

The Power of Collective Identity Narration: Greenland's Way to a More Autonomous Foreign Policy

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This paper demonstrates how different Greenlandic governments have exploited a narrative of a unique Greenlandic identity to shape and strengthen a foreign policy autonomous from Denmark. Central to this narrative is, on the one hand, the widespread anticipation of more independence in the future and, on the other hand, the notion of a common cultural core formed in the past. The three main elements of this core are the Greenlandic language, hunting traditions, and a particular relationship to nature. While the status of the three elements is often disputed in specific domestic policy debates, such as the commissions exploring future Greenlandic constitution and reconciliation with Denmark, on the international policy level there is a remarkable agreement about the narrative. Here the three elements are understood as a matter of societal security. They need to be protected from external threats in order to uphold the current Greenlandic society. In several cases, the elements are securitised. Hereby the nomination of external threats is used to successfully legitimise extraordinary rights, such as whaling, while the strive for independence substantiate more favourable CO₂-reduction requirements. These different rights do, on the one hand, enhance Greenland's individual position in the world, and hence also strengthen the nation-building process, while, on the other hand, making visible a paradox where increased CO₂-emissions have negative implications for the traditional way of living. These implications mirror the complexity of the identity narrative, as the cultural core and the anticipated future independence sometimes contrast each other.

Introduction: a 'window of opportunity'

Greenland's foreign policy competence seems to be clearly defined, but as this paper will show the articulation and protection of an alleged unique identity represents a 'window of opportunity' that has been used to extend the competence. To show this, the foreign policy analysis will focus on the communication by Greenland's political representatives regarding three synchronic cases that together mirror the central cultural elements of the ethno-national community, namely: 1) status of the Greenlandic language; 2) protection of hunting rights; and 3) the protection and development of the Greenlandic nature. These three elements have been highlighted by exemplary analyses of how the current hegemonic collective identity narrative has emerged, while the individual cases have been emphasised by Naalakkersuisut's (the Government of Greenland) annual foreign policy reports. The three analyses will make visible how the designation of an external threat to the cultural traditions and the envisioned future with more independence, have

been used to legitimise a claim for extraordinary rights with regard to whaling and more lenient CO₂ reduction requirements. This double perspective on a common heritage and an anticipated future reflects the tension between tradition and modernity within the collective identity narrative, as tradition signals status quo while development means change. This is also visible on the international level where the official communication oscillates between portraying Greenlanders as either a minority or an equal partner depending on the situation; something which may be an intentional strategy or a transitory phenomenon as a result of the relatively recent transition from home rule to self-government.

The paper is theoretically inspired by Ole Wæver's discursive approach to foreign policy analysis and his understanding of foreign policy as based on a state's self-image. Empirically, the author's curiosity has been stimulated by an interesting sentence on the webpage of Greenland's Foreign Affairs Department. Here it is written that Greenland's foreign policy competence is regulated by three measures: the Constitutional Act of Denmark, the Act on Greenland Self Government and practice (Naalakkersuisut.gl n.d.). The fact that practice is also a regulatory factor indicates that the legal frameworks may be open to interpretation, hence leaving a 'window of opportunity' for Greenland to achieve a more autonomous foreign policy. But why then focus on how a collective identity narrative has been articulated internationally? Besides the theoretical inspiration, statements such as the following by the former Premier Aleqa Hammond have stimulated the curiosity. In her first opening speech of Inatsisartut (Greenland's parliament) she stated:

Greenland's active participation internationally contributes to the drawing of attention to Greenlandic interests and also to attract investments to the development in Greenland. But it also signals that no one can step on us or override Greenland's interests. It provides the backbone; it gives pride. The individual citizen may also use this to strengthen one's self-awareness. As a people it can strengthen our culture, self-awareness and self-perception (Hammond 2013: 3. Author's translation).

This statement shows a clear connection between the collective identity narrative and the development of international relations. What is, however, conspicuous is the lacking definition of what characterises the collective identity; what exactly is it that is possibly threatened or strengthened? To give an adequate answer to this question, this paper refers to exemplary historical analyses of the emergence of a collective Greenlandic identity and to articulations by the political parties in Inatsisartut. Together with a short introduction to Wæver's theoretical approach, these findings are necessary as basis for the foreign policy analysis, and will, thus, be presented on the following pages.

Analytical strategy: foreign policy as representation and protection of a collective identity

Ole Wæver's discourse theoretical approach to foreign policy analysis observes a country's foreign affairs as being based on a specific identity representation, whose contingent composition is what defines the state's self-image (Wæver 2001: 285). This image is dependent on a dichotomy between Self and Other, where the outside of the delineation is constitutive to a certain identity (Laclau 1990; Torfing 1999: 299), meaning that what defines the collective 'Us' is first and foremost that 'We' are different from 'Them' (cf. Laclau & Mouffe 2002: 82). An Other can either be perceived as an antagonistic enemy that threatens the very existence of a state (cf. Campbell 1992: 48) or an

agonistic¹ competitor which merely represents different values that are tolerated due to the common acceptance of fundamental democratic rules (Mouffe 1993: 4). In the development of a collective Greenlandic identity, Denmark has been the primary Other, while ethnicity has traditionally been perceived as something congenital (cf. Sørensen 1994: 168-169), as to be a Greenlander seems to require at least one Greenlandic parent (Petersen 1991: 17; Kleivan 1999: 98). Secondly, the identity narrative has been connected to language; reified culture, such as hunting traditions; and a romantic, intimate relation to the Greenlandic nature (Sørensen 1994: 108-109). Such characterisations of self-images are found through historical analyses (Wæver 2002: 40), and by drawing on exemplary analyses highlighting exactly these three cultural components (cf. Gad 2005), this paper will narrow down the focus to how language (cf. Langgård 2003: 231), hunting rights (cf. Sørensen 1991: 189; Thomsen 1998: 21f.) and nature (cf. Pedersen 1997: 154ff.) have been articulated as a matter of protecting the Greenlandic collective identity.

When linking a state's identity representation to its foreign policy, a security policy focus is essential (Wæver 2002: 26) as articulations of external dangers or threats to the state's existence and identity is what legitimises a particular foreign policy (Campbell 1992: 12). To define a threat is in Wæver's terms to *securitise*; a political and discursive action (Wæver 1995: 55) that seeks to justify specific state-centred acts (ibid.: 65) that ultimately allow temporary disregarding of fundamental rights (Buzan & Wæver 2009: 217). On the international level, Greenland is, however, a special case as it is not yet a state and military security policy is still in the hands of Copenhagen. Instead, this paper subscribes to a wider understanding of security, and special attention will be given to the issue of societal security whose reference object in this case is the collective Greenlandic identity that may be perceived as threatened by different external actors or values with putative potential for eroding the nation (Buzan et al. 1998: 121). As Greenland has never been a state, the basic constellation of a collective We has been dominated by the so-called culture nation (Gad 2004: 121), characterised by a widespread perception of culture and identity as an essence (Sørensen 1994: 168ff.) rather than something dynamic and interchangeable. This reflects how Greenlandic culture is generally believed to be an ethno-national community, whose members have an internal, cultural core in common, that should be protected from external interference (Gad 2008: 274, 281). An ethno-national community is "an extremely powerful mode of subjectivation" (Wæver et al. 1993: 22) and as the national narrative is formed, different subject positions are ascribed to people within the group who, again, stand in contrast to other groups defined by different predicates, hence constructing a meaningful and mutually defining Us and Them (Howarth 2005: 157).

As the foreign policy analysis develops it will become visible how different subject positions are ascribed to the Greenlandic people depending on the situation. Particularly the subject positions 'minority' and 'equal partner' will be identified throughout the analysis as the international communication by Greenland's political representatives sometimes rest upon a perception of Greenlanders as a minority with special rights or on a perception of Greenlanders as an equal partner with equal rights. These labels reflect the different wording in the Home Rule Act and in the Act on Self Government respectively. When the Home Rule Act was introduced in 1979 it was "[...] in recognition of the special status which Greenland occupies in national, cultural and geographical terms within the kingdom" (Hjemmestyreløven 1979. Author's translation), which is a formulation that mirrors the contemporary perception of Greenlanders as a minority (Thisted 2012: 612). With words such as 'equality', 'mutual respect' and 'partnership' the Act on Self Government broke with this characterisation and the historic subordination within the Danish

Realm (*ibid.*). Other subject position pairs can sometimes also be identified in the communication, but it is with reference to these historical documents that ‘minority’ and ‘equal partner’ are the preferred guiding difference throughout the analysis.

On the international level, Greenland’s collective identity narrative seems to be clear and unambiguous and although the consensus on certain central values is relatively sedimented, the different political parties do, however, have different perceptions of how static or dynamic the Greenland nation is. Before we turn to the foreign policy analysis, the following section will, thus, briefly describe some of the nuances present in the domestic debates about what constitutes the Greenlandic collective identity.

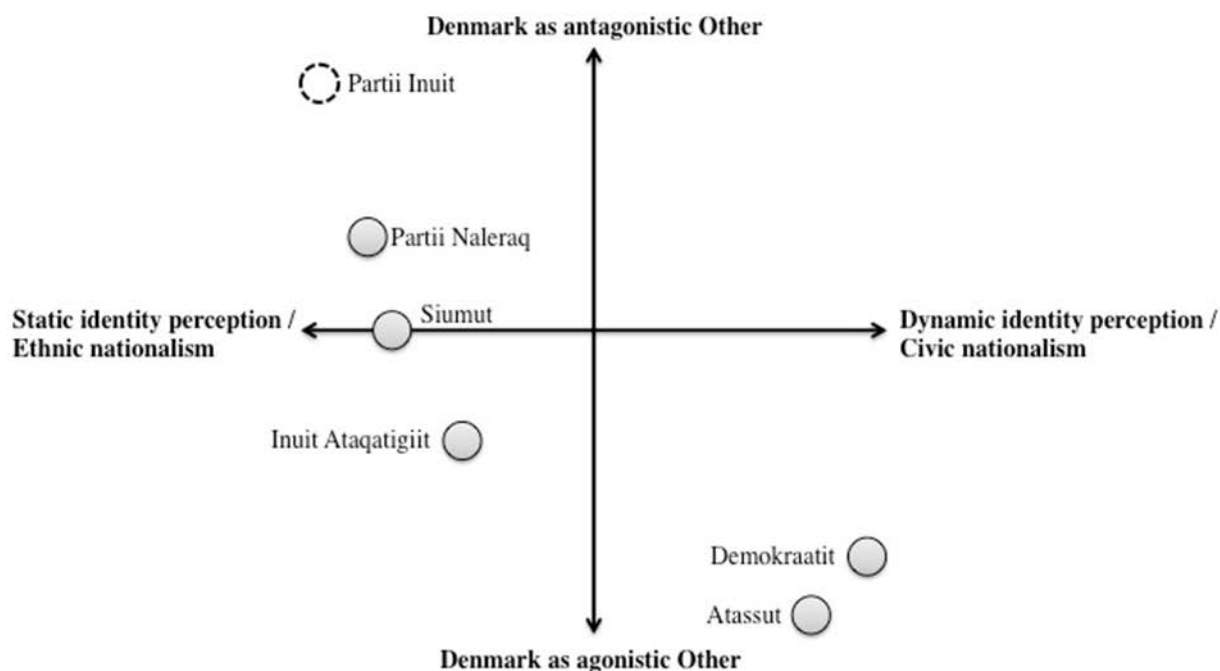
Domestic nuances on how Greenland should develop as a nation

On 25 November 2008, 75.5 percent of all eligible Greenlanders voted for the Act on Greenland Self-Government, which acknowledges Greenlanders as “a people pursuant to international law with the right of self-determination” (2009: 1). On 21 June 2009 the Act on Self-Government entered into force whereby the legal obstacles on the road towards full independence were removed with the sentence: “Decision regarding Greenland’s independence shall be taken by the people of Greenland” (2009: §21). The social liberal Demokraatit was the only political party that recommended a ‘No’ in the referendum on the Act on Self-Government (Demokraatit 2008: 9). In spite of this, Demokraatit today, however, unequivocally support the quest for independence just like every other political party in Inatsisartut (cf. Jacobsen 2014: 24-29) and, thus, all parties unite around this Greenland’s *raison d’être* (cf. Tobiassen 1995: 40f; in Gad 2004: 276). The agreement between the political parties is, however, only intact as long as the anticipated future independence is vaguely defined. If e.g. the parties’ different characterisation of the desirable relation to Denmark is included, consensus ceases and disagreement appears, as Atassut and Demokraatit put great emphasis on maintaining close relations to Denmark, while Partii Inuit, as the Other extreme, plead for no links to Denmark whatsoever (cf. Jacobsen 2014: 24-29). The two major parties, Inuit Ataqatigiit and Siumut, are situated in between, with the latter sometimes being closer to Partii Inuit, when Denmark’s past subjugation of Greenlanders is described in more antagonistic terms and as actions that need to be dealt with by a reconciliation commission, inspired by the process following the end of South Africa’s apartheid regime (*ibid.*).

Each and every political party in Inatsisartut agree that the Greenlandic language, hunting traditions and a particular relationship to nature are core cultural elements important for the Greenlandic nation and, thus, need to be protected (Jacobsen 2014: 29-34). Whether they constitute an identity-wise essence is, however, object for disagreement. Some parties have a more ethno-national perception where identity is believed to be a static essence, while others subscribe to a more dynamic and civic-national perception of what it means to be a Greenlander (*ibid.*) (cf. figure 1). When zooming in on the domestic political debates concerning protection of language, the often-used term ‘non-Greenlandic speaking Greenlander’ reveals that language cannot be used as demarcation line between Greenlander/non-Greenlander (*ibid.*). If a Greenlander does not speak Greenlandic, the person is merely perceived as a Greenlander with a flaw (cf. Gad 2005). Similar nuances appear when parliamentary climate debates are included in the analysis as higher temperatures represent a paradox because they, on the one hand, constitute an existential threat to the hunting traditions while they, on the other hand, help to diversify fishing opportunities and

improve the accessibility for mining and hydrocarbon extraction. The unanimous support for the parliamentary motion regarding a territorial exclusion for Greenland in the Kyoto Protocol's second commitment period (EM2013/109) indicates that the endeavour for new significant economic profits – necessary if future independence shall be realised – is favoured even if it may compromise culturally important hunting traditions and the environment. In this way, the current dominating collective identity narrative in Greenland contains an immanent tension between tradition and modernity, as it has done throughout history.

Figure 1: Greenland's political parties' identity perception and preferable future relation to Denmark. Partii Inuit is marked with a dashed line to show that the party is no longer present in Inatsisartut.



Cultural protection and demands for development through foreign relations

Based on the exemplary historic analyses showing how the Greenlandic language, hunting traditions and a particular intimate relation to nature have been highlighted as central cultural components in the dominating collective identity narrative, the focus will now be narrowed down to the question of how these components have been articulated internationally since the introduction of self-government. When doing this, it is relevant to look at whether these components have been securitised as a matter of upholding the national identity, and how the communication ascribes different subject positions to the Greenlandic people. The empirical data for the three synchronic analyses have been structured according to Naalakkersuisut's annual foreign policy reports, which highlight a list of relevant forums and cases: 1) Regarding the status of the Greenlandic language, the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII), United Nations Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous People (EMRIP) and the Nordic Council constitute the list of relevant forums. 2) Concerning the protection of hunting traditions, the European Union's (EU) ban on seal product import and the dispute with the International Whaling Commission (IWC) stand out as exemplary cases. 3) Pertaining to the analysis of how the particular relation to nature has been articulated on the international level, the communication under the auspices of UN – the COP meetings in particular – are the empirical

foundation for the last analysis. As these three synchronic analyses will show, the foreign policy communication oscillates between portraying Greenlanders as either a minority or an equal partner, which indicates a tension between modernisation and tradition within the dominating collective identity narrative. In the communication regarding the protection and development of nature this tension becomes paradoxical as the anticipated increased industrialisation - necessary if the dream of independence shall be realised – indirectly threatens the hunting traditions.

Status of the Greenlandic language

When UNESCO published its *Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger* in 2010, the Greenlandic language was identified as being in danger; more specifically *avannersuarminsut* and *tunumiunusut*, which are spoken in North and East Greenland respectively, were characterised as ‘definitely endangered’, while the West Greenlandic *Kitaamiunusut* – which is the written language standard (Thomsen 2013: 261) – got the label ‘vulnerable’ (Moseley 2010). By doing this, UNESCO securitised the Greenlandic language, but a specific threat was not, however, unequivocally pointed out. By observing the parliamentary debates about an official language policy back in 2009 and 2010, it is clear that particularly the Danish language is perceived as the primary threat or opponent. This observation is supported by former Minister for Family, Culture and Church, Mimi Karlsen, who, in a speech to the Nordic Language Commission in 2011, stated:

The modernisation of Greenland has i.a. led to danification - also language wise – and later greenlandisation. The linguistic crisis between 1950 and 1980 has had some repercussions, which can be difficult to overcome. Back then, the language almost lost its status among people with middle-range training (Karlsen 2011: 4. Author’s translation).

Such articulations have been more frequent in the domestic debates than internationally where a threat to the status of the language is not articulated to the same extent. The *Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger* is, however, the founding documentation for the ICC project *Assessing, Monitoring and Promoting Arctic Indigenous Languages*, in which the head of Greenland’s Language Secretariat, Carl Christian Olsen, plays a key role (ICC 2011: 6).

As mentioned by Karlsen, the protection of the Greenlandic language was a core element in the nationalist wave in the 1970’s when indigenous traditions were idealised and the links to other Inuit were enhanced. These relations are still central in i.a. UNPFII and EMRIP of which the latter has given special attention to “[...] language and culture’s role in connection with promotion and protection of indigenous peoples’ rights and identity” (Naalakkersuisut 2013a: 24. Authors’ translation), as they are still threatened by “[d]iscriminatory legislation, dominant cultural majorities and lack of recognition” (ibid.). Whether this also concerns the Greenlandic language is not crystal clear from the information publicly available, but the adoption of an official language policy underlines that: “The Greenlandic language is a central part of the Greenlandic people’s cultural identity. The language has a culture-bearing function that shall be preserved, strengthened and simultaneously developed” (EM2009/88:1. Author’s translation). This mirrors Greenland’s special position within the international indigenous network, well exemplified by Kuupik Kleist’s speech at the EMRIP annual meeting in 2009 where he emphasised that the introduction of self-government is a “[...] de facto implementation of the declaration of indigenous peoples’ rights” (Naalakkersuisut 2010: 22. Author’s translation) and that “[...] the experiences of Greenland’s process can serve as inspiration for others of the world’s indigenous peoples in their struggle for

greater autonomy and in their development as a people” (ibid.: 23). Such a statement indirectly excludes people who are not indigenous but still perceive themselves as part of the Greenland nation and, thus, the statement represents a static or more ethno national perception of what it means to have a true Greenlandic identity. The positioning of Greenlanders as a minority in these forums is furthermore a relic from the past when Greenland did not have self-government and is as such more retrospective than prospective.

The communication made under the auspices of Nordic Council is contrary to the communication in the UN forums, as ‘equality’ and ‘independence’ rather than ‘minority’ are the subject positions used to portray Greenlanders desirable position. In 2006, the Nordic Council adopted a declaration on Nordic language policy, which distinguishes between ‘community bearing’ languages - consisting of Faroese, Greenlandic, Sami, Danish, Finnish, Icelandic, Norwegian and Swedish - and ‘state bearing’ languages that leave out the first three (Norden 2006: 11). Thus, there is a clear hierarchical line, which would have been more likely to be accepted if the non-state entities’ underlying logic was based on indigenous peoples’ rights and the subject position ascribed to their citizens was ‘minority’. By observing the statements made concerning the status of the Greenlandic language (cf. Jacobsen 2014: 39-41), it is, however, evident that this is definitely not the case. Instead, Greenland’s representatives plead for a position equivalent to the official states’ and a discontent over the lower status of the Greenlandic language has often been used for raising questions over Greenland’s general lower position in the Nordic Council hierarchy. As a result of this persistent engagement then Premier Aleqa Hammond was invited to join the Prime Ministers’ annual summer meeting in 2014 (Sommer 2014). This was a clear indication of higher status, a step towards the announced vision of future full membership (Nordisk Råd 2013) and in line with Greenland’s foreign policy strategy from 2011 which describes direct participation in the Nordic Council as important because it “[...] can generate results that support the general foreign policy work” (Naalakkersuisut 2011: 21. Author’s translation). An important fact for this successful development was the establishment of a strategic partnership with Åland and the Faroese Islands in 2012 that gives the three autonomous areas the authority to speak on behalf of each other (lagtinget.aland.fi); a partnership, which a Naalakkersuisut foreign policy report described as “a pivotal development of Greenland’s foreign relations” (Naalakkersuisut 2013a: 12. Author’s translation).

Protection of hunting rights

Hunting traditions’ core position in the dominating collective identity narrative has especially been articulated on the international level where the protection of the rights to sealing and whaling have been challenged by external decisions that limit the export of seal products and restrict Greenland’s quota on large whales. Both cases took their beginning shortly after the introduction of self-government when Greenland proposed a quota of ten humpback whales – which until then only had been allowed for St. Vincent and the Grenadines to catch – and when the EU introduced a ban on import of seal products that, however, contained a so-called ‘Inuit exception’ (EU 2009). Despite the special exception, it is argued that the ban has still had grave consequences to Greenland’s export of seal products as it decreased from DKK 60 million in 2006 to DKK 6 million in 2012 (Sommer 2012) and when the exception was overruled by WTO in 2013 – and upheld in May 2014 – the Greenlandic seal hunters’ outlook only got gloomier. Contrary to this development, the dispute with IWC has so far resulted in a positive outcome for Greenland as the

wish for a higher quota on large whales was fulfilled in September 2014. On the way to these two different outcomes, the communication regarding the two cases have had some central elements in common, namely: a sharply articulated dichotomy between Us and Them, a definition of the external decisions as being threats to Greenland's societal security and an oscillation between ascribing either the subject position 'indigenous minority' or 'equal partner' to the Greenlanders. Furthermore, they have both been highlighted in Naalakkersuisut's annual foreign policy reports and described by former Premier Hammond as "[...] crucial cases for the future of Greenland" (Andersen 2014. Author's translation).

The primary antagonistic Other in both cases has been the EU and the European members of IWC. Already before the EU ban on import of seal products came into force it was characterised by Jonathan Motzfeldt from Siumut as "[...] a cultural genocide, like the one they have committed in South America [...]" (Holm 2009. Author's translation) and the purpose of the ban was interpreted as "[...] to prevent the Arctic people from surviving in their own way by eating seals and whales and birds" (ibid.). This was an unambiguous securitisation of the traditional way of living that – through its central position in the dominating collective identity narrative – can be identified as a matter of societal security threatened by the EU. The same pattern has been visible in the IWC dispute, which peaked in 2013 after Greenland decided to unilaterally raise its quota on humpback whales, and Denmark, thus, considered leaving IWC where it represents Greenland. In response to this consideration, then Minister for Fishing, Hunting and Agriculture, Karl Lyberth, retorted with a feature article entitled 'The Danes should not decide how we should live and eat' (Org.: 'Danskerne bør ikke bestemme hvordan vi skal leve og spise'). Here he made a clear distinction between the Europeans who "[...] go to the supermarket and buy pre-packed meat of farmed animals butchered by others" (Lyberth 2013. Author's translation) in contrast to "Here in Greenland, we go into the wild to catch our food and we are therefore responsible for our own food supply" (ibid.). Ultimately, Lyberth made it clear that the decision of unilaterally raising Greenland's whaling quota was taken "[...] to protect our people's way of living" (ibid.).

The reason for why Greenland should have these extraordinary rights is explained by historic traditions and cultural importance that both the EU and IWC themselves perceive as legitimate arguments. What does not legitimise extraordinary hunting rights is, however, when an economic logic is brought into play, like in the following statement made by then Minister for Fishing, Hunting and Agriculture, Ane Hansen, where she argues that: "[...] we, in our endeavour to implement self-government in Greenland, have to make full use of all the resources we can get, including all animals caught" (Hansen 2010: 1. Author's translation). Suspicion of commercial whaling and sealing was exactly the reason why IWC did not accept Greenland's wish for a higher quota in 2012 and the explanation for why the WTO undermined EU's 'Inuit exception' because it was perceived as being anti-competitive to seal product export in Canada and Norway (Naalakkersuisut 2013b). The question of equality or minority has also been relevant at another level, as Greenland is represented by Denmark in IWC and WTO, while they both carry out their own bilateral relation with the EU. Throughout the two processes politicians such as Juliane Henningsen from Inuit Ataqatigiit has, thus, often suggested that Greenlanders as people pursuant to international law with the right of self-determination should work "[...] persistently to ensure that Greenland has an independent voice in IWC and WTO, as decisions in such forums have influence on Greenland's opportunities for cooperation with other countries" (EM2011/14. Author's translation). This has, however, not yet happened, but as an alternative to the European

market, Greenland is now looking towards Asia, where China, South Korea and Japan have expressed a growing interest in Greenland's seal products (Kleist 2013: 3; Naalakkersuisut 2014a).

Development and protection of Greenland's environment

Greenland's self-government was introduced in the wake of the global rediscovery of the Arctic, which – with the beginning of the global financial crisis and the simultaneous historically high oil prices in mind – created a significant interest in the newly discovered vast hydrocarbon resources and the emerging shipping routes in the High North (cf. i.a. Gad 2013). Greenland with Kuupik Kleist at the helm was indeed very attentive to this development and it soon became clear that the upcoming COP15 in Copenhagen was going to be an important summit where Greenland would seek to position itself as an individual international actor with an agenda different from the Danish Government's. Kleist, thus, stated in his first opening speech of Inatsisartut: "We would like to have the same opportunity as other countries that have been able to exploit their oil potentials without paying taxes. It cannot be true that when it is our turn we then have to pay through the nose to emit CO₂" (Kleist 2009a: 12. Author's translation). Initially, Denmark was not keen on giving Greenland special treatment, but a few days before the beginning of COP15, Kleist and Denmark's Minister of Climate, Lykke Friis, signed a memorandum of understanding which by a single sentence in a footnote frees Greenland from being subject to the same obligations as Denmark. The footnote simply stated: "Therefore, the commitments of Denmark as a member of the European Union do not apply to the Faroes and Greenland" (Kleist & Friis 2009). Though the result of COP15 was limited to the non-legally binding *Copenhagen Accord*, it was still a historic event for the development of a more autonomous foreign policy, which is part of the *raison d'être* as confirmed by Kleist in a feature article shortly after: "The climate policy must be seen in the context of the overall political objective of a financially self-sustaining Greenland" (Kleist 2009b. Author's translation).

The goal of differentiated climate targets was the same the subsequent year, when Kleist participated in COP16 in Cancún, but instead of referring to future anticipated independence, the justification was then instead based on indigenous people's rights, exemplified by Kleist's statement after the summit: "Last week, we were the only Arctic country that drew attention to the indigenous people's rights in relation to climate change. We are really proud of this, and the reactions have been very positive" (Fisker 2010. Author's translation). Instead of Greenland vs. Denmark, the dichotomy was here the indigenous people vs. the industrialised world that formed a potential threat towards growing industrialisation in Greenland. The background for this decision was probably that the COP15 agreement with the Danish government was no longer applicable, which meant that Greenland was no longer certain of self-representation and therefore sought to be part of an alternative coalition. In August 2012, Greenland's individual position in the climate negotiations was, however, enhanced as Denmark and Greenland signed an agreement based on §13.2 in the Act on Self-Government: "In matters which exclusively concern Greenland, the Government may authorise Naalakkersuisut to conduct the negotiations, with the cooperation of the Foreign Service" (Act on Greenland Self-Government 2009). This was a milestone in Greenland's development of a more autonomous foreign policy. The more individual position on the world stage was reflected at COP18, where the argument of indigenous people's rights was downplayed in favour of articulations pleading for equality, anticipated industrialisation and, hence, future independence.

Since the introduction of self-government, the possibilities rather than the risks have been most often emphasised in the official communication, but this changed when UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon arrived in Greenland in March 2014. Climate change's negative effects on the vulnerable environment then became far more pronounced, i.a. by then Premier Aleqa Hammond who stated: "It is also important to see that the strong, proud culture in the Arctic is threatened because of climate changes" (Naalakkersuisut 2014b. Author's translation) and "Climate changes have a direct impact on our daily lives, on the household economy and that we get food on the table" (ibid.). In this way she referred to the collective identity narrative where the hunting traditions are particularly threatened as hunting grounds and animals disappear in step with increasing temperatures. According to Hammond it is, however, not only of existential importance to the professional hunters, but to the survival of the cultural heritage of the entire Greenlandic population and hence a matter of protecting the Greenland nation against an external threat.

Half a year later, Hammond reciprocated Ki-Moon's visit when she – at what became her last international journey as Premier of Greenland – travelled to New York to give a speech at the UNESCO side event on climate change and Indigenous peoples' rights. Here she underlined the connection between climate change and exerting Indigenous peoples' rights, while she in line with the tendency since COP15, expressed that "Greenland will not be a passive victim of climate change. A likely scenario for the future of Greenland is an economic growth supported by new large-scale industries and oil and mineral extraction. This will profoundly affect our society and the environment" (Hammond 2014: 3-4). A few minutes later she, however, also stated that "At the heart of Inuit culture, is the preservation and long-term protection of the living resources, on which life in the Arctic has always depended. These living resources are key to my identity and to that of my people" (Hammond 2014: 10). Her speech, thus, both highlighted the positive and the negative sides of the climate paradox, as they threaten the culturally important hunting traditions while on the other hand are perceived as a welcomed change that may help speeding up the process towards increased independence.

Perspectives and potentials

The climate change paradox exemplifies well how the cultural traditions and the independence discourse sometimes are in conflict with each other, as the prioritisation of one side may have negative consequences to the other. The climate change paradox, thus, mirrors the double perspective of the dominating collective identity narrative, which, however, is used actively to optimise Greenland's international bargaining position. In this way, both extraordinary whaling rights and special rights in a future global climate agreement have been secured, while the official status of the Greenlandic language has played a significant role in elevating Greenland's general status in the Nordic Council. The reason for this communicative oscillation between describing Greenlanders as a 'minority' or an 'equal partner' may be an intentional strategy or a transitory phenomenon mirroring the relatively recent transition from home rule, characterised by hierarchical subordination, to self-government and a position as equal partner (cf. Thisted 2012: 612). This change is both visible in Greenland's external communication and in the outside world's perception of Greenland, visible in e.g. EU's 'Inuit exception' and WTO's subsequent overruling due to its anti-competitive elements (Naalakkersuisut 2013b). This development may be an indication of an incipient change in the outside world's perception of Greenland's position, which

on the one hand may result in less special treatment in the future, but on the other benefit the process towards increased self-determination.

Greenland's state-like imitation is particularly observable in the communication in the Nordic Council and in relation to the climate summits, where the elected representatives have obtained a higher degree of autonomy by referring to the Act on Self-Government and the anticipated future increased independence. If one broadens the analytical perspective a bit, it becomes visible how this was also the case when Aleqa Hammond on behalf of Greenland decided to boycott the Arctic Council ministerial meeting in Kiruna in 2013 because she was discontent with Greenland's lower status in comparison with Denmark (Duus 2013). A similar kind of discontent was expressed in the sealing and whaling disputes where wishes for individual representation in WTO and IWC were articulated. Put together, these examples can be described as a postcolonial sovereignty game (cf. Adler-Nissen & Gad 2014: 16), where Greenland sometimes seeks to draw a sharper communicative dichotomy to Denmark, while, in other instances, simply leaving out the Danish Realm of the foreign policy communication concerning an envisioned future with more self-determination. As mentioned earlier in this paper, this will require significant foreign investments in e.g. large-scale mining projects in order to, first of all, render superfluous the bloc grant from Denmark of approximately €500 million annually. Such projects will, however, require assistance from thousands of foreign workers who may, in time, constitute a potential threat to Greenland's societal security as continuing presence of a major group of for example Chinese workers would challenge the widespread ethno-national perception of Greenlandic culture. Hence the state-building process can have an effect on the nation-building process as the narrative of what is truly Greenlandic will be challenged and possibly changed when the structure of society and composition of population also change. This is based on the logic, as explained by Wæver: "If one's identity is based on separateness, on being remote and alone, even a very small admixture of foreigners will be seen as problematic" (Buzan et al. 1998: 124). This logic is indeed present in the parliament debates about the anticipated future mining boom, but at the same time the expected presence of foreign workers is generally accepted as a necessary means to serve the overarching goal of increased independence (cf. FM2014/68).

Conclusion

Although the legal frameworks seem to dictate a clear definition of Greenland's foreign policy competence, a 'window of opportunity' is, however, present as implied by the Foreign Affairs Department that points to 'practice' as a third regulatory factor. With inspiration from Ole Wæver's understanding of foreign policy as based on the state's self-image, this paper narrowed down the focus to articulations about protection of a collective identity; language, hunting rights and a special relation to nature. These analyses revealed how: 1) The debate about the status of language is used as a platform for achieving rights more equal to the states of the Nordic Council, while simultaneously being described as an indigenous minority right under the auspices of UN. 2) The sealing and whaling disputes have been articulated as threats to the national identity security where the reference to indigenous peoples rights have resulted in a higher quota on large whales, while WTO have overruled EU's Inuit exception because it is anti-competitive. 3) The special relation to nature represents a paradox – mirroring the double perspective of the dominating identity narrative – where the exploitation of the nature's non-living resources, necessary if increased independence shall be realised, indirectly threatens hunting traditions, as growing

industrialisation would contribute to continuing climate changes. Common for these three cases is the oscillation between portraying Greenlanders as either a minority or an equal partner depending on the situation, which either may be a transitory phenomenon as a result of the relatively recent transition from home rule to self-government or an intentional strategy used to optimise Greenland's bargaining position internationally. No matter the reason, this has resulted in extraordinary rights to whaling and more favourable CO₂ reduction requirements, which do not apply to the rest of the Danish Realm. In this process, Greenland has furthermore enhanced its cooperation with Åland and the Faroe Islands under the auspices of the Nordic Council, while initiating new international relations with China, Japan and South Korea that are perceived as new promising markets for i.a. seal product export. By referring to protection of cultural traditions and by articulating the anticipated future with more independence, Greenland has, thus, shaped and strengthened a foreign policy a little more autonomous from Denmark.

Notes

1. Or not-so-radical Other as termed by Lene Hansen (2006: 7).

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