

See discussions, stats, and author profiles for this publication at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/336748741>

Greenland's Arctic advantage: Articulations, acts and appearances of sovereignty games

Article in *Cooperation and Conflict* · June 2020

DOI: 10.1177/0010836719882476

CITATIONS

35

READS

383

1 author:



Marc Jacobsen

Royal Danish Defence College

36 PUBLICATIONS 267 CITATIONS

SEE PROFILE

CONFIDENTIAL - FOR FUNDING REVIEW ONLY



Greenland's Arctic advantage: Articulations, acts and appearances of sovereignty games

Cooperation and Conflict

2020, Vol. 55(2) 170–192

© The Author(s) 2019

Article reuse guidelines:

sagepub.com/journals-permissions

DOI: 10.1177/0010836719882476

journals.sagepub.com/home/cacMarc Jacobsen 

Abstract

Greenland representatives successfully use the renewed international geostrategic interest in the Arctic to enhance Greenland's foreign policy sovereignty. This is facilitated by Denmark's dependence on Greenland's geographic location and continuous membership of the Danish Realm for maintaining the status of an Arctic state, which recently has become one of the five most important security and foreign policy priorities. The dependency gives Greenland an 'Arctic advantage' in negotiations with Denmark, while turning circumpolar events into strategic arenas for sovereignty games in the aim to move the boundary of what Greenland may do internationally without Danish involvement. This article analyzes how these games unfold in the Arctic Council, at the high-level Ilulissat meetings and at circumpolar conferences where Greenland representatives articulate, act and appear more foreign policy sovereignty through outspoken discontent, tacit gestures and symbolic alterations. Altogether, this contributes to the expanding of Greenland's foreign policy room for maneuver within the current legal frameworks, while enhancing Greenland's international status and attracting external investments, important in their striving towards becoming a state with full formal Westphalian sovereignty.

Keywords

Arctic, foreign policy, geopolitics, Greenland, identity, international relations, postcolonialism, sovereignty games

Introduction

In the Arctic, nation states and the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC) disagree whether the rightful meaning of 'sovereignty' is either a fundamental binary concept or a contested concept in flux. As a state-in-the-making with almost 90% of its population being Inuit, Greenland is situated between those two oppositions. On the one hand, their

Corresponding author:

Marc Jacobsen, Department of Political Science, University of Copenhagen, Øster Farimagsgade 5, 1353 Copenhagen K, Denmark.

Email: Marc.Jacobsen@ifs.ku.dk

self-government is part of the transnational Inuit community while it, on the other hand, aspires to become a state in the traditional sense with full formal Westphalian sovereignty. In this striving, the development of more foreign policy sovereignty is an important factor in the enhancement of Greenland's international status and in their ability to attract external investments. The governmental arrangement with Denmark allows the Government of Greenland some foreign policy competence on areas of exclusive concerns and which entirely relate to fields of responsibility that Greenland has taken over. As this definition is open to interpretation, it gives rise to the question: how do representatives expand Greenland's foreign policy room for maneuver by playing sovereignty games in the Arctic?

In attempting to answer this question, it is relevant to take into consideration the renewed geopolitical interest in the Arctic region, welcomed by changing Greenlandic governments as an opportunity for establishing new international relations in their aim to loosen dependence on Denmark. Meanwhile, the Arctic has also become one of Denmark's top-five foreign policy priorities (The Danish Government, 2017, 2018), causing a somewhat reverse dependency as Greenland's geographic location and membership of the Danish Realm is the only thing legitimizing Denmark's Arctic state status. This gives Greenland an 'Arctic advantage' in negotiations with Denmark, while making circumpolar events well-chosen strategic arenas for playing sovereignty games seeking to move the boundary of what Greenland may do internationally without Danish involvement. Following the tradition of analyzing foreign policy as discourse and praxis, this article investigates how Greenland representatives make use of the international Arctic interests and Greenland's geostrategic location to articulate, act and appear a more sovereign position in international politics. In contribution to the sovereignty games literature, this article will make use of ethnographic observations from central Arctic related events, hence showing how otherwise undocumented empirical data may reveal more latent moves in the sovereignty game. In a broader perspective within the study of International Relations (IR), this article will also contribute to the understanding of quasi states' international roles which too often are treated by mainstream IR as having no separate agency.

As the analysis will show, Greenland's foreign policy sovereignty is successfully enhanced via outspoken discontent and tacit gestures in the Arctic Council, at the high-level meetings in Ilulissat and at circumpolar conferences, highlighted by shifting Greenlandic governments as some of the most important foreign policy arenas. Before turning to the analyses of these three cases, the analytical strategy of how to study sovereignty games will be explained, followed by a brief introduction to Greenland's official foreign policy competence and international priorities as stated in the Self-Government Act and the Foreign Policy Strategy.

Sovereignty games

The concept of sovereignty is constitutive of modern politics as other concepts are defined in relation to it and depend on it for meaningful use within specific discourses (Bartelson, 1995: 12–13). Within law, for instance, sovereignty defines the scope of a polity's authority in geographic and material terms, whereas in political terms it defines

the supremacy of a state's institutions and its internal and external infinitude (Espersen et al., 2003: 142). The juridical understanding is similar to the ontology of conventional IR, referring to the Peace of Westphalia in 1648 as the birth of the modern international system with sovereign states at its center (e.g. de Carvalho et al., 2011: 738). Here, sovereignty is a binary question that leaves no agency to hierarchically subordinated non-states such as Greenland. Challenging this dominant understanding, an alternative literature has revisited the theoretical assumption of sovereignty as inseparable from the state (e.g. Albert and Brock, 2001; Bartelson, 1995; Habermas, 2001; Krasner, 1999), most radically claiming that the Westphalian definition was a fallacy and that sovereignty is today not a prerogative of the state (Agnew, 2005; Ruggie, 1986, 1993). Following this critique, Jessica Shadian has argued that the ICC – representing the approximately 160,000 Inuit in Alaska, Canada, Greenland and Chukotka since 1977 – is an example of a polity which transcends the state-centered theoretical legacy by having sovereignty (understood as authority) in international legislations, in regional institutions and in local land claim agreements (Shadian, 2010: 503). In this way, she argues, the ICC 'has been central in helping reshape the inside–outside boundaries which have constituted the global political system throughout Westphalia' (Shadian, 2010: 504), demonstrating how sovereignty rather should be seen as 'a constitutive process of power construction' (Shadian, 2010: 487).

At first, Greenland seems to have a foot in both camps: on the one hand, the Parliament of Greenland pays a substantial part in the local body of the ICC's annual expenses and appoints members to official delegations participating in international ICC meetings; and on the other hand, all but one of the total seven political parties currently in parliament agree that Greenland's ultimate and overarching goal is state formation. However, as the analysis will show, representatives of the Greenland Government do not share the conceptual contestation but rather subscribe to the traditional sovereignty understanding. In the aim to move Greenland closer towards this ideal of full formal Westphalian sovereignty, representatives seek to expand the room for maneuver within foreign policy by acting more state-like in Arctic international politics. To analyze these movements, I use the concept of 'sovereignty game' to grasp the strategic uses of language by a 'constitutional-hybrid' such as Greenland which currently maneuvers between self-determination and dependence (Loukacheva, 2007: 5, 109). Relating back to Robert Jackson's (1991) analysis of the emergence of quasi-states during decolonization processes, studies of sovereignty games draw on Ludwig Wittgenstein's (1958) elaboration of language games in which the use of language itself is compared to making a move in a game. Central to this analogy is that the common understanding between the involved actors depends on a system of shared rules: the constitutive rule defining the game is the traditional either/or understanding of sovereignty, while regulative rules may evolve as the game develops (cf. Aalberts, 2012: 92–95), hence potentially changing the criteria for participation in international agreements and modifying the roles of the players (Adler-Nissen and Gad, 2014: 18).

The concept of sovereignty games has been further refined by, most notably, Karin M. Fierke and Michael Nicholson (2001), Tanja Aalberts (2004, 2010, 2012) and Rebecca Adler-Nissen together with Thomas Gammeltoft-Hansen (2008) and Ulrik Pram Gad (2013, 2014), who have demonstrated how sovereignty should not only be perceived as a purely spatially bounded concept, but also as defining functionality and identity of both

states and non-states. Following this tradition, sovereignty is perceived as a claim to authority, while ‘sovereignty games’ is intended as a heuristic device used analytically to bring attention to the rules, players and moves of the game (cf. Aalberts, 2012: 94; Adler-Nissen and Gammeltoft-Hansen, 2008: 7). What is particularly central to postcolonial cases of sovereignty games is whether the former colony should be awarded any subjectivity as a player in the game and, through this, get the very possibility of articulating authority (Adler-Nissen and Gad, 2014: 20). As such the notion of ‘game’ fits within a constructivist perspective and has nothing to do with ‘game theory’ or similar rational choice approaches which reduce the game to the level of strategy and tactics where actors try to predict and act upon opponents’ expected moves.

In a contribution to the sovereignty games literature this article shows how ethnographic observations may reveal otherwise undocumented latent sovereignty games, while I suggest to analytically distinguish between articulations, acts and appearances when analyzing how moves alter rules of what the players may do within different types of discursive arenas. In the present case, such moves serve to adjust the boundary for what Greenland may do internationally by altering the level of representation, hence contributing to the process towards fulfilling the ideal national self-image of transforming the postcolonial hierarchy into one of sovereign equality (cf. Neumann, 2014). This process is facilitated by Denmark’s dependence on Greenland’s geographic location and continuous membership of the Danish Realm for maintaining its status as an Arctic state. A dependency, which the Government of Greenland uses to its own advantage resulting in more responsibility and authority (cf. Adler-Nissen and Gad, 2014: 20), hence enhancing Greenland’s sovereignty over its own foreign affairs.

Articulations, acts and appearances in discourse, praxis and ethnographic observations

Studies of sovereignty games start with laying out the constitutive rules, defining the game. These are institutionalized sovereignty arrangements in the form of treaties, constitutions, delegation laws and other legal texts, which are ‘frozen’ outcomes of past sovereignty games (Adler-Nissen and Gad, 2013: 14). In the present article, these will be presented in a short overview of how a more autonomous foreign policy has evolved in step with Greenland’s continuous state-building process during the past 40 years, followed by a review of the current official foreign policy competence as stated in the Act on Greenland Self-Government. As previous analyses have shown, the exact definition of this competence is open to interpretation, hence leaving room for sovereignty games to be played (Ackrén, 2014; Gad, 2013, 2014, 2016; Jacobsen, 2015; Jacobsen and Gad, 2018; Kristensen and Rahbek-Clemmensen, 2018a).

Secondly, the framing of the sovereignty game is made visible by analyzing *articulations* in parliamentary records, public debates, policy papers and official statements as part of the official foreign policy identity discourse. As this article exclusively concerns how representatives position Greenland at Arctic related events, the analysis will depart from the parliamentary debate about whether Greenland should have its own Arctic strategy, while articulations from the debates about the annual foreign policy reviews of 2009–2018 will be used ad hoc to show why the Arctic Council, the Ilulissat meetings

and the circumpolar conferences are the three most relevant cases in this regard. 2009 marks the starting point for the analysis of Greenland's Arctic sovereignty games as that was the year when the Act on Greenland Self-Government entered into force.

Thirdly, relations between the legal texts and the identity discourse are handled in diplomatic praxis as both articulations and *acts*, which can be analyzed through qualitative in-depth interviews with representatives of the case country revealing how they maintain relations in concrete everyday moves and how – and to what extent – strategies are employed (cf. Adler-Nissen and Gad, 2014: 22). In the present study, a total of 16 interviews have been conducted of which the eight interviews with civil servants working in Greenland's Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Nuuk – which counts a total¹ of 11 including the Minister and an intern – are particularly central. Together with the parliamentary debates, the interviews have guided the analysis towards the main documents and most important events where Greenlandic foreign policy is practiced in a discursive Arctic context. At the same time, civil servants' explanations of how international representation of Greenland is performed 'behind the scenes' help with nuancing the analysis beyond what can be concluded from official statements, while demonstrating 'how foreign policy and global politics are experienced as lived practices' (Neumann, 2002: 628).

On top of this usual method for how to analyze sovereignty games, this study also pays special attention to sovereignty *appearances* in manifestations of hierarchy such as a commemorative plaque and in the arrangement of meeting rooms. This analytical addition reveals symbolic but important challenges and enhancements to the former colony's subjectivity as a player in international politics and shows how such moves may change the regulative rules. Most of these observations have only been possible by being present at central events² such as the 2017 Arctic Council Ministerial meeting in Fairbanks, Alaska, and the Ilulissat Declaration's 10-year anniversary in Ilulissat, Greenland, in May 2018. Though Adler-Nissen and Gad emphasize that 'the strategic moves can only be fully grasped in their unique settings and regional contexts' (Adler-Nissen and Gad, 2013: 15), very few studies of sovereignty games make use of their own ethnographic observations. Through being present where the sovereignty games evolved in an Arctic context, it is possible to include passing remarks, tacit gestures and otherwise undocumented articulations, acts and appearances, demonstrating how sovereignty games sometimes take place behind the façade. Before turning to the analysis of Greenland's Arctic sovereignty games, a brief overview of the development of Greenland's official foreign policy competence will now be presented.

Greenland's foreign policy competence: the official story

Since the introduction of Home Rule in 1979 – by which Greenland's local parliament and local government was established and areas such as education, fisheries, environment and health were assumed from Denmark – Greenland has gradually gained more sovereignty within foreign affairs. The decisive event initiating this process was Denmark's entry into the European Community in 1973 in which Greenland had to follow suit despite 70% of Greenlanders being against the decision due to the concomitant loss of sovereignty over the important fisheries export (Petersen, 2006). When leaving the European Community in 1985 and instead joining the Overseas Countries and

Territories arrangement, Greenland assumed *de facto* sovereignty over fisheries after which Nuuk could then negotiate favorable agreements directly with Brussels. Together with Greenpeace's campaign against sealing during the same period, this gave rise to a more active Greenlandic foreign policy. With a legal base in the Home Rule's §16,³ Greenland became a member of the Nordic Council and established diplomatic representations in Brussels in 1992 and in Ottawa in 1998⁴ (Motzfeldt 2006: 120–121, 127). Hence, Greenland began acting more and more as a state in international diplomacy after the introduction of Home Rule. The development whetted the appetite, and in the beginning of the new millennium, the Defence Agreement of 1951 between Denmark and the United States was renewed with the Government of Greenland as an individual part of the triangular negotiations which resulted in the Itilleq Declaration (2003) and the Igaliku Agreement (2004)⁵ (Motzfeldt, 2006: 125). As a result, the Thule Radar was upgraded and integrated in the American missile defense, while the prior negotiations enhanced Greenland's foreign policy sovereignty and security policy influence (Kristensen, 2004).

Following a referendum in which 75.5% voted in favor, the Act on Greenland Self-Government entered into force on June 21, 2009, whereby Denmark formally recognized Greenland's right to secede if the people of Greenland decide to do so. In direct line with the Itilleq Declaration codified in the Enabling Act, the Self-Government Act gives Greenland more room for international maneuver and to, 'on behalf of the Realm, negotiate and conclude agreements under international law with foreign states and international organisations, including administrative agreements which exclusively concern Greenland and entirely relate to fields of responsibility taken over' (Statsministeriet, 2009: §12). The definition of what *exclusively* concerns Greenland and *entirely* relates to fields of responsibility is, however, open to interpretation. This is also acknowledged on the webpage of Greenland's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which states that the foreign policy competence is regulated by three measures: the Constitution of the Kingdom of Denmark; the Act on Greenland Self-Government; and praxis (Naalakkersuisut.gl, n.d.). The emphasis on praxis bears witness to the perception that sovereignty can, indeed, be played in the aim to gain even more responsibility over Greenland's foreign policy.

Here it should be mentioned, that 'Ministry' and 'Minister' are the official English translations of 'Naalakkersuisoqarfik' and 'Naalakkersuisoq', meaning⁶ 'the place where decisions are made' and 'the one who decides.' These translations are more prominent than the Danish ones which instead mean 'department' and 'member of self-government.' The translations of 'Naalakkersuisut' and 'Inatsisartut' into 'government' and 'parliament' are examples of the same, though these two Greenlandic terms are often used in Danish. Formally, Denmark's Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Government of Denmark and the Danish parliament also serve Greenland, and therefore the more prominent titles are not used in Danish to describe the political context in Greenland. As such, the English translations could also be seen as frozen results of past and perhaps tacit sovereignty games played to enhance the symbolic appearance of Greenlandic politicians and civil servants when engaging in international affairs.

One of the central points of reference in parliamentary debates about how Greenland should navigate in the world, is the Government of Greenland's Foreign Policy Strategy of 2011. Together with the introduction of self-government, the strategy mentions the increased geopolitical and economic interests in the circumpolar region as the

main argument for upgrading the annual foreign policy review to an actual strategy. As highlighted on the very first page: 'It is important that the interest in the Arctic and Greenland is converted into concrete opportunities for the Greenlandic people and its development as a nation' (Naalakkersuisut, 2011: 3). Throughout the document, external attention towards the Arctic is highlighted as a window of opportunity for how to position Greenland more prominently on the world stage, while the geopolitics of the Arctic Ocean is listed among the top foreign policy priorities (Naalakkersuisut, 2011: 5, 8–9). This priority should be pursued in a peaceful manner as agreed in the Ilulissat Declaration, while the Arctic Council is praised as the main forum for generally securing a regional peaceful status quo. The third strategic arena for Greenland's Arctic sovereignty games are circumpolar conferences, which the later foreign policy reviews and parliamentary debates often emphasize as particularly important events. Following a brief introduction to how Greenland parliamentarians discuss the external Arctic attention and Greenland's related geopolitical opportunities, we will now turn to the analyses of how Greenland representatives use these strategic arenas to move the boundary of what Greenland may do internationally without Danish involvement.

Greenland's Arctic sovereignty games

'Several countries and states have come up with arctic strategies, which is a typical characteristic of non-Arctic countries [. . .] For an arctic country like Greenland, our Foreign Policy Strategy is an arctic strategy. We are the Arctic. We are the epitome of the Arctic' (Naalakkersuisoq, EM2016/106).⁷ With these words, Greenland's then Minister of Foreign Affairs, Vittus Qujaukitsoq, turned down the proposal for parliamentary resolution that Greenland should have its own strategy for the region. Together with Denmark and the Faroe Islands, Greenland is co-author of the *Kingdom of Denmark Strategy for the Arctic 2011–2020*, but discontent with Denmark's behavior in circumpolar affairs gave rise to the proposal by the then opposition leader, Sara Olsvig (EM2016/106), who also found inspiration in the Faroese unilateral Arctic assessment titled *The Faroe Islands – a Nation in the Arctic*. The decisive event behind the proposal⁸ happened a few months prior to the parliament debate when a review of Denmark's foreign and security affairs emphasized that 'We must take advantage of our position as a major Arctic power to influence developments in the Arctic to the benefit of the Kingdom of Denmark, the region and the peoples of Greenland and the Faroe Islands' (Taksøe-Jensen, 2016: 13). Qujaukitsoq called the report 'a terrifying read' and criticized it for not taking Greenlandic interests into consideration (Nyvold, 2016).

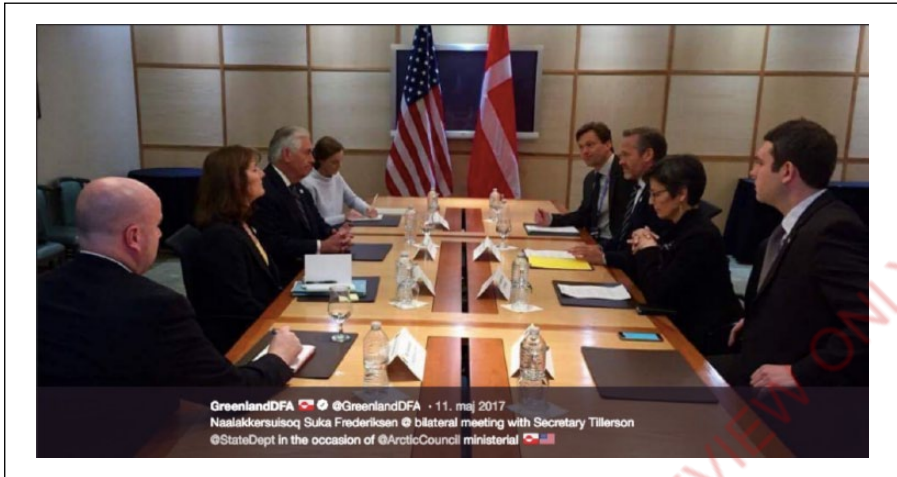
In his speech to the parliament, he further underlined: 'We should not just let others foist their attitudes and policies in our region. We must be ready to fight when we find that others' strategies and attitudes are not in line with our interests. This is, of course, particularly true for Denmark with whom we work closely. Here it should be emphasized that the Kingdom of Denmark has one Arctic part and that is Greenland' (Naalakkersuisoq, EM2016/106). The quote illustrates well the constant delicate balancing between cooperation and conflict in Danish–Greenlandic relations while pointing to the fact that Greenland's geographic location and its membership of the Danish Realm are what legitimize Denmark's active participation in the highest political circles in Arctic affairs

(Jacobsen, 2016). Though there is lack of consultation and the occasional postcolonial overruling, Denmark's discovery of the unredeemed potential at the top of the world can also be perceived as an opportunity for expanding Greenland's room for maneuver in conducting foreign policy. How these sovereignty games evolve is the center of the following analyses of Greenland's representation in, first, the Arctic Council, second, the claims to the Arctic Ocean seabed and, related, the Ilulissat Declaration, and, finally, at circumpolar conferences where Greenland representatives may act more individually due to the more informal setup.

Arctic Council: musical chairs and slamming doors

Until 2011, Greenland and the Faroe Islands were gradually accustomed to being equal and distinct parts of the official delegation to the Arctic Council. For instance, it was then Premier of Greenland, Lars-Emil Johansen, who signed the founding Ottawa Declaration on behalf of the Danish Realm in 1996, and during executive council meetings it was tacitly accepted praxis that the delegation always had three chairs at the table, three flags on the table and a country label saying 'Denmark/Faroe Islands/Greenland' (Olsen and Shadian, 2018: 132). This arrangement ended when the chairmanship gavel was passed from Denmark to Sweden in 2011. The change was not directly articulated but instead manifested in the symbolic displacement of the Faroese and the Greenlandic representatives' chairs, which were placed away from the table – behind the Danish representative – at the next council venue, while they were also themselves excluded from the important Senior Arctic Officials (SAO) meetings (Olsen and Shadian, 2018). This sovereignty game played by the member states to emphasize the importance of Westphalian sovereignty as the ordering rule among the players was soon challenged by the then newly appointed Premier of Greenland, Aleqa Hammond, who decided to boycott the ministerial meeting in Kiruna in May 2013 and to suspend all of Greenland's ongoing activities in the council until a resolution was found.

After three months of negotiations with the new Canadian chairmanship, an agreement was concluded giving all three parts of the Danish Realm the right to full participation in all council meetings – including the SAO meetings. In cases where the number of chairs available for each delegation are less than three, it is an internal decision among the three who, depending on the agenda, is the most eligible to take the seat. The victory, however, had a slight negative after-taste as the representation of Greenland and the Faroe Islands was simultaneously degraded as the three flags were replaced with one full-size Danish flag (Gerhardt, 2018: 120), hence limiting the symbolic appearance and highlighting the hierarchy within the Danish Realm. On the other hand, Greenland gained the right to participate with Denmark in the scheduled informal meetings where, for example, granting of observer status and other more sensitive questions are debated outside public attention. This first happened during the ministerial meeting in Iqaluit in 2015 when the European Union's import ban on seal products was discussed with the then Premier of Nunavut, Peter Taptuna (Naalakkersuisut, 2015: 17). Two years later, Thule Air Base and the seabed claims in the Arctic Ocean were on the agenda during the meetings with the then US Secretary of State, Rex Tillerson (shown on Photograph 1), and with Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Chrystia Freeland (Naalakkersuisut, 2017: 15). In this way, the boycott and the outspoken discontent with the level of



Photograph 1. Bilateral meeting between the USA and Denmark/Greenland in connection with the Arctic Council Ministerial meeting on May 11, 2017. On the right side of the table, Greenland and Denmark are represented by (from closest to farthest from the camera) Jacob Isbosethsen (then acting Permanent Secretary of Greenland's Ministry of Foreign Affairs), Suka K. Frederiksen (then Greenland Minister of Foreign Affairs), Anders Samuelsen (then Denmark's Minister of Foreign Affairs), and Lars Gert Lose (then Denmark's Ambassador to the USA). In the background are Denmark's and the USA's flags; not Greenland's. This illustrates well, how it is essentially a meeting between the USA and Denmark, with an extra seat for Greenland when, for example, the Thule Air Base is on the agenda (Photograph: Greenland's Department of Foreign Affairs' twitter profile @GreenlandDFA, which changed to @GreenlandMFA in 2018).

representation helped with limiting the degradation of Greenland's sovereignty in the Arctic Council and enhanced the opportunity for speaking on behalf of oneself, though still in the presence of Denmark and under Danish flag as illustrated in Photograph 1.

Another noteworthy step towards more equal representation came in the shape of speaking time during the formal – almost ceremonial – ministerial meetings where Denmark, Greenland and the Faroe Islands since 2015 have agreed to equally share the three minutes allocated for each delegation. At the ministerial meeting in Fairbanks in 2017, Greenland's then Minister of Foreign Affairs, Suka K. Frederiksen, expressed content with this arrangement but underlined that ideally Greenland should have all three minutes as the only true Arctic representative of the Danish Realm. A first step towards this ideal would be to leave out the Faroe Islands (interview May 12, 2017). With this move, she opened for a potential sovereignty game against a postcolonial ally whose similar historical relations to Denmark as a former colonizer usually unites them (e.g. in the Nordic Council cf. Jacobsen, 2015), hence trying to modify the roles within the Danish Realm and change the regulative rules for participation in the Arctic Council.

The symbolic acts at the high-level biannual ministerial meetings are central to how the Government of Greenland appears internationally, but most of the actual content of the Arctic Council's work derives from the six working groups. This is acknowledged in the Foreign Policy Strategy which states that it is essential to participate actively and to express

and represent Greenlandic opinions and values in the working groups operating outside of the broad media interest, as this ‘bottom-up’ approach offers significant influence (Naalakkersuisut, 2011: 13–14). While the Danish Realm participates as a unity in the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme and the Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment, Greenland has led the Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna⁹ in 2006–2009. The most valued group according to the strategy is, however, the Sustainable Development Working Group (SDWG), which has received its own chapter in the foreign policy reviews for the past ten years. During the 2009–2011 chairmanship, Greenland headed the group and has subsequently kept the coordinating and executive role on behalf of the Danish Realm (Naalakkersuisut, 2010: 48; 2013: 36). This role has been used effectively, as Greenland – according to the foreign policy reviews – has been particularly influential by placing humans’ health and living conditions at the top of the group’s agenda (Naalakkersuisut, 2010: 12; 2017: 16). In this way, representatives present themselves as successful at positioning Greenland at these lower, but important, governance levels within the Arctic Council; a strategic act serving to enhance Greenland’s authority in the council where the member states to some extent must accept Greenland as party to the game.

In addition to the Danish Realm’s delegation, Greenland has two other channels for representation in the Arctic Council. The first is via the permanent participation of the ICC which pleads for Indigenous Peoples’ rights and takes a more critical stance on hydrocarbon exploitation and the state-centered sovereignty perspective. The other is via the West Nordic Council which was welcomed as an observer at the Fairbanks Ministerial meeting in 2017. In this parliamentary cooperation, Greenland and the Faroe Islands act on an equal footing with the sovereign state of Iceland, sharing the same past as a former Danish colony and often mentioned as a role model for future Greenlandic state formation (e.g. interview with Jacob Isboethsen, October 20, 2018). The extra channels of representation expand the number of possible moves in the game as Greenland representatives may both put forward their opinions as a member state, a permanent participant and an observer, hence gaining more influence in the Arctic Council and enhancing Greenland’s foreign policy sovereignty on the Arctic governance stage.

Ilulissat: sovereignty claims and tacit games

On December 15, 2014, the Danish Realm submitted data to the United Nations’ Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS) claiming an 895,000 km² seabed in the Arctic Ocean. The area – which corresponds to nearly half of Greenland’s present land territory and approximately 19 times the area of Denmark – overlaps significantly with Russia’s and Canada’s claims. From the beginning, it was a collective decision to initiate the project¹⁰ that ultimately will be an expansion of Greenland’s Westphalian sovereignty if the vision of independence is fulfilled. Reportedly, part of the Danish motivation for financing the venture was to dampen independence movements by showing how continued membership of the Danish Realm has tangible benefits beyond the standard economic support (Breum, 2015: 314).¹¹ On a different scale, potential conflict with Canada and Russia was a grave concern in Copenhagen and as the project came to an end, Nuuk was worried that the claim would be cautious and timid with more respect for maintaining good diplomatic relations instead of going ‘all in’ on behalf of Greenland (Breum, 2015: 316–317). Despite reported Danish–Greenlandic disagreements during the final part of the process, the extent of the

claim surprised many commentators who described it as ‘provocative’ (e.g., Michael Byers in *Politiken* (Skærbæk, 2014)). The Russian and Canadian reactions were, however, balanced as the five littoral states – Canada, Denmark, Norway, Russia and USA – adjacent to the Arctic Ocean, had already agreed that scientifically valid geodata and international law shall determine the delineation as stated in the Ilulissat Declaration of May 2008. By their signatures, they refuted the perception of the Arctic Ocean as a *terra nullius* and refused alternative solutions following the logic of the Antarctic Treaty, which neither recognizes any sovereignty claims nor allows any mining and military activities.

While the declaration diminished the horizontal conflict potential between the states, it simultaneously gave way for vertical disputes between the signatories and the Indigenous Peoples of the Arctic (Jacobsen and Strandsbjerg, 2017). During the ensuing year, the ICC issued *A Circumpolar Inuit Declaration on Sovereignty in the Arctic* questioning the dominant either/or concept of sovereignty implied in the Ilulissat Declaration and instead pleaded for detaching sovereignty from the state with the words ‘Sovereignty is a contested concept. . . and does not have a fixed meaning. . . Sovereignities overlap and are frequently divided within federations in creative ways to recognize the right of peoples’ (Inuit Circumpolar Council, 2009: sect. 2.1). As co-host of the Ilulissat meeting and a founding member of the ICC, Greenland formally had a leg in both camps. From the official communication of shifting Greenlandic governments it is, however, clear that they seldom emphasize the transnational Inuit ethnic identity nor share the conceptual contestation of the dominant sovereignty understanding (see Gerhardt, 2011; Strandsbjerg, 2014). Rather they ascribe to a civic-national perception of what it means to be a Greenlander and embrace the traditional idea of either/or sovereignty in the strive towards becoming a state. Following this, the Government of Greenland acts as a state and articulates a place for itself alongside the signatories of the Ilulissat Declaration. By asserting this position, it endorses the constitutive rules of the game and underlines that the claims – if proved successful – will expand Greenland’s potential Westphalian sovereignty; something which the Danish government seems to respect as Greenland leads the Realm’s internal working group and the external presentations of the submissions to the CLCS (cf. Naalakkersuisut, 2016: 31).

Along with the ICC, Sweden, Finland and Iceland were upset about not receiving an invitation to the Ilulissat meeting. To dampen interstate disagreement and continuing constructive cooperation in the well-established regional governance structure, the then US Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, suggested that the exclusive format should not continue (Naalakkersuisut, 2010: 1). When the Ilulissat Declaration’s 10-year anniversary was celebrated on May 22 and 23,¹² 2018, invitations were therefore extended to the three other Arctic Council members, the six¹³ permanent participants and the Director of the Arctic Council Secretariat. The celebration went smoothly and Greenland’s and Denmark’s shared role as host seemed frictionless, which may bear witness to a well-functioning partnership regarding the claims. At the same time, there may also be a norm embedded in the shared role as host about not criticizing the other part when guests are present. While the frontstage is kept nice and tidy, unresolved disagreements may be hidden backstage (Goffman, 1959), and even though it is not directly articulated, one can allude to these disagreements by supportive remarks and gestures indicating agreement with criticism from a third part. This happened during the anniversary when the Faroese Minister of Foreign Affairs, Poul Michelsen, said in an online interview: ‘We are not as Arctic as Greenland, which is the

only reason why Denmark and the Faroe Islands have a say in the Arctic. With that in mind, I think Greenland gets too little attention. It seems like they are guests in their own house. That is wrong, I feel' (Jacobsen, 2018, interview May 23). With this move, the Faroese minister acted as a postcolonial ally and a kind of stand-in for Greenland in this sovereignty game with their shared former colonizer. While endorsing Greenland as a main player and problematizing the lack of authority and acknowledgement given to the local host, his articulation could also be seen as an attempt to move attention from the constitutive rule to the regulative rules by blurring the line between states and non-states.

The Greenlandic reaction to the Faroese standpoint was observed in the corridors at the venue hotel where more informal conversations took place during the breaks of the scheduled program. These backstage moments offered glimpses into the different delegations' individual agendas and more candid opinions about the events of the day. During a high-level session closed to the press, the Saami representative, reportedly, echoed the ICC's contestation of the state-centered sovereignty understanding, and while no-one argued against the statement, a Greenland representative expressed irritation in the corridors, hence confirming that the Greenland administration shares the state-centered ontology represented in the Ilulissat Declaration. In a similar way, it surfaced that Greenland representatives had made a tactical move prior to the anniversary – and perhaps even without Denmark noticing. The task of creating a commemorative plaque of the anniversary (shown on Photograph 2) was in the hands of the Foreign Affairs Ministry in Nuuk, and when they



Photograph 2. Greenland's and Denmark's then respective Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Vivian Motzfeldt and Anders Samuelsen, co-hosted the Ilulissat Declaration's 10-year anniversary in May 2018. Here they stand next to the commemorative plaque which has an illustration of the Arctic region in the right bottom corner. Originally, it should bear the names of the Arctic states, but as 'Greenland' was bracketed below 'Denmark', Greenland's Ministry of Foreign Affairs decided to leave out the names hence enhancing Greenland's sovereignty appearance (Photograph: Marc Jacobsen).

saw that the illustration of the Arctic region only carried names of states with ‘Greenland’ bracketed below ‘Denmark’, they chose to simply erase all the names, hence limiting the subordinated appearance. As such, this subtle move served as a small enhancement of Greenland’s symbolic sovereignty appearance on the international scene, while – in a broader perspective – altering a praxis inherited from times of colonization.

Circumpolar conferencing: acting sovereign in more informal settings

A visible example of the renewed geopolitical interest in the Arctic is the rapid growth of conferences about the regional political dynamics during the past decade. Arctic Frontiers, Arctic Circle, Arctic Futures Symposium, Arctic Encounter, High North Dialogue and International Arctic Forum are the names of the recurrent conferences held in the cities of Tromsø, Reykjavik, Brussels, Seattle, Bodø and Arkhangelsk/Saint Petersburg. Participation in the Arctic Frontiers, Arctic Circle and Arctic Futures Symposium are integral parts of Greenland’s annual foreign policy reviews describing them as ‘an opportunity to present Greenland, influence the international agenda in our direction and ensure awareness of the opportunities in Greenland’ (Naalakkersuisut, 2016: 20). The Icelandic initiative, Arctic Circle, is particularly highlighted by Greenlandic parliamentarians as the most important, and in the sole occasion¹⁴ when an invited minister could not participate due to sickness, it caused immense debate in the parliament where several parties demanded a detailed explanation for the absence (Demokraatit, 2017; Inuit Ataqatigiit, 2017). The importance of being present in Reykjavik to influence the regional discourse in the wake of the immense external attention is well explained by Vivian Motzfeldt, who was Greenland’s Minister of Foreign Affairs for a short period in 2018: ‘Many countries with Arctic strategies are located outside the Arctic region, yet these strategies have been adopted without consulting the populations of our countries. We, thus, believe that the largest Arctic conference, Arctic Circle, held annually, should get the greatest attention from our country. In most Arctic affairs and debates, we must show our co-responsibility’ (Motzfeldt, EM2016/106).¹⁵

From the beginning, Greenland has had a central position at this conference which has replaced the Norwegian state-sponsored event, Arctic Frontiers, as the largest and most prestigious conference for Arctic aficionados. Former Premier of Greenland, Kuupik Kleist, was one of the founding figures, and at the very first assembly in 2013, the then Premier Aleqa Hammond was the principal speaker after the official welcoming remarks. Her speech followed the rhetorical line set out in her boycott of the Arctic Council earlier the same year by articulating Greenland as a sovereign actor in circumpolar politics. She predicted how the parliament of Greenland a few days later would vote in favor of allowing uranium mining and argued that ‘[t]his will pave the way for Greenland in a not-so-distant future to become a significant uranium exporter – among the world’s top-10 or possibly top-5’ (Hammond, 2013: 5). With this statement, she ignored how the question of uranium export would give rise to a sovereignty dispute with Danish authorities about whether it is solely a matter of resource exploitation or also a potential security issue and, thus, within Copenhagen’s area of responsibility (see Jacobsen, 2019; Kristensen and Rahbek-Clemmensen, 2018b; Rasmussen and Merksel, 2017; Vestergaard, 2014; Vestergaard and Thomasen, 2015). As such, it was the beginning of a rhetorical tradition

where Greenland representatives use circumpolar conferences to act more sovereign as the more informal setup provides an opportunity to do foreign affairs without Denmark looking over their shoulder. The change of arena, changes the tactics available in the sovereignty game.

The idea of the Arctic Circle assembly arose for three reasons: first, it was in response to the exclusion of Iceland from the 2008 Ilulissat meeting (Mouritzen, 2017), secondly, it was a challenge to the Arctic Council to take on a more global profile; and, thirdly, it was an offer to marginalized and isolated actors seeking a more prominent position in Arctic governance (Depledge and Dodds, 2017: 142–144). Since 2015, additional smaller forums have been hosted by, *inter alia*, Alaska, Greenland, Québec, Scotland and the Faroe Islands which are all home to substantial independence movements and subject to superior representations in the Arctic Council. At these fora, the Greenland Government has pursued the same economic and social dimensions as emphasized in the Arctic Council's SDWG while using the events as a platform to establish and enhance direct bilateral relations. As Greenland's then Minister of Foreign Affairs, Vittus Qujaukitsoq, said at the Arctic Circle Forum in Québec in December 2016: 'The Arctic Circle Assembly and its regional Forums, actually provide just such a platform, allowing for the types of exchanges, which are not possible in the formal settings of the Arctic Council and the Arctic Five Coastal States' (Qujaukitsoq, 2016: 3). He further criticized Barack Obama and Justin Trudeau's moratorium on oil and gas¹⁶ drilling in North American Arctic waters and expressed optimism about the newly elected Donald Trump's administration's expected nomination of Rex Tillerson as Secretary of State: 'I sincerely hope that the President-elect will choose as Secretary of State, an outstanding individual with a comprehensive experience from the private sector. This will be of benefit to our region' (Qujaukitsoq, 2016: 2). **By the end of his speech, Qujaukitsoq went one step further, hence demonstrating how the conference may serve other purposes than what is possible at the other regional gatherings: 'In Greenland we are open for business. Why not envisage having an American and a Canadian permanent diplomatic presence in Nuuk within the coming four years, to make sure that the potentials are fully developed?'** (Qujaukitsoq, 2016: 5). In May 2019, the Trump administration announced that the United States will establish a permanent representation in Nuuk. Whether the decision has been facilitated by Greenland's diplomacy remains untold, but regardless this move does contribute to the enhancement of Greenland's authority as a more autonomous player in international politics.

Because conferences are not defined as formal institutions but instead take place on the blurred line between dialogue and governance, they have become important stages for exchanges of ideas and practices about the geopolitical development of the Arctic (Depledge and Dodds, 2017: 145–146). **For a quasi-state such as Greenland where praxis is an important factor in determining the room for maneuver within foreign affairs, such events are particularly useful in the aim of seeking more sovereignty on the regional governance regime.** This is well illustrated in the words of the Permanent Secretary of Greenland's Ministry of Foreign Affairs: 'We participate in the Arctic Council together with Denmark and the Faroe Islands. It is a bit more formal forum, while I see the Arctic Circle as a more informal forum, and that is, perhaps, where thoughts and ideas actually can be tested. It is a kind of supermarket for ideas and thoughts about the Arctic' (interview with Kenneth Høegh, May 15, 2018). In this way, Greenland representatives make

use of the circumpolar conferences – and the Arctic Circle in particular – to position Greenland as a central geopolitical player while acting more sovereign in the absence of Denmark. While the more bombastic statements made in this arena are not always realizable within the current governmental arrangement, they may serve as trial balloons for what Greenland can do internationally without Denmark interfering, and as attempts to enhance Greenland's foreign policy sovereignty.

Conclusion: Greenland's Arctic advantage

As the most autonomous self-governing Arctic territory situated on the mezzanine between a past as a Danish colony and an envisioned future as an independent nation state, Greenland enjoys a special place within the regional governance system. By proclaiming that Greenland is a state-in-the-making, the self-government subscribes to the traditional either/or definition of sovereignty shared by the Arctic states, well-exemplified by the wording of the Ilulissat Declaration. With this, the Greenland Government simultaneously distances itself from the rhetoric of the ICC claiming that sovereignty is a concept in flux not exclusively reserved for rightful states. This discrepancy is only articulated in the corridors by Greenland Government representatives, which simultaneously ensures continuous representation of their perspectives by the ICC in, *inter alia*, the Arctic Council. Here, Greenland is both represented via one of the member states (Denmark), via one of the permanent participants (ICC) and via one of the observers (West Nordic Council), altogether expanding Greenland's possible moves in the sovereignty game.

In their striving towards becoming a state, Greenland representatives try to maximize Greenland's foreign policy sovereignty within the current legal frameworks by articulating, acting and appearing a more individual position. Analytically, these moves are found through discourse analysis, interviews and ethnographic observations, of which the latter reveal otherwise undocumented moves of the game such as passing remarks, tacit gestures and symbolic signs which are only possible to include in the analysis if the analyst is present where the sovereignty game unfolds. This article suggests that studies of sovereignty games should do more to include ethnographic observations and pay special attention to sovereignty *appearances* in symbolic manifestations of hierarchy; for example, how meeting rooms are arranged and anniversaries marked. Such observations uncover both present and potential challenges and enhancements to players' subjectivity and demonstrate how some moves may change the regulative rules of the game.

The success of Greenland's sovereignty moves is facilitated by Denmark's dependence on Greenland's geographic location and continuous membership of the Danish Realm for maintaining status of an Arctic state, which recently has become more important as the northernmost region has been declared one of Denmark's top-five foreign policy and security strategic areas. This dependency provides Greenland with an 'Arctic advantage' where circumpolar events are used as strategic arenas for trying to move the boundary for what Greenland may do internationally without Danish involvement. Through outspoken discontent and tacit gestures, Greenland has gained more authority and responsibility – and hence a more sovereign appearance – in the Arctic Council, at the Ilulissat meetings and at circumpolar conferences of which the latter serve as a particularly useful platform

for strengthening bilateral relations due to the more informal setup. In this way, Greenland representatives have expanded Greenland's foreign policy room for maneuver within the current legal frameworks (the constitutive rules) by playing sovereignty games through articulating, acting and appearing a position more separate from Denmark.


Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Rebecca Adler-Nissen, Anine Hagemann and Hans Mouritzen for their insightful comments during a research seminar hosted by the University of Copenhagen, while Ulrik Pram Gad and Ole Wæver also deserve special thanks for their exemplary supervision throughout the years. I am also grateful for the constructive comments by the two anonymous reviewers and the journal editors. Last but not least, I am thankful to the many interviewees; especially Mira Kleist whose kind assistance was decisive for the field trip to Greenland.

Funding

The author(s) disclosed receipt of the following financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article: The research for this article received financial support from the Velux Foundation (Grant Number: 10319).

ORCID iD

Marc Jacobsen  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1544-9404>

Notes

1. In comparison, 850 people work in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Copenhagen, while about 500 represent Denmark at the various embassies and consulates abroad (um.dk, n.d.).
2. At both events, no seats were available for academics, so a press card happened to be the only possible way to experience the meetings first-hand. Reportages and interviews have been published in *Sermitsiaq* and *High North News*.
3. The Home Rule's §16 stipulated that 'the home rule authorities may demand that in countries in which Greenland has special commercial interest Danish diplomatic missions employ offers specifically to attend such interests.' (Hjemmestyreløven, 1979).
4. The representation in Ottawa, however, closed four years later.
5. With this agreement, the Government of Greenland profited from something which it was actually against in the first place. As argued by Ole Wæver, this was important 'training' in how it is to be a micro-state (Wæver, 2004: 31–33).
6. Thanks to former Director of the Greenland Home Rule, Jakob Janussen, for pointing to the exact meanings of the Greenlandic words.
7. All speeches in Greenland's parliament are translated from Greenlandic to Danish either by the speaker or by the parliament's hard-working simultaneous interpreters whom deserve my deepest gratitude. I am responsible for the translations from Danish to English.
8. The proposal was already made one-year prior in the parliament debate about the annual foreign policy review (Inuit Ataqatigiit, 2015: 3). In the wake of the new Danish foreign policy interest in the Arctic, Sara Olsvig found the opportunity to repeat her proposal.
9. Greenland's Department of Nature and Environment is responsible for the representation in the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme, the Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment and the Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna, while the Sustainable Development Working Group is within Greenland's Ministry of Foreign Affairs' area of responsibility (Naalakkersuisut, 2013: 36).

10. The Danish Realm has submitted a total of five submissions to the United Nations' Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS). Besides the one described, there are two claims south and northeast of Greenland, and two north and south of the Faroe Islands (a76.dk, 2014). The CLCS assesses submissions from all over the globe, hence the Danish Realm's Arctic Ocean claim is currently number 76 in line and, thus, it will probably take at least ten years before a solution is found. Russia is currently number one in line because of an early submission made in 2001. Though the submission was not deemed scientifically valid, the Russian Federation kept its place in line while working on a resubmission, which was finally submitted in 2015.
11. In this part of the analysis, I rely on the description in Martin Breum's book *The Greenland Dilemma* (2015). Prior to my PhD studies, I was research assistant on the original Danish version of the book titled *Balladen om Grønland* (Breum, 2014), and therefore this use of secondary literature is not as secondary as the reader may think at first.
12. 28 May is the exact date for the signing of the Ilulissat Declaration, but as there were not enough vacant hotel rooms on that date, the event had to take place the week before (interview with Jakob Rohmann 2018).
13. Though all six indigenous organizations were invited, only the Saami Council and the Inuit Circumpolar Council participated in the celebration.
14. At the Arctic Circle assembly 2017, Greenland had a record-high participation with 70–80 people representing the government, the research institutions, municipalities, private businesses, Indigenous Peoples organizations, health services and the public sector (interview with Mira Kleist May 18, 2018).
15. Special Advisor and Senior Arctic Official of Greenland, Mira Kleist, confirms the importance of representing Greenland at the Arctic Circle assembly and other similar conferences: 'The responsibility is a bit heavier when it comes to the Arctic because we are such a central part of the Arctic that it is unacceptable if we are not present. Because we are often mentioned, our presence is important so we can confirm or reject some of those things said at these conferences. If they are undisputed, they become the written truth about the conditions in Greenland' (interview May 18, 2018).
16. The interest in oil and gas varies greatly from one Arctic country to another and it is therefore not likely that a geopolitical rush for hydrocarbons will lead to conflict in the region as sometimes portrayed in the media (Keil, 2014).

References

Literature

- Aalberts TE (2004) The sovereignty game states play: (quasi-)states in the international order. *International Journal for the Semiotics of Law* 17(2): 245–257.
- Aalberts TE (2010) Playing the game of sovereign states: Charles Manning's constructivism *avant-la-lettre*. *European Journal of International Relations* 16(2): 247–268.
- Aalberts TE (2012) *Constructing Sovereignty between Politics and Law*. London: Routledge.
- Ackrén M (2014) Greenlandic paradiplomatic relations. In: Heininen L (ed.) *Security and Sovereignty in the North Atlantic*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 42–61.
- Adler-Nissen R and Gad UP (2013) Introduction: Postcolonial sovereignty games. In: Adler-Nissen R and Gad UP (eds) *European Integration and Postcolonial Sovereignty Games: The EU Overseas Countries and Territories*. London: Routledge, 1–24.
- Adler-Nissen R and Gad UP (2014) Introduction: Postimperial sovereignty games in the Nordic region. *Cooperation and Conflict* 49(1): 3–32.

- Adler-Nissen R and Gammeltoft-Hansen T (eds) (2008) *Sovereignty Games: Instrumentalizing State Sovereignty in Europe and beyond*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Agnew J (2005) Sovereignty regimes. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 95(2): 437–461.
- Albert M and Brock L (2001) What keeps the Westphalia together? In: Albert M, Jacobson D and Lapid Y (eds) *Identities, Borders, Orders: Rethinking International Relations Theory*. Minnesota, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 29–50.
- Bartelson J (1995) *A Genealogy of Sovereignty*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Breum M (2014) *Balladen om Grønland. Trangen til Løsrivelse, Råstofferne og Danmarks Dilemma [The Greenland Dilemma]*. Copenhagen: Gyldendal. [In Danish.]
- Breum M (2015) *The Greenland Dilemma: The Quest for Independence, the Underground Riches and the Troubled Relations with Denmark*. Copenhagen: Royal Danish Defence College.
- de Carvalho B, Leira H and Hobson JM (2011) The big bangs of IR the myths that your teachers still tell you about 1648 and 1919. *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 39(3): 735–758.
- Depledge D and Dodds K (2017) Bazaar governance: Situating the Arctic circle. In: Keil K and Knecht S (eds) *Governing Arctic Change – Global Perspectives*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 141–160.
- Espersen O, Harhoff F and Spiermann O (2003) *Folkeret: De Internationale Retsforhold [International Law: International Legal Matters]*. Copenhagen: Christian Ejlers' Forlag. [In Danish.]
- Fierke KM and Nicholson M (2001) Divided by a common language: Formal and constructivist approaches to games. *Global Society* 15(1): 7–25.
- Gad UP (2013) Greenland projecting sovereignty: Denmark protecting sovereignty away. In: Adler-Nissen R and Gad UP (eds) *European Integration and Postcolonial Sovereignty Games: The EU Overseas Countries and Territories* (New International Relations). London: Routledge, 217–230.
- Gad UP (2014) Greenland: A post-Danish sovereign nation state in the making. *Cooperation and Conflict* 49(1): 98–118.
- Gad UP (2016) *National Identity Politics and Postcolonial Sovereignty Games. Greenland, Denmark and the EU* (Monographs on Greenland 353 [Man & Society 43]). Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Publishers.
- Gerhardt H (2011) The Inuit and sovereignty: The case of the Inuit circumpolar conference and Greenland. *Politik* 14(1): 6–14.
- Gerhardt H (2018) The divergent scalar strategies of the Greenlandic government and the Inuit Circumpolar Council. In: Kristensen KS and Rahbek-Clemmensen J (eds) *Greenland and the International Politics of a Changing Arctic: Postcolonial Paradiplomacy between High and Low Politics*. London: Routledge, 113–124.
- Goffman E (1959) *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. New York: Anchor Books.
- Habermas J (2001) *The Postnational Constellation*. Boston, MA: The MIT Press.
- Jackson R (1991) *Quasi-States: Sovereignty, International Relations and the Third World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Jacobsen M (2015) The power of collective identity narration: Greenland's way to a more autonomous foreign policy. In: Heininen L, Exner-Pirot H and Plouffe J (eds) *Arctic Yearbook 2015: Arctic Governance and Governing*. Akureyri: Northern Research Forum, 102–118.
- Jacobsen M (2016) Denmark's strategic interests in the Arctic: It's the Greenlandic connection, stupid! *The Arctic Institute*, 4 May. Available at: <https://www.thearcticinstitute.org/denmark-interests-arctic-greenland-connection/> (accessed 8 October 2019)
- Jacobsen M (2019) Digging sustainability: Scaling and sectoring of sovereignty in Greenland and Nunavut mining discourses. In: Gad UP and Strandsbjerg J (eds) *Politics of Sustainability in the Arctic: Reconfiguring Identity, Time and Space*. London: Routledge, 52–73.

- Jacobsen M and Gad UP (2018) Setting the scene in Nuuk: Introducing the cast of characters in Greenlandic foreign policy narratives. In: Kristensen KS and Rahbek-Clemmensen J (eds) *Greenland and the International Politics of a Changing Arctic: Postcolonial Paradiplomacy between High and Low Politics*. London: Routledge, 11–27.
- Jacobsen M and Strandsbjerg J (2017) Desecuritization as displacement of controversy: Geopolitics, law and sovereign rights in the Arctic. *Politik* 20(3): 15–30.
- Keil K (2014) The Arctic: A new region of conflict? The case of oil and gas. *Cooperation and Conflict* 49(2): 162–190.
- Krasner SD (1999) *Sovereignty: Organized Hypocrisy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Kristensen KS (2004) *Greenland, Denmark and the Debate on Missile Defense: A Window of Opportunity for Increased Autonomy*. DIIS working paper 2004/14. Copenhagen: Danish Institute for International Studies. Available at: https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/17395/Greenland_Denmark_Missile_Defense.pdf (accessed 8 September 2019).
- Kristensen KS and Rahbek-Clemmensen J (2018a) *Greenland and the International Politics of a Changing Arctic: Postcolonial Paradiplomacy between High and Low Politics*. London: Taylor & Francis; Routledge.
- Kristensen KS and Rahbek-Clemmensen J (2018b) Greenlandic sovereignty in practice: Uranium, independence and foreign relations in Greenland between three logics of security. In: Kristensen KS and Rahbek-Clemmensen J (eds) *Greenland and the International Politics of a Changing Arctic: Postcolonial Paradiplomacy between High and Low Politics*. London: Routledge, 38–53.
- Loukacheva N (2007) *The Arctic Promise: Legal and Political Autonomy of Greenland and Nunavut*. Toronto, ON, Canada: University of Toronto Press.
- Motzfeldt J (2006) Hjemmestyre og udenrigspolitik [Home Rule and Foreign Policy]. In: Petersen H (ed.) *Grønland i Verdenssamfundet. Udvikling og forandring af normer og praksis [Greenland in the international community. Development and changes in norms and praxis]*. Nuuk: Atuagkat, 117–113. [In Danish.]
- Mouritzen H (2017) Danmark og Island: Kurrer på Tråden mellem Arktiske Venner [Denmark and Iceland: A Tiff between Arctic Friends]. DIIS policy brief, Danish Institute for International Studies, Copenhagen. Available at: <https://www.diis.dk/publikationer/danmark-island-kurrer-paa-traaden-mellem-arktiske-venner> (accessed 8 October 2019). [In Danish.]
- Neumann IB (2002) Returning practice to the linguistic turn. *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 31(3): 627–651.
- Neumann IB (2014) Imperializing Norden. *Cooperation and Conflict* 49(1): 119–129.
- Olsen IH and Shadian JM (2018) Greenland and the Arctic Council: Subnational regions in a time of Arctic Westphalianisation. In: Kristensen KS and Rahbek-Clemmensen J (eds) *Greenland and the International Politics of a Changing Arctic: Postcolonial Paradiplomacy between High and Low Politics*. London: Routledge, 113–124.
- Petersen H (2006) Grønland på verdenskortet [Greenland on the World Map]. In: Petersen H (ed.) *Grønland i Verdenssamfundet. Udvikling og forandring af normer og praksis [Greenland in the world community. Development and changes in norms and praxis]*. Nuuk: Atuagkat, 7–28.
- Rasmussen RK and Merkelsen H (2017) Post-colonial governance through securitization? A narratological analysis of a securitization controversy in contemporary Danish and Greenlandic uranium policy. *Politik* 20(3): 83–103.
- Ruggie JG (1986) Continuity and transformation in the world polity. In: Keohane R (ed.) *Neorealism and Its Critics*. New York: Columbia University Press, 131–157.
- Ruggie JG (1993) Territoriality and beyond. *International Organization* 47(1): 139–174.

- Shadian J (2010) From states to polities: Reconceptualizing sovereignty through Inuit governance. *European Journal of International Relations* 16(3): 485–510.
- Strandsbjerg J (2014) Making sense of contemporary Greenland: Indigeneity, resources and sovereignty. In: Powell RC and Dodds K (eds) *Polar Geopolitics? Knowledges, Resources and Legal Regimes*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 259–276.
- Vestergaard C (2014) Greenland's uranium and the Kingdom of Denmark. In: Mouritzen H and Hvidt N (eds) *Danish Foreign Policy Yearbook*. Copenhagen: Danish Institute for International Studies, 51–75.
- Vestergaard C and Thomasen G (2015) *Governing Uranium in the Danish Realm*. Copenhagen: Danish Institute for International Studies.
- Wæver O (2004) Det er hårdt at være stat. Naalagaaffiulluni oqitsuinnaangilaq [It's tough being a state]. *Sermitsiaq* 33: 31–33. [In Danish.]
- Wittgenstein L (1958) *Philosophical Investigations*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Official documents news articles

- a76.dk (2014) Kontinentalsokkelprojektet [The Continental Shelf Project]. Available at: http://a76.dk/about_us/index.html (accessed 17 September 2018). [In Danish.]
- Demokraatit (2017) *Ordførerindlæg: Udenrigspolitisk Redegørelse 2017 [Rapporteur's Speech: Foreign Policy Report 2017]*. Available at: https://inatsisartut.gl/dvd/EM2017/pdf/media/2533225/pkt14_em2017_uprg2017_ordf_demokraatit_da.pdf (accessed 18 September 2018). [In Danish.]
- Hammond A (2013) The Premier Aleqa Hammond's speech at the Arctic Circle Assessment. Naalakkersuisut [Government of Greenland]. Available at: <https://naalakkersuisut.gl/~media/Nanoq/Files/Pressemeddelelser/ARCTIC%20CIRCLE%20presentation%20FINAL%20EN.pdf> (accessed 18 September 2018).
- Hjemmestyreloven (1979) *Lov nr. 577 af 29. november 1978 om Grønlands Hjemmestyre*. Nuuk: Inatsisartut.
- Inuit Circumpolar Council (2009) *A Circumpolar Inuit Declaration on Sovereignty in the Arctic*. Available at: <https://iccalaska.org/wp-icc/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Signed-Inuit-Sovereignty-Declaration-11x17.pdf>
- Igaliku Agreement (2004) *Bekendtgørelse af aftale af 6. august 2004 med Amerikas Forenede Stater om ændring og supplerung af overenskomst af 27. april 1951 om forsvaret af Grønland* [Announcement of agreement of 6 August 2004 with the United States of America about changes and supplements of agreement of 27 April 1951 about the defence of Greenland]. Udenrigsministeriet [Denmark's Ministry of Foreign Affairs], 28 April 2005.
- Inuit Ataatigiiit (2015) *Ordførerindlæg: Udenrigspolitisk Redegørelse 2015 [Rapporteur's speech: Foreign Policy Report 2015]*. Available at: https://inatsisartut.gl/dvd/EM2015/pdf/media/2677486/pkt14_em2015_udenrigspolitiske_redegoerelse_ordf_inuit_ataatigiiit_da.pdf (accessed 21 September 2018). [In Danish.]
- Inuit Ataatigiiit (2017) *Ordførerindlæg: Udenrigspolitisk Redegørelse 2017 [Rapporteur's speech: Foreign Policy Report 2017]*. Available at: https://inatsisartut.gl/dvd/EM2017/pdf/media/2533260/pkt14_em2017_uprg2017_ordf_inuit_ataatigiiit_da.pdf (accessed 18 September 2018). [In Danish.]
- Itilleq Erklæringen (2003) *Fælles principerklæring mellem Regeringen og Grønlands Landsstyre om Grønlands inddragelse i udenrigs- og sikkerhedspolitikken* [Joint Declaration of Principles between the Government and the Greenland Home Rule Government about Greenland's involvement in foreign- and security policy]. Itilleq, 14 May 2003.

- Jacobsen M (2018) Faroese Foreign Minister: We definitely benefit from the Arctic attention. *High North News*, 24 May. Available at: <https://www.highnorthnews.com/en/faroese-foreign-minister-we-definitely-benefit-arctic-attention> (accessed 10 August 2018).
- Motzfeldt V (EM2016/106) *Forslag til Inatsisartutbeslutning om, at Naalakkersuisut pålægges til EM2017 at udarbejde en arktisk strategi, der tager udgangspunkt i Grønlands rolle og geopolitiske handlingsrum som en arktisk nation* [Proposal for Inatsisartut decision that Naalakkersuisut be mandated for EM2017 to draw up an Arctic strategy based on Greenland's role and geopolitical room for action as an Arctic nation]. Siumut. [In Danish.]
- Naalakkersuisut (2010) Udenrigspolitisk Redegørelse 2010 [Foreign Policy Report 2010]. Naalakkersuisut/Government of Greenland. Available at: <https://naalakkersuisut.gl/~media/Nanoq/Files/Attached%20Files/Udenrigsdirektoratet/DK/Udenrigspolitiske%20redegørelser/Udenrigspolitiske%20redeg%C3%B8relse%202010.pdf> (accessed 4 September 2018). [In Danish.]
- Naalakkersuisut (2011) Udenrigspolitisk Strategi 2011 [Foreign Policy Strategy 2011]. Naalakkersuisut/Government of Greenland. Available at: <http://naalakkersuisut.gl/~media/Nanoq/Files/Attached%20Files/Udenrigsdirektoratet/DK/Udenrigspolitiske%20redegørelser/Udenrigspolitiske%20redeg%C3%B8relse%202011.pdf> (accessed 10 August 2018). [In Danish.]
- Naalakkersuisut (2013) Udenrigspolitisk Redegørelse 2013 [Foreign Policy Report 2013]. Naalakkersuisut/Government of Greenland. Available at: <https://naalakkersuisut.gl/~media/Nanoq/Files/Attached%20Files/Udenrigsdirektoratet/DK/Udenrigspolitiske%20redegørelser/Udenrigspolitisk%20Redeg%C3%B8relse%202013.pdf> (accessed 4 September 2018). [In Danish.]
- Naalakkersuisut (2015) Udenrigspolitisk Redegørelse 2015 [Foreign Policy Report 2015]. Naalakkersuisut/Government of Greenland. Available at: <https://naalakkersuisut.gl/~media/Nanoq/Files/Attached%20Files/Udenrigsdirektoratet/DK/Udenrigspolitiske%20redegørelser/Udenrigspolitisk%20Redeg%C3%B8relse%202015.pdf> (accessed 4 September 2018). [In Danish.]
- Naalakkersuisut (2016) Udenrigspolitisk Redegørelse 2016 [Foreign Policy Report 2016]. Naalakkersuisut/Government of Greenland. Available at: <https://naalakkersuisut.gl/~media/Nanoq/Files/Attached%20Files/Udenrigsdirektoratet/DK/Udenrigspolitiske%20redegørelser/Udenrigspolitisk%20Redeg%C3%B8relse%202016.pdf> (accessed 4 September 2018). [In Danish.]
- Naalakkersuisut (2017) Udenrigspolitisk Redegørelse 2017 [Foreign Policy Report 2017]. Naalakkersuisut/Government of Greenland. Available at: <https://naalakkersuisut.gl/~media/Nanoq/Files/Attached%20Files/Udenrigsdirektoratet/DK/Udenrigspolitiske%20redegørelser/Udenrigspolitisk%20redeg%C3%B8relse%202017.pdf> (accessed 8 October 2019). [In Danish.]
- Naalakkersuisoq for Erhverv, Arbejdsmarked, Handel og Udenrigsanliggender (EM2016/106). *Svarnotat*. Available at: https://inatsisartut.gl/dvd/EM2016/pdf/media/2523089/pkt106_em2016_bf33_groenlands_arktiske_strategi_sn_1beh_da.pdf (accessed 10 August 2018).
- Naalakkersuisut.gl (n.d.) Naalakkersuisuts Udenrigspolitiske Kompetence – De Juridiske Rammer [Naalakkersuisut's Foreign Policy Competence – The Legal Framework. Naalakkersuisut/Government of Greenland. Available at: <https://naalakkersuisut.gl//da/Naalakkersuisut/Departementer/Udenrigsanliggende/Naalakkersuisuts-udenrigspolitiske-kompetencer/De-juridiske-rammer> (accessed 22 August 2018). [In Danish.]
- Nyvold M (2016) Forsker støtter Aleqas kritik af Taksøe-rapport [Researcher supports Aleqa's criticism of Taksøe report]. *Sermitsiaq.AG*, 6 May. Available at: <http://sermitsiaq.ag/node/187397> (accessed 10 August 2018). [In Danish.]

- Olsvig S (EM2016/106) *Forslag til Inatsisartutbeslutning om, at Naalakkersuisut pålægges til EM2017 at udarbejde en arktisk strategi, der tager udgangspunkt i Grønlands rolle og geopolitiske handlingsrum som en arktisk nation*. Inuit Ataqatigiit. Available at: https://inatsisartut.gl/dvd/EM2016/pdf/media/samlingsfiler/2862021/pkt106_em2016_bf33_groenlands_arktiske_strategi_saol_inuit_ataqatigiit_da.pdf (accessed 10 August 2018).
- Qujaukitsoq V (2016) Greenland, Canada, and the United States: the Arctic Potential, Speech by Greenland's Minister for Industry, Labour, Trade, Energy and Foreign Affairs, Mr. Vittus Qujaukitsoq. In: *The Arctic Circle Quebec Forum*, Quebec City, QC, Canada, 12 December. Available at: https://naalakkersuisut.gl/da/Naalakkersuisut/Nyheder/2016/12/141216_Arctic_Circle (accessed 19 September 2018).
- Skærbæk M (2014) Bred politisk opbakning til dansk krav på Nordpolen [Broad political support for Danish claims on the North Pole]. *Politiken*, 15 December. Available at: <https://politiken.dk/indland/politik/art5556783/Bred-politisk-opbakning-til-dansk-krav-p%C3%A5-Nordpolen> (accessed 5 September 2018). [In Danish.]
- Statsministeriet (2009) The Act on Greenland Self-Government, Act no. 473 of 12 June 2009. Available at: http://www.stm.dk/_p_13090.html (accessed 14 August 2018).
- Taksøe-Jensen P (2016) *Udredning: Dansk Diplomati og Forsvar i en Brydningstid* [Investigation: Danish Diplomacy and Defense in Times of Change]. København: Udenrigsministeriet. [In Danish.]
- The Danish Government (2017) Foreign and Security Policy Strategy 2017–2018. Available at: <https://um.dk/en/news/newsdisplaypage/?newsid=030b755e-643a-44db-989a-528847f6671b> (accessed 8 October 2019).
- The Danish Government (2018) Foreign and Security Policy Strategy 2019–2020. Available at: https://www.dsn.gob.es/sites/dsn/files/2018_Denmark%20Foreign%20and%20security%20policy%20strategy%202019-2020.pdf (accessed 8 October 2019).
- um.dk (n.d.) Ministeriet som arbejdsplads [Ministry as a workplace]. Udenrigsministeriet – Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark. Available at: <http://um.dk/da/om-os/stillinger/arbejdsplads/> (accessed 16 August 2018). [In Danish.]

Interviews

- Suka K. Frederiksen, Greenland's Minister of Foreign Affairs, May 12, 2017, Fairbanks, Alaska, USA.
- Anders Samuelsen, Denmark's Minister of Foreign Affairs, May 12, 2017, Fairbanks, Alaska, USA.
- Kenneth Høegh, Permanent Secretary, Greenland's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, May 15, 2018, Nuuk, Greenland.
- Mira Kleist, Special Advisor, Greenland's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, May 18, 2018, Nuuk, Greenland.
- Jakob Rohmann, Chief of Protocol, Greenland's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, May 18, 2018, Nuuk, Greenland.
- Monica Paulli Andersen, Head of Section, Greenland's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, May 18, 2018, Nuuk, Greenland.
- Nick Bæk-Heilmann, Head of Section, Greenland's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, May 18, 2018, Nuuk, Greenland.
- Hanne Fugl Eskjær, the Kingdom of Denmark's Arctic Ambassador, May 22, 2018, Ilulissat, Greenland.
- Anders Samuelsen, Denmark's Minister of Foreign Affairs, May 22, 2018, Ilulissat, Greenland.
- Allison LeClaire, Canada's Senior Arctic Official, May 23, 2018, Ilulissat, Greenland.

- Nina Buvang Vaaja, Director of the Arctic Council Secretariat, May 23, 2018, Ilulissat, Greenland.
- Minik Rosing, Professor, Natural History Museum of Denmark, May 23, 2018, Ilulissat, Greenland.
- Vivian Motzfeldt, Greenland's Minister of Foreign Affairs, May 23, 2018, Ilulissat, Greenland.
- Poul Michelsen, Faroe Island's Minister of Foreign Affairs, May 23, 2018, Ilulissat, Greenland.
Published online in *High North News*. See: Jacobsen 2018.
- Jacob Isbosethsen, Head of Department, Greenland's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, May 24, 2018, Ilulissat, Greenland.
- Jacob Isbosethsen, Head of Greenland's representation to Iceland [since September 2018], October 20, 2018, Reykjavik, Iceland.

Author biography

Marc Jacobsen is currently a PhD Candidate at the Centre for Advanced Security Theory, University of Copenhagen, Denmark. His research mainly focuses on foreign policy identity, (para)diplomacy and security discourses; particularly within the Arctic and with special interest in the evolving postcolonial Danish-Greenlandic relations in the light of increased Arctic attention. Marc is also a Senior Fellow and Leadership Member of The Arctic Institute, an international network of scholars providing in-depth analyses of circumpolar security issues.

CONFIDENTIAL - FOR FUNDING REVIEW ONLY