53 Three former and current Greenlandic officials, interviewed in Copenhagen and Brussels, 17 December 2010, 28 January 2011, and 24 March 2011.

Chapter 6
From unique continuity to practical Greenlandization of EU relations

Greenland presents Denmark as a mere 'platform' for its relationship to the EU, and chapter 5 analysed how the Government of Greenland routinely photoshops Denmark out of the picture when describing its relationship to the EU in both Nuuk and Brussels. However, the practical games played in relation to the EU seem to imply a distribution of agency which is more complex than the platform metaphor and photoshopping would allow.[54]

6.1 The games allowed by continuity

Persons matter when a fragile, small-scale diplomatic corps is working.[55] The first couple of decades after branching off from Denmark–EU relations in the mid-1980s, Greenland–EU relations were basically handled by the same trio: Greenland's representative in Brussels and Greenland's chief fisheries negotiator based in Copenhagen were both Danes with personal ties to Greenland, who began their carriers in the Danish colonial administration but were 'taken home' by the home rule government after it was established in 1979. These two 'Greenlanders'

54 Chauvet (2014) seems somewhat preliminarily to accept the photoshopped version, as he concludes that 'L'UE doit gérer sa propre relation avec le Groenland, indépendamment du Danemark … Les diplomaties entre le Groenland, le Danemark et l'UE sont parallèles, complètement distinctes, sans compénétration'.

55 This was a basic tenet in almost all of the interviews on Greenlandic diplomacy – but also in interviews on other OCTs (Hannibal and Holst 2010; cf. H. Petersen 2006:12–13).

were joined by the diplomat who happened to be at the relevant desk in the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs when Greenland's exit had to be negotiated; later, his highly specialized experience kept him from circulating to other tasks as most diplomats do. A basic benefit of continuity was, of course, first-hand experience with previous rounds of negotiations with the EU.

Related has been the consistent work on building up 'textual levers' for future benefits by contributing to the self-description of the other: As part of the reason for providing an annual subsidy of 25 million euros to the development of Greenland, the EU states that 'the European Community has a continuing geostrategic interest in treating Greenland, being part of a Member State, as a privileged neighbour and in contributing to Greenland's wellbeing and economic development'.[56] Tracing this sentence backwards, it must have passed through computers in Copenhagen and Nuuk, just like an earlier example of Greenland writing itself into EU policy documents via Copenhagen: EU's 'Northern Dimension' policy was originally devised by Finland to focus on Russia as a counterweight to the focus on the EU's Mediterranean neighbours. Following a Greenlandic initiative (Vesterbirk 2006:157), however, an 'Arctic Window' stretched the area covered by the Dimension all the way to include Canada in the West as a neighbouring country. The formulations of the Arctic Window were later used as one of multiple hooks for arguing the necessity of a benevolent agreement with Greenland to serve the EU's interests in the Arctic.[57]

Furthermore, the continuity of the Greenland–EU portfolio in the Danish MFA also secured that at least one person in Denmark was granting qualified attention to EU issues that might be relevant for Greenland in a manner that does not conform to regular Danish priorities. This was why the Government of Greenland requested the continuity.[58] The flipside of this continuity was that Greenlanders ulti-

56 Preamble to 'Joint declaration by the European Community, on the one hand, and the Home Rule Government of Greenland and the Government of Denmark, on the other, on partnership between the European Community and Greenland', printed in OJEU (29 July 2006) L 208/32, available via Naalakkersuisut (n.d.).

57 Former Greenlandic official, telephone interview, 28 March 2011.

58 Greenlandic official, interviewed in Denmark, 12 January 2011.

mately worried that the Danish MFA might find that loyalty shifted from Copenhagen to Nuuk, endangering the point of the whole setup.[59]

In more subtle ways, the continuity of portfolios – and the continuity of personal experience and contacts across the fine line between Danish and Greenlandic bureaucracy – provided advantages to the Government of Greenland when engaged in negotiations. When comparing his working conditions with those of his Icelandic colleagues, one Greenlandic official noted that inside knowledge of the EU's internal coordination procedures made a significant difference – not only in terms of the elegance with which the negotiations could be conducted but also in terms of the results. The inside knowledge stemmed both from personal experience from earlier assignments within what was then the Danish Ministry for Greenland as well as from relating to sympathetic Danish colleagues sitting on the European side of the table representing Denmark as a member state in the internal EU coordination.[60]

A more delicate advantage came from how continuity allowed the trio to develop a distinct distribution of roles. Of particular interest are the postcolonial blame games occasionally played by one Greenlandic official in particular, which involved spectacles such as literally kicking doors open to get access and slamming them shut behind him when leaving meetings in anger.[61] These games also involved 'publically' criticizing the Danish official present at a meeting with European counterparts for acting in a 'colonialist' manner.[62]

6.2 When the chips are down

Overall, it is difficult not to find the outcome of the games successful when considering the core priorities of Greenland: to maintain both the cash flow from Brussels and self-government in fisheries. When

59 Three former and current Greenlandic officials interviewed in Copenhagen, 17 December 2010, 12 January 2011, and 24 March 2011.

60 Former Greenlandic official, interviewed in Copenhagen, 17 December 2010.

61 Former Greenlandic official, interviewed in Copenhagen, 2 October 2009.

62 Former Greenlandic official, interviewed in Copenhagen, 2 October 2009; cf. the analysis of the triangular relationship with Washington and Copenhagen in chapter 4.2 above and in Kristensen (2004).

asked to explain the success, however, interviewees place the decisive agency differently: Some insist that results have come about because the assets that Greenland commands (fish) are simply necessary for the EU to acquire.[63] Others ascribe the success to the elaborate and broad-spectre preparatory efforts coordinated between Greenland and Denmark, including the combination of ministerial tourism, feeding the EU with suggestions on how to formulate its self-interest, and documenting Greenland's needs and potentials in detail.[64] Yet others insist that what made the EU agree to the Partnership agreement in 2006 – and the accompanying budget line for the sustainable development of Greenland – was a high-level conversation in which the President of the European Commission asked the Danish Prime Minister 'whether the member state *really* meant' the demands put forward by the Greenlanders.[65]

More interesting than the question of which story is the best approximation of reality is to note how the three narratives each match a political stance to the present and future of the community of the realm identified in the first chapters of this book: If Greenlandic success with the EU is due to Greenlandic resources, the community of the realm is reduced to an unnecessary straitjacket for a Greenland ready to secede. If the success is a truly joint effort between Greenland and Denmark, the community of the realm remains a handy working relationship until Greenland is ready to do on its own. If it was really the Danish prime minister spending political capital on Greenland, the community of the realm is a perfect framework for the maternalistic Danish benevolence necessary for Greenland to endure.

6.3 Employing Danish sovereignty to challenge Danish sovereignty

However, in the cases where Inuit traditions of killing wild animals have been under attack, Danish support – especially in the Council of

63 Greenlandic official, interviewed in Copenhagen, 12 January 2011.

64 Former Greenlandic official, interviewed in Copenhagen, 2 October 2009.

65 Danish official, interviewed in Copenhagen, 14 September 2009.

Ministers – has undoubtedly been central to any success with influencing the EU. But Danish support has been neither unlimited nor automatic. The Danish position is to be formulated as a compromise between, on the one hand, North Atlantic priorities and, on the other, Danish public opinion and consistency with the more conservationist position Denmark advocates in comparable cases outside of the community of the realm.[66] Particularly one case provides a vivid example of the importance attached to these issues – and of the legal and political difficulties they entail: In 2009, the EU prepared a ban on the import of sealskin. In a letter to the presidents of the European Commission and the European Parliament, the speaker of the Greenlandic Parliament warned that Europe was repeating the colonial policies pursued in South America 400 years ago and thereby committing 'cultural genocide' (Motzfeldt in KNR 2009; cf. ICC 2009a). Behind the fears of the collapsing market was the threat to cultural practices described as essential to Inuit identity (Fægteborg 1990; Gad 2005: ch.2) posed by Western standards concerning the 'humane' treatment of animals. Sealing (and whaling, etc.) arguably also has importance for the household budgets of Greenlandic families living off of subsistence and/or subsidized hunting and fishing.

Concerted and persistent Danish–Greenlandic action secured that the ban on the import of sealskin explicitly exempts skins produced by traditional hunters. On the one hand, this exemption effectively gave Greenland a monopoly on selling sealskin in the EU, as Canada, Norway, and other competitors were not ready to claim that their skins were produced by traditional hunters. On the other hand, the exemption did not ameliorate the fears of the Government of Greenland that sealskin would be impossible to sell in Europe for all practical purposes (GoG 2009b). Nor did it accommodate the principled position that sealing is sustainable and should, hence, at least be morally on par with how, say, cows are produced in European industrial agriculture.

The Greenlandic government considered at one point asking Denmark to act on its behalf in the WTO to challenge the ban on the import

66 Three Danish and Greenlandic officials, interviewed in Copenhagen and Brussels, 14 September 2009, 12 January 2011, and 24 March 2011. Cf. the ethnographic analysis of the diplomatic handling of a parallel Faroese case in Adler-Nissen (2014).

of sealskin introduced in the EU (including Denmark).[67] A Danish diplomat commenting anonymously on the considerations was quoted as saying that

> If the government of Greenland decides to challenge the EU decision [in the WTO], it will be Denmark that lodges the appeal on behalf of Greenland. This would result in Denmark, itself a member of the union, suddenly being in the position of lodging an appeal against itself. It is something we have never experienced before and would be extremely unusual.
>
> (Sermitsiaq 2009a)

During interviews with Greenlandic officials, the sealskin case was mentioned as one in which the constitutional link to Denmark – and Denmark's lack of good will on a specific point – has been a barrier to pursuing Greenlandic interests: under conditions of full formal sovereignty, Greenland would have been free to support Canada in the WTO,[68] just as Norway did. Nevertheless, you do not necessarily get your way simply because your case makes it to court. The WTO Dispute Settlement Board's conclusion backfired double seen from the Greenlandic perspective: The general EU ban on sealskin was held to be in accordance with WTO agreements, whereas the exception for Inuit products was found to be a violation (WTO 2014). In the meantime, the Faroes got what Greenland did not: acceptance from Copenhagen to launch a case at the WTO on behalf of Denmark against the EU including Denmark – not on the right to sell sealskins but with respect to procedures for negotiating fishing quotas (Lögmansskrivstovan 2013). Once again, each new generation of constitutional lawyers in the Danish Ministries of State, Justice, and Foreign Affairs have proven to be more creative than the ones preceding when deciding which games the postcolonial members of the community of the realm are allowed to play with Danish sovereignty in order to keep the very same sovereignty formally intact.

67 Prime Minister Kuupik Kleist (IA), speaking in parliament, LTF 16 June 2009.

68 Greenlandic official, interviewed in Copenhagen, 12 January 2011.

6.4 The benefits of losing memory

A new generation has meant that Greenland–EU relations have been placed in the hands of bureaucrats and diplomats without personal memory of how Denmark handled the pre-home rule Greenland as part of the EC. This has meant a 'Greenlandization' of the handling, which is described as 'only natural'.[69] The Greenlandic representatives in Brussels and Copenhagen along with the chief fisheries negotiator (no longer based in Copenhagen but in Nuuk) and the Greenland–EU desk officer in the Danish MFA are all Greenlanders – products of Danish and international higher education but with the home rule administration as their central job experience. Apart from this Greenlandization, the generational change also seems to involve a gradual Danish detachment: the Greenland–EU file in the MFA has been merged with the general Greenland file, while a separate position as 'Arctic Ambassador' has been formed and filled with MFA seniors with no particular Greenlandic experience. The Greenland file at the Danish permanent representation in Brussels is but a side task for younger diplomats rotating in and out of town every few years.[70]

High-profile cases involving 'wild animals' produce work on both representations as well as in Nuuk and Copenhagen. But the bulk of the workload and the initiative in handling the day-to-day business of Greenland *vis-à-vis* the EU have gradually shifted from the Danish to the Greenlandic side of the security door separating the Greenlandic representation from the Danish.[71] Asked about the possible consequences of the generational change for the – regularly returning, more heavy-duty – negotiations of Greenland's partnership and fisheries

69 Leading Greenlandic official, interviewed in Copenhagen, 28 March 2011. As noted in chapter 3, the term 'Greenlandization' is notoriously polyvalent. It involves at least the formal transfer of decisions and administration from Copenhagen to Nuuk – but may as a programmatic slogan also involve linguistic, ethnic, and mental changes.

70 Informal conversations with three Danish and Greenlandic officials in Copenhagen, 15 March 2011, Brussels, 24 March 2011, and Nuuk, 17 April 2011.

71 Five present and former Danish and Greenlandic officials, interviewed in Copenhagen and Brussels, 9 September 2009, 17 December 2010, 28 January 2011, and 24 March 2011.

agreements with the EU, one central Greenlandic official finds that losing the memory of alternatives left behind 'may, after all, be both bad *and* good'.[72] Even if Greenlandic re-accession to the EU is still occasionally propagated (Kristensen 2010; Mølgaard 2010; Sermitsiaq 2010), this scenario is hardly relevant any longer (cf. Lyberth et al. 2014:141). Rather, intellectual capacities are concentrated on devising new creative platforms and levers for enhanced Greenlandic subjectivity in relation to the EU from the already innovative ways of playing games with sovereignty, which is summarized under the label 'the community of the realm'.

However, chapter 7 will discuss how the national identity narratives of Denmark and Greenland are bound to collide if they continue unchanged. Chapter 8 concludes that the creativity performed by both Greenland and Denmark in relation to the EU may be important as a model for the further diversification of Greenland's dependency – and how such creativity may, if employed in other relations, prolong the community of the realm by directing it towards its own dissolution.

72 Leading Greenlandic official, interviewed in Copenhagen, 28 March 2011.

Chapter 7
Scenarios for the community of the realm

Danish and Greenlandic national identity discourse equally prescribe culturally homogenous nation-states as ideals. Chapters 2 and 3 showed how stories are nevertheless told about the community of the realm that are not identical – but nevertheless compatible enough to allow each a meaningful role in the identity discourse of the other: Greenland recognizes the need for outside assistance to be able to increasingly support itself economically, whereas Denmark can accept a role for itself as a parent who resolutely shows her teenager trust in the form of self-government and block grants.

In the long run, these two basic stories will hardly allow the community of the realm to continue. This chapter lays out why. First, two scenarios are briefly outlined in which the preconditions for the narratives change radically: The self-understanding of Denmark and/or Greenland could in principle be fundamentally recast; or the perceived inequality of the relation might suddenly change. Second, two more likely scenarios are drawn up to explain why the Danish and Greenlandic narratives on the community of the realm are indeed on a collision course: While the narratives appear compatible, they can hardly tolerate sustained, explicit exposure to each other – and such exposure is unavoidable. Third, two scenarios consider how the two stories – with a deliberate Danish and/or Greenlandic effort – can be transformed to become long-term compatible; a compatibility, however, containing another set of significant paradoxes. The final section discusses how Denmark and Greenland are each currently re-evaluating their common past in a way that may facilitate the transformative scenarios –

before chapter 8 tends to the lessons that may be learned from the EU relation.

7.1 Radically changed foundations

The points of departure for the narratives upholding the community of the realm are that Denmark and Greenland see themselves as ideally homogenous nation-states and that the deviation from this ideal implied by the multinational community of the realm is explained by Greenland's inadequacy to stand alone. Both of these preconditions might conceivably disappear – with radically different results.

Scenario 1: New self-images allow a frozen community of the realm. In principle, the intimate state–nation link, which is a basic element in the national self-images, could be changed in Denmark and Greenland alike; Denmark could become accustomed to being a cultural nation subject to multiple political centres (Brussels and Copenhagen) each shared with other cultural nations; and Greenland could become accustomed to federalism or multiculturalism as a constitutional form.

Despite EU membership and pan-Inuit romanticism, however, neither Denmark (Hansen 2002) nor Greenland provide any substantial evidence suggesting a decoupling of political and cultural identity (Christiansen 2000:61–71; but pace Thisted 2011): The fundamental ideal of a cultural nation with its own, sovereign government seems unchallenged. A modified fundamental view of how Denmark and Greenland respectively should be a nation-state could in principle occur as a result of a longer process to which we will return shortly. Before returning to such a scenario, however, the three most likely scenarios are laid out, all implying the dissolution of the community of the realm, be it rapid or slow.

Scenario 2: An oil bonanza ends dependence. Besides a (not immediately probable) change in the nation-state ideal, change can be conceived as a radical transformation in the unequal character of the relationship between the two countries. While not all Siumut politicians will accept it, even very large-scale mining projects will not be sufficient (Rosing et al. 2014). Most likely – but still hypothetically – such a change would have to come from the discovery of very large Greenlandic oil deposits.

If such discoveries were of sufficient dimensions, Greenland would no longer be financially dependent on Denmark – and the country would be much freer in relation to cover its other resource needs (personnel, know-how, etc.) from other countries. Simply because Greenland could pay for itself. Such an 'Arctic Kuwait' might or might not want to be formally subject to another state. Conversely, Denmark would probably not agree to perform expensive tasks for a wealthy Greenland without a substantial share in the revenues flowing from such an oil adventure. Greenland would probably not be willing to allow Denmark such a share. The higher the revenue from raw materials, the less the chance of survival for the community of the realm.

A fundamental change in either the Danish or Greenlandic self-understanding as nations which ought to have their own state (scenario 1) is highly unlikely. A fundamental change in the unequal character of the relation following a Greenlandic oil bonanza (scenario 2) is possible – but impossible to forecast.

7.2 Continuation and collision of established stories

What is most likely to happen, then, is that both the Danish and Greenlandic sides continue to tell roughly the same stories about the community of the realm as they do now – that these stories will have to involve inequality – and that the stories coming from each side of the Atlantic will collide. The Danish and Greenlandic stories each contain particularly sensitive elements, as described in scenarios 3 and 4, which – especially in combination – could accelerate the termination of the community of the realm:

Scenario 3: Danish impatience with Greenlandic ingratitude. The Danish story about why the homogenous nation Denmark finds itself in a commonwealth with Greenland is based on the responsibility that Denmark believes it has to help Greenland develop and mature. The obvious end of this responsibility could come from a Danish rebellion against a lack of gratitude from Greenland: Denmark perceives itself to display trust towards the adolescent Greenland; in return, Greenland ought to display gratitude for this trust. The former leader of the Social Liberal Party, MF Marianne Jelved, made a remark at a confer-

ence on the economy of the community of the realm that might signal how it will sound when patience is running out: '[I] hope that my grandchildren will never ask me what benefits I get from being their grandmother' (Lennert 2006:97; cf. DNAG 2004).

Scenario 4: Greenlandic impatience with Danish maternalism. On the Greenlandic side, such an explication of a hierarchical family metaphor will conceivably trigger a backlash. The maternalistic metaphor is so natural to the Danish side that even a well-intended Danish left-wing MF, Pernille Frahm (Soc.), ends up responding to a Greenlandic colleague that: 'I don't think that it's embarrassing to be someone's mother … I don't think you should be ashamed of that nor that you need a mother once in a while' (FF 19 February 2008, 13:46). Metaphors of adolescence might be acceptable as self-diagnosis, coming from the right position, and imbued with carefully measured prospects of self-therapy. One Greenlandic high school student explains that: 'We have so many problems, and that's fair enough because we're a very young nation. But as it is right now, Greenland is one big puberty crisis … and we need to be a bit adult' (Kuka Chemnitz in Gaardmand 2015). Notable in this intervention is, firstly, the self-irony of a teenager diagnosing the whole of society with problems that he has probably been told that *he* personally is suffering from. Secondly, and more importantly, the prescribed cure is one of volition, not of capabilities: We do not need assistance in growing up (in this regard); we merely need to pull ourselves together and act as the adult we already are. When coming from a Dane, however, infantilization is not acceptable to Greenland, striving as it is for recognition as an equal. The rhetoric on both sides is walking a fine line; that much is clear from the line in the sand drawn by then MF Juliane Henningsen, elected in Greenland for IA: '[P]aternalistic talk is of course of no use to us. But exchange of knowledge, conceiving new solutions, and offers to cooperate … that, we can, of course, use quite a lot' (FF 19 February 2008, 15:24).

The collision resulting from a projection of the Danish and Greenlandic stories of the community of the realm in scenarios 3 and 4 are two sides of the same coin: In Denmark, the community of the realm is legitimized by the inequality of the relationship – whereas in Greenland, the inequality of the relationship is unbearable as a permanent condition.

7.3 Compatibility facilitated by Danish self-restraint

In contrast, scenarios 5 and 6 lay out how Denmark and Greenland each in their own – very different – way could transform their stories so that they may come to facilitate a continuation of the community of the realm. On the one hand, increased attention among Danish politicians to historically charged metaphors could be taken to point in this direction. Nevertheless, the transformation is not complete and backlashes may be triggered by populist appeals to traditional ideas of what the relation is and should be. And even the transformed stories each include their paradoxes.

Scenario 5: Self-effacing Danish power makes the community of the realm acceptable in Greenland. One way to facilitate the continued compatibility of the stories upholding the community of the realm on the two sides of the Atlantic would be for Denmark to take the shared narrative to heart that was established with the mandate of the bilateral Commission on Self-Government and sedimented in the preamble of the 2009 Act on Self-Government: Here, Denmark explicitly recognized that Greenland and Denmark are equal members of the family in at least one important sense: Greenland has the right to unilaterally declare its own independence (even if certain formalities must be negotiated and certain legal procedures might delay the procedure). Today, Denmark ends its story based on family metaphors by noting that Greenland is not ready to leave home – but it is Greenland's own decision if and when to go. Denmark could explicitly embrace a continuation of the story, including the farewell as a joint goal and accepting that it is imminent. Hence, the joint purpose of the community of the realm would be not merely to render Greenland increasingly able to support itself within the community of the realm but to make Greenland *independent*. However, it seems to be very difficult for Danish politicians to arrive at the paradoxical conclusion that the community is best sustained by directing it towards the complete cancellation of the colonial power relation. Whenever a Danish politician mentions the community of the realm, they ritually add an introit about how they hope that Greenland will remain in the community, even if this is Greenland's own decision.

One chance for Denmark to demonstrate that the development of the Community of the Realm is not conditioned on Danish superiority but rather on equality may present itself soon. Both the Greenlandic and Faroese parliaments have decided to begin writing their own constitutions. The Greenlandic Parliament is likely to revive the process it has already initiated twice (Sermitsiaq 2015). The Faroese already had a full draft in 2011, which was even supported by the parties favouring continued association with Denmark (Johannesen in Lidegaard 2012; Skaale 2012). However, the Faroese Parliament stopped short of adopting the text when Danish prime minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen (Lib.) conveyed the message from the Danish constitutional lawyers in the Ministry of Justice that it was unclear whether the proposed Faroese constitution was consistent with the Danish constitution (Rasmussen in Ritzau 2011). Activist legal theory, on the other hand, insists that there need not be a problem with having two (or three) constitutions (Spiermann in Sermitsiaq 2015).

But what does Denmark gain by actively discouraging the Faroese and Greenlanders from adopting their respective constitutions? There is no chance that official Danish representatives would ultimately stand up in the parliaments in Tórshavn and Nuuk to try to stop the vote – let alone sending warships to convey the message (as the Danish government did when a Faroese referendum decided in favour of independence in 1946). If Denmark wants to continue the community of the realm, the most principled reply would of course involve a revision or merely a re-interpretation of the Danish constitution to describe its relation to the two new constitutions. Even though the development of the community of the realm is full of episodes in which steps of devolution hitherto deemed unconstitutional were suddenly no-longer so, a legal accept of two new basic laws would probably be too big a step for the Danish authorities on constitutional law. Even then, however, the Danish government could choose 'constructive disagreement', as it did for a while in the case of the planned export of uranium from Greenland: The Danish and Greenlandic governments disagreed over who has competence on the issue – but they agreed to disagree on principles and concentrate on how export should be handled in practice (Regeringen &

Naalakkersuisut 2013).[73] Likewise, when faced with the reality of a Greenlandic (or Faroese) constitution adopted by the parliament in Nuuk (or Tórshavn), business will most likely go on as usual; the block grant cheques will keep on flowing. Whether formally acknowledged or not, the practical reality of the relationships of both Greenland and the Faroese to Denmark is one of free association – Denmark cannot use its power overtly without disproving the freedom of association.

Another way to continue the story with Greenlandic independence as a common goal would entail Denmark renouncing its right to as well as its prospects for any income from an imagined future oil bonanza in Greenland – all the while Denmark continues to sponsor the development of Greenland. This would prove to Greenland that the block grant check really does have 'no strings attached'. Supporters of the community of the realm would then simply be left to hope that a self-sufficient Greenland would freely decide to maintain relations – just as parents can only hope that their adult children will continue to visit them at the nursing home or possibly even offer them a room in their cohousing community.

7.4 Compatibility facilitated by creative metaphors and diversification of dependence

Scenario 6: Creative metaphors and the diversification of dependence disarms the ticking Greenlandic allergy against Danish maternalism. On the Greenlandic side, the prospects of the community of the realm are – paradoxically – defined by the reduced dependence of Greenland on Denmark. Only if the ties to Denmark become less dominant will they appear to be so harmless that a less straining community can be maintained. This requires more than merely a break with the hierarchical reflexes that accompany most of the emotional family metaphors upholding the

73 After a couple of years of disagreement, the joint working group established to describe procedures for uranium export produced four agreements – signed by Danish and Greenlandic ministers – which, in a more or less convoluted manner, confirmed the Danish interpretation of the division of sovereignty: Greenland can mine uranium, but exports must be controlled by Danish authorities. Agreements available via Naalakkersuisut (2016).

community of the realm; it also requires a break with a series of institutionalized habits.

Most people – even most Danes – have gradually broken the habit of explicitly using the mother/child metaphor when describing the Greenland–Denmark relationship. Even a metaphor of brotherhood (Rosing 2014) easily appears problematic, as brothers inevitably come in pairs of big and small, older and younger. (No one promotes a metaphor of the community of the realm as twins or triplets.) Instead, it has become commonplace to speak of the community as a *partnership*. To keep the positive emotional charge of the family metaphor, however, the community is often conceived of as a marital relationship (or a ritualized courtship; Lynge 2002). The creative use of this metaphor was demonstrated by the Greenlandic and Danish prime ministers when meeting the press after celebrating the Self-Government Act on 21 June 2009 (Sermitsiaq 2009b). Kuupik Kleist (IA) said that '[s]ome have been asking whether this [self-government] is a divorce or a separation. I would say that it is a more equal relation between two parties who agree on an arrangement. In other words: As of today, the man is permitted an equal share in decisions at home as the wife'. Lars Løkke Rasmussen (Lib.) concurred that '[a]ny good marriage rests on both the husband and wife wanting to live together. To sustain a marriage in which only one of them finds it worthwhile to be married will be traumatizing in the long run'. According to the Greenlandic newspaper *Sermitsiaq* (2009b), the Danish prime minister did not mind being the wife in relation to Greenland. However, the metaphor has not caught on. Apart from the playful celebration in Nuuk, only MF Søren Espersen (DPP) has employed marital metaphors – as a criticism of what he sees as government leniency towards Greenlandic independence plans: 'Greenland tells us: "We're married, but as soon as we get rich we want a divorce"' (Espersen in Hansen & Mackeprang 2014; cf. FF 21 February 2013, 14:27).

More metaphorical creativity is called for if Greenland and Denmark are to be able tell a joint story of the community of the realm. For instance, the relationship with Denmark looks different if we metaphorically think of Greenland as a player on a market. Infidelity is a breach of the obligation of loyalty one has to one's partner. Conversely, in the market one would say that it is a very risky strategy for Green-

land as a relatively small player to be so dependent on a single business partner. Nothing prevents a company from checking out other business opportunities; that is actually what is supposed to make a market function.

The government of Greenland could – tomorrow – decide to redirect the publicly owned container ships and international flights to the USA, Canada, Iceland, or the UK as soon as contractual obligations expire. That would save freight and passengers a lengthy detour if their final destination is anywhere other than Denmark. However, such a decision, indiscriminately made and universally implemented, would probably be really bad business in both the short and medium term. Because most of the passengers and goods are actually going to or from Denmark. And the Greenlandic consumer has had decades to learn to prefer Danish cereal brands for breakfast. Traffic and preferences are the result of a lengthy history of individual people and specific goods whose travel patterns have been shaped by the colonial relationship between Denmark and Greenland.

There are many barriers to change, but one is particularly apparent: language. Greenland's first foreign language – Danish – can only be used in one place outside of Greenland: in Denmark. The obvious alternative would be to prioritize English. Meeting (English-speaking) globalization without (Danish-speaking) colonial connotations could prove to facilitate the implementation of elements of modernity without co-importing the identity problems. In a global perspective, English is surely the colonial language *par excellence*; and the Greenlandic language will remain small. But in the particular history of Greenlandic identity formation, Danish language plays *the* role as the language of the oppressor – whereas during World War II, English entered the stage as the language opening the door to a larger world. The historical connotations attached to the two languages indeed make a difference. By letting the English language work as a facilitator of the diversification of Greenland's dependence on the outside world, the unhealthy overloading of the relationship to Denmark would gradually subside, simply because the Danish connection would lose importance. The paradox is that reduced dependence might pave the way for Greenland embracing the concrete historical and family ties to Denmark for the purely emotional value they do actually have.

Perhaps the most durable metaphors for the community of the realm would be a cohousing community: Less than a commune – you each have your own private premises, you do not share everything. More than good neighbours – you choose to do certain important things together. The family metaphors – at least in the prevalent, romantic version – carry connotations of unconditional emotional commitment. Among the family metaphors, the parent/child metaphor combines this with both hierarchy and the conflicts involved in adjusting hierarchy and negotiating commitment. Conversely, it is okay in cohousing to develop emotional commitment – and you are likely to do so. But the point of departure is a voluntary, practical arrangement. Each party is there because they benefit from sharing some of the facilities and tasks. But how to get to such a new metaphor?

The hard work that remains to be done must be done in Greenland – in the form of concrete effort to diversify the practices that spring out of dependence and in the form of more abstract work to decolonize how people view themselves and Greenland. This is where a switch to English as a second language would have its real force: a shift to English will not necessarily entail a shift away from Denmark, neither in terms of imports and exports nor in terms of training and recruitment. But making English the second language of Greenland would make the *opportunity* of such changes in substantive relationships more visible. 'Opportunity' is the key word here: The most important step out of the postcolonial state – the postcolonial state of relations and the postcolonial state of mind – would be the recognition and acceptance of Greenland's opportunity to make its own choices about its relationship to the world: Greenland is no longer forced to depend on Denmark. There are obviously limitations on Greenland's choices – no actors, collective or individual, have completely free choices. In the colonial era, restrictions were ultimately based on brute force; in the postcolonial predicament, at least some of the barriers are inside our heads.

7.5 Re-evaluating the past as a precondition for re-inventing the future

Greenlandic intellectual Finn Lynge once diagnosed an important Greenlandic reaction to its present postcolonial condition as phantom pains: Greenlanders still feel a sense of 'Danish oppression' despite – according to Lynge – such oppression no longer actually existing (Lynge 2002). As the manifest presence of a wooden leg and a neural memory of the real leg reminds the patient of what once was, practices resembling and reminiscent of colonial oppression are widespread in contemporary Greenland. The community of the realm – as considered in scenarios 5 and 6 – can therefore best survive if it is emptied of power and dependence; of inequality and hierarchy.[74]

Denmark's contribution to such a development largely exists in an exercise of self-restraint, self-consciousness, and honesty. In this regard, important moves have been made by Martin Lidegaard (Soc.Lib.), then Minister for Foreign Affairs (quoted in Breum 2014). Firstly, he embraced the ambition fundamental to Greenlandic national identity discourse: 'I respect the Greenlandic goal of political independence. I respect the desire to secede from the community of the realm which has existed in Greenland for many years and grown since the home rule of 1979'. Secondly and equally importantly, he attempted to formulate a way to proceed together in contrast to the one tested for a couple of decades:

> In the old days, Denmark would say to Greenland, 'If we can help you, let us know!' I don't think that's a way to speak to an equal partner. We need to turn things around and say, 'Where can we cooperate for mutual benefit and delight – in respect for each other's goals?'

Thirdly and even more importantly, Lidegaard acknowledges that Denmark has – and has had – a separate interest in upholding the community of the realm: 'We [i.e., Denmark] simply take up more space in Beijing and Washington and Berlin, because we [i.e., Denmark] are linked up with Greenland'. What has been clear for decades from Qaa-

74 Thisted (2011) discusses how Greenlandic difference may be negotiated as equality rather than hierarchy in a pop-cultural context.

naaq to Ittoqqortoormiit – but nevertheless been denied by Danes with or without an official title – was suddenly official Danish policy: Denmark is not (only) in Greenland for the benefit of the Greenlanders. It is possible that Denmark *also* wants to do good in Greenland. And it is also possible that all of the alternatives to Denmark would be worse for Greenland. But Danish imperial projects in Greenland have not always been determined purely by altruism.

One potentially important site for Greenlandic renegotiations of the colonial past is the Reconciliation Commission established in 2014. The Danish government wanted no part in the initiative, which they seem to have interpreted as an attempt by then prime minister Aleqa Hammond to blame the Danes. However, the Commission's agenda was refocused to 'uncover cultural and societal challenges in society which cause tense relations as a consequence of the colonial heritage' (Forsoningskommissionen n.d.). Following this, the work has been focused partly on current tensions inside Greenland and partly on the historical processes leading to these tensions. There is a chance that this re-writing of Greenlandic history will avoid the continuation of a Greenlandic self-identification as victims (Thisted 2014) by accepting how Greenlanders have played an important part (cf. Forchhammer 2001; Langgård 2002:79; Thomsen 1996:271) in decisions now evaluated to be part of a Danish project of 'Danicization'. Acknowledging such complicity in the past may prove a better basis for re-acquiring agency when concerning the future (Mbembe 2001). Phrased in general terms: A more nuanced understanding in both Denmark and Greenland of the sovereignty games of the past will render it easier for the two parties to engage in new versions of sovereignty games that are acceptable to both parties.

A continuation of the community of the realm will be facilitated by creative work on the metaphors shaping the expectations for the relation – and by an honest will to revisit the past; by practical Greenlandic differentiation of its postcolonial dependency and a Danish will to demonstrably put aside its own interests and act as a 'platform' for Greenland's engagement in paradiplomacy to this end. Here, the games played – in more or less coordination – by Greenland and Denmark in relation to the EU may serve as inspiration when engaging new partners.

Chapter 8
Successful sovereignty games

8.1 Greenlandic futures within or without the community of the realm

It has been argued that the EU needs to maintain its mission statement, 'an ever closer union'. It must keep integrating to be legitimate. Like a bicycle, it must keep moving forward, otherwise it will fall over (cf. Moravcsik 2007). In this regard, the community of the realm appears to be a bicycle in reverse gear. The community of the realm must keep disintegrating to be legitimate. The community of the realm might actually be the opposite of the EU: 'an ever looser union'. One might think that Denmark could probably postpone the expiry date of the community of the realm by formalizing what is already the practical reality: The community of the realm is a free association – not in the legal sense prescribed by the UN but in the pragmatic sense that everyone agrees that Greenland and the Faroes are free to disassociate.

If you want the community of the realm to continue, there is really just one – paradoxical – argument against accepting up front separate basic laws for Greenland and the Faroes – and in parallel; against accepting up front to formalize the community of the realm as a 'free association' in a format compatible with UN provisions: What if the bicycle reaches its goal? If there is no more devolution to demand? No more formalities to protest? Will the bicycle fall? In other words: Have the processual elements of Greenlandic identity – being on the way from colonial subjection to independence – become so ingrained that

Greenland can never find rest? A hint to the answer might be found with neighbours across the Atlantic.

A Greenlandic sovereign nation state – now imagined, someday possibly realized – is and will be distinctively post-Danish. It is part of a series of North Atlantic, post-Danish nations, which also includes Norway, Iceland, and the Faroe Islands. They are post-Danish in two ways: First, they were constituted in revolt against Denmark as a colonial ruler. Second, they are modelled on a Danish ideal; that is, they are to a large degree conceptually isomorphic (Adler-Nissen & Gad 2014; Neumann 2014; cf. Wåhlin 1994): They share the same ideas about what constitutes a nation and what role this leaves for a state. These 'Danish' ideas about how to be a nation will likely create challenges for both the continuation of the community of the realm – even as a self-declared 'ever looser union' – and for Greenland within or without the community of the realm:

First, the Danish ideal stipulates that sovereignty ultimately belongs to a culturally homogenous people. This ideal has been the impetus behind all of the independence movements against Denmark. In Norway, this struggle for sovereignty has been continued against the EU (Neumann 2002), and the Norwegians have used it to absolve themselves of their complicity (as part of the Dano–Norwegian kingdom) in European imperialism, be it the slave trade or the colonization of Greenland: 'How could we have been imperialists, when we were ourselves colonized?' (Neumann 2014). In Iceland, the struggle for independence did not end with independence. Rather, it has to be re-enacted in relation to the past metropoles (Norway, Denmark), neighbours (the UK), and supranational organizations that could look like an empire *in spe* (the EU) (Bergmann 2014). Taking these 'most similar' cases as evidence, Greenland is likely to continue its struggle for sovereignty beyond formal sovereignty.

In this situation, a Machiavellian advisor to the Danish government – and to any Greenlanders who prefer a continued community of the realm – would suggest that the bicycle proceed (in reverse) at the lowest possible speed. The community of the realm must keep disintegrating – but to draw it out as long as possible, the accommodation of Greenlandic and Faroese demands for recognition and devolution will only come at the slowest possible pace. If such a line of reasoning is already

secretly behind the development of Danish policies, that would explain the dynamic – but only in slow motion – interpretation of what kind of recognition and devolution can be granted in accordance with the Danish constitution. Actually, Greenland can have anything they want in terms of equality and self-government – but Greenland will only get it after, say, 20 years of experimentation, analysis, protest, contemplation, and negotiation: Equal integration in 1953; recognition as distinct and home rule in 1979; formal delegation of power to conclude (some) international agreements in 2005; recognition as liable for self-determination in 2009; a Greenlandic constitution in 2021; recognition of the equal status of said constitution – which would mean formal sovereignty and, hence, UN conform 'free association' – in 2053.

Nonetheless, a separate question remains: If association is to be free for both parties in such a formally equalized community of the realm, the conditions must be agreeable to both parties. And what if Denmark does not agree to take on the tasks parcelled out by Greenland on the 'sale and lease back' conditions imagined? Perhaps you do not always want to get what you demand.

Second, a post-Danish nation requires its own modern welfare state to nest the unfolding of the unique qualities of a culturally homogenous people. As Greenland imposes this ideal on a territory with a rather challenging climate and topography – and moreover insists on reifying specific elements of past material culture as symbolic – it sets a high threshold for success. While scaling back the expectations for the extraction of minerals as a source of revenues for financing independence, a cross-Atlantic, cross-disciplinary committee of experts paused to call for a public debate on the direction and type of society, which Greenland is heading in and for; particularly concerning the basic structures of society that have been taken over from Denmark without much reflection (Rosing et al. 2014:33). Economists consistently advocate changes involving a revision of how welfare is understood and practiced in Greenland (Aningaasaqarnermut Siunnersuisoqatigiit 2014a). Meanwhile, Greenlanders are urbanizing like elsewhere around the globe, slowly abandoning dispersed settlements in areas where they appear to be without economic prospects (Aningaasaqarnermut Siunnersuisoqatigiit 2014b). And on topics deemed crucial for future industrial development, the Government of Greenland acts more like a

state than in line with demands traditionally put forward by indigenous peoples (Strandsbjerg 2014). Welfare reforms are called for, settlements facilitating traditional cultural practices are emptying themselves, and huge extractive projects are planned. All of this is occurring in the absence of debate on what a future Greenlandic society should substantially look like – except that it should be independent. Decisions shaping the future are guided by (day-to-day politics, yes, but also by) an overall goal of independence combining political sovereignty and economic self-support with a point of departure in still ill-defined 'Greenlandic conditions'.

In the heyday of nationalism in Europe, a basic narrative of the rejuvenation of this or that nation worked as a mobilizing force in combination with competing political programmes for what kind of society should be the result (Smith 1991:161). Today, a credible alternative process would be to call in consultants to facilitate a creative workshop on nation branding (cf. Thisted 2012a). No matter how, the visions for the future must be taken to heart by broader strata of the population. If not, the phantom pains of national subordination and marginalization will keep returning, readily presenting occasion to declare independence.

Apart from allowing every conceivable element of devolution to proceed in slow motion, Denmark might succeed in extending the existence of the community of the realm by placing its diplomatic muscle not just at but in the service of Greenland. By creatively facilitating Greenlandic diversification of its dependency relations – as when playing along with Greenland in relation to the EU – Denmark will make itself a valuable tool in making itself superfluous. Only then will Denmark appear acceptable in the long term to Greenland.

8.2 EU and paradiplomacy speeding up slow-motion decolonization in the Arctic

Greenland has kept the size of its payments from Brussels constant across a series of potential hurdles: across the introduction of home rule in the face of a Danish bureaucracy accustomed to taking care of Greenlandic affairs; across withdrawal from membership and 'taking home' sovereignty over fisheries from Copenhagen and Brussels to the

home rule government established partly for this purpose; and across the introduction of parliamentary scrutiny of the EU budget. In terms of material output, this can hardly count as anything but sovereignty games well played.

In terms of structure, the Greenland–EU relationship combines two elements: First, Greenland uses the Danish membership as a 'platform' from which to handle its EU relations. Second, Greenland sports a national identity narrative that projects a sovereign Greenlandic nation-state imagined by simultaneously mirroring and liberating itself from the Danish nation-state. This combination has necessitated that games are played with present Danish sovereignty in both the practical handling and in the discursive presentation of the relations to the EU. In a number of different ways, Denmark is photoshopped out of the picture in both rhetoric and practice.

Notably, this arrangement has also been convenient for Denmark: By 'allowing' Greenland to act independently, Denmark is able to escape the embarrassment of having the 'colonialist' label applied internationally. More importantly, however, the Danish government (if not necessarily the public and all political parties) seems to have realized that in relation to Greenland, playing traditional colonialist games is the only sure way to cut a post-colony loose. Especially when the post-colony in question may avail itself of a discourse on booming resources in the Arctic to beef up its visions of itself as a future independent player. Greenland–EU relations represent one stage where such an image of the future has been performed – an image not without a certain reality to it, but nevertheless carefully calibrated to keep up appearances.

This far down the road, the combination of independent Greenlandic visibility and the Danish platform has worked: Greenland is envisioning its own sovereignty into being. It is telling a narrative of independent agency which is successfully inviting others to partake in the realization of the narrative and in the Arctic bonanza it is envisioning. All the while, Denmark is protecting its formal sovereignty over Greenland by downplaying Danish authority and facilitating Greenlandic agency in relation to the EU. But continuing these narratives without ending them in full formal Greenlandic sovereignty will demand considerable creativity in both Greenland and Denmark, bearing in mind how the concept of a homogenous nation-state structures identity on

both sides of the Atlantic. In a number of instances, one may foresee the breakdown of some of the games if they come to interfere with each other in specific ways:

First, while the former colonizer (Denmark) is photoshopped out of the picture in certain instances, the practical handling of the relation relies on Denmark in a manner that goes beyond what may meaningfully be described as a platform. Perhaps the take-over of a new generation of Greenlandic bureaucrats, working under a political leadership more determinedly committed to Greenlandic independence, will find an increased urge – or need – to make Denmark even less active. Secondly and related to this, Danish detachment from the practical government of Greenland has naturally resulted in less attention to the needs and ideas of Greenland where they diverge from standard Danish policies. Where many Danish bureaucrats and all Danish diplomats need to have at least a basic idea of the procedures and priorities in Brussels to do their respective jobs and advance their careers, the same does not apply to Nuuk (or Tórshavn for that matter). Consequently, there might be limits to the quality of the service Greenland receives in Copenhagen. Until a new division of labour settles – with or without a legal codification of responsibilities – Danish ministries cannot detach without putting the community of the realm at risk. To be able to take care of Greenlandic foreign policy interests, it is not enough to be experts on EU procedures and legislation; one must also uphold and cultivate the competencies necessary to understand and foresee Greenlandic priorities and reactions.[75]

Third, in the rhetorical construction of narratives of the relation, politicians may find themselves in a cross-fire: Describing the *present*

75 The 2013 complication of the procedures concerning the selection of companies eligible for the US Air Force Base Maintenance Contract at Thule – by qualifying as Danish or Greenlandic – provides a spectacular warning about how insufficient attention, experience, and sense of the proportions awarded to the issue at relevant levels in Copenhagen, Nuuk, and the US agencies involved conspired to create trouble for both the Greenlandic budget and the legitimacy of the community of the realm (cf. Spiermann 2015; and the material discussed in the Greenland Committee of the Danish parliament during the autumn of 2015, available at ft.dk). The complications were catalysed by Denmark suddenly – after 40 years of EU membership – worrying about the applicability of EU legislation prohibiting the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs from giving preference to Danish companies, even if the contract concerns work in an OCT (Kammeradvokaten 2013).

relation to the EU as one of sovereign equality may score points at home, but overplaying the present independence may be risky when talking to a Commission anxious not to interfere in the constitutional relations between its member states and their overseas countries and territories. Fourth, describing the *future* relation as one of sovereign equality may score points both at home and in Brussels but it leaves Greenland depending on two discourses that involve their own problems: First, by inscribing itself in a position where it may choose to offer its collaboration and resources to either one or the other of the world's great powers, Greenland engages in a geopolitical discourse which may not prove benevolent towards an independent micro-state. Second, the resources and possibilities envisioned in the discourse of an Arctic bonanza following climate change may fail to materialize. And such discourses built upon notions of bright futures can usually only be kept alive for a limited period of time without some material back up.

If not overplayed, the narratives of Danish absence told by the Government of Greenland may actually sum up to a credible strategy allowing Greenland to drag itself up by its boot straps: If – by telling the Greenlanders that they are taking care of their own relations to the EU themselves in virtual sovereign equality – Greenlandic politicians provoke the very civic engagement and energy needed for Greenland to *actually* fend for itself, then sovereign equality *is* a good step closer. If – by telling the EU that Greenlandic resources are necessary and valuable – they provoke the investments needed to indeed *realize* the potential resources, then formal sovereignty *is* a good step closer. The story Greenland tells to the EU about a Greenland in virtual sovereign command of resources rendered accessible by a warmer climate is repeated across the globe. So if the EU does not come up with the investments, others might. Denmark can also compete – the past will serve both as a resource and a self-imposed disability: Intimate, institutional knowledge of Greenland may facilitate both better bids and Greenlandic trust (Hammond 2014) – but colonial history means that any self-serving Danish interest (real or imagined) must be demonstrably put aside.

The way the Government of Greenland has engaged in sovereignty games in its relations with the EU shows that a non-sovereign polity

can enhance its own subjectivity in relation to third parties. Greenland's strategy has a dual effect: it has made the acquisition of full formal sovereignty more plausible while at the same time widening the room to manoeuvre within imperial sovereignty. Notably, this has been achieved by refraining from a general confrontation (rhetorical or otherwise) with its imperial metropole, Denmark. Rather, confrontations with the colonial overlords have been carefully calculated and occasionally staged to achieve maximum concessions from the EU. These calculations and stagings have, of course, relied on a particular constellation of past and future: the undeniable history of colonial subjugation combined with the enticing projection of an Arctic bonanza ahead. Greenland, hence, may credibly present itself as both a victim of past Danish sovereignty games and an important player in future Arctic sovereignty games in ways that are not open to other micro-polities. While the benefits from this approach *vis-à-vis* the EU are tangible (as detailed above), as a general strategy for foreign relations this investment has yet to produce returns beyond brand recognition.

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Seen from a different perspective, however, this book synthesizes my engagement with the development of Greenlandic postcolonial identity and the slow-motion dissolution of the community of the realm thus far. This engagement began when writing my Master's thesis in 2004 and has been a constant distraction from the projects paying my bills ever since. Hence, the thoughts and formulations presented in this book have been developed through a series of articles published (mainly in Danish) in *Eskimologis Skrifter, Politica*, *Nordiques*, *Grønlandsk Kultur- og Samfundsforskning*, *Cooperation & Conflict*, *Politik* (Gad 2005; 2008a; 2009b; 2012; 2014a; and 2015) and as book chapters in Engell & Søndergaard (2008) and Adler-Nissen & Gad (2013b). I am grateful for the comments from a series of reviewers and editors in the respective editorial processes. My analysis would not have found its present form without Karen Heilmann Lennert, Kristine Holst Nymark, Ida Hannibal, Niko-

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The relationship between Greenland and the EU is to a great degree influenced by the image of Greenland being on the path towards independence from Denmark. In both countries, identity discourse idealizes the homogenous nation state, leaving the 'community of the realm' in need of a good explanation. However, attempts to explain Greenland's continued reliance on outside help in its development towards independence continuously risk infantilizing the country. As climate changes are establishing the Arctic as a site of mineral extraction and commerce, Greenland is finding new ways of diversifying its dependence. Important in this regard is the way Greenland's relationship to the EU is played out as a series of 'sovereignty games' that minimize Denmark's role as intermediary. This book looks at changes to national identity discourse and foreign policy through four analytical strategies — identifying the core concepts of Danish and Greenlandic identity through discourse analysis; reading political debates as identity-political negotiations; using qualitative interviews with key actors to see how clashing identity discourses are managed in diplomatic practice; and approaching legal texts as the 'frozen' outcome of these 'sovereignty games'. In conclusion, the book draws up scenarios for how the expiry date of the 'community of the realm' may be extended – by finding new metaphors that will facilitate equality, and by employing Danish diplomacy to make Greenland less dependent on Denmark.

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