

Chapter 3

Greenland, the Arctic, and the Issue of Representation: What is the Arctic? Who Has a Say?

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Greenland's Premier Kim Kielsen opened the 2019 annual Arctic Assembly in Reykjavik with these words:

We have always been of the conviction that our country should play a natural and central role on topics that concerns the Arctic, and when the Arctic is on the agenda, it has already been established that Greenland is an essential element of the decision-making process, and we will always participate to carry on with this responsibility.

Whenever the Arctic is discussed within the Realm, Greenland always plays a central role. Thus we are of the conviction that it should be natural for Greenland to occupy a permanent seat in the Danish delegation to the Arctic Council.¹

The centrality of Greenland's role in Arctic issues is crucial, especially when it comes to its geographic location and the political dynamic relationship within the Kingdom of Denmark. Why? Because representation and identity matters in the Arctic as to who represents you. And in the Greenlandic case Danish remote control slowly has been and will continue to be redressed as autonomy continues to be expanded.

Premier Kielsen was speaking in Greenlandic. His words in the last sentence regarding Greenland representing the Realm at the Arctic Council in Greenlandic—“*Pissusissamisoortutullu uagut isigaarput Kalaallit Nunaat Issittumi Siunnersuisooqatigiinni Naalagaaffiup aallarti-taattut issiavik tigummissagipput*”—mean that as we see it, Greenland should—naturally—occupy the seat that Denmark currently occupies at the Arctic Council.

The relationship between Greenland and Denmark has been, is and will continue to evolve, just as most relationships between colonized and colonizer have evolved around the world. In the Arctic context and from the perspective of international law and politics, Greenland is an interesting case in the present day, because sovereignty issues in the circumpolar North were largely settled in the twentieth century, with the boundaries and identities of the nation-states effectively set. It is necessary to keep this historic perspective in mind when we speak of Greenland in an Arctic context and its political ambitions, for what Greenland has prioritized over the years in its international activities is to represent its interests abroad and in different regional forums.

The Self Rule Act and Foreign Affairs Authority

In 2004, a joint Greenland and Danish Commission on self-rule was established with seven members each from the Greenland Parliament and the Danish Parliament. The mandate of the Commission states that both the Danish and the Government of Greenland wish to secure the greatest possible equality between Greenland and Denmark and to present a proposal on how the authorities in Greenland can take over further competencies within the framework of the Danish constitution on the one hand and in accordance with the Greenland people's right to self-determination in international law on the other.² (The author was part of the Commission's work on the chapter that deals with foreign affairs on the Greenland side.)

Because the Commission mandate was to work within what is possible within the Danish constitution, one of the main contentious debates and negotiations concerned the interpretation of Article 19 in the Danish constitution that deals with foreign policy powers between the Danish government and Danish parliament (Folketing).³ It states:

The King shall act on behalf of the Realm in international affairs, but, except with the consent of the Folketing, the King shall not undertake any act whereby the territory of the Realm shall be increased or reduced.⁴

Two years prior to the establishment of the joint commission, the Danish Prime Minister had announced an initiative that would grant

Greenland and the Faroe Islands certain foreign policy powers. The final act that was passed in Denmark, Greenland and the Faroe Islands went into effect in 2005. It states among other things that “Act no. 577 of 24 June 2005 gives full powers to the Government of Greenland to negotiate and conclude agreements under international law on behalf of the Kingdom of Denmark where such agreements relate solely to matters for which internal powers have been transferred to the Greenland Authorities.”⁵

The justification for the introduction of the Act to grant certain foreign policy powers was explained with the fact that the *practice* since the introduction of Home Rule in 1979 was that Greenland had gained and exercised foreign policy prerogatives that actually had not been taken into account with the 1979 Act and that there was now a need to turn practice into *recognized law*. In other words, with these developments over the years it became evident that there was room for interpretation as regards the foreign policy powers contained in the Danish constitution. This increasing divergence between broad Danish constitutional frameworks and Greenlandic actual political practice made perfect sense, given that Greenland is located in the North American Arctic in a well-defined geographical location with clearly defined borders, while Denmark is in the middle of northern Europe. Greenlanders are ethnically different from Danes, speak a different language, have their own economy and a separate culture and society.

It is also noteworthy that in the Self Rule Act of 2009, specifically in the preamble, Greenlanders were officially recognized as a people pursuant to international law with the right of self-determination.

International law scholar Ole Spiermann argued in one of the annexes to the report of the 2004 Commission that Article 19 in the Danish constitution deals with the authority between the government (the King) and the Danish parliament. According to him said article did not regulate the relationship between the different elements within the realm. In other words, the fact that Greenland can act internationally on its own behalf and not on behalf of the realm is compatible with the wording of Article 19. The article does not touch upon whether parts of the realm can act in international affairs or who acts on behalf of part of a certain realm, which is consistent with the authorization agreement enacted into law in 2005. Spiermann further argued that legally

it cannot be a premise to expect how a part of the realm's practice will evolve, and that instead in the future, one can expect that practice to be adapted to reflect the scope of application.⁶

The relationship between Greenland and Denmark has evolved over time and remains in constant flux. What is understood to be permissible under the constitution both in relation to the 1979 Home Rule and 2009 Self Rule Acts has changed. In the area of justice for example, Greenland's powers acquired in 1979 were significantly less than under the 2009 Act.⁷ In fact, today it has become permissible for complete juridical powers to be transferred to Greenland. It follows thus, that there is room for maneuver as regards the interpretation of Article 19 of the constitution in the same way when it comes to practice and legal enshrinement in the Danish-Greenlandic relationship over who calls the shots in foreign affairs.

What's more, there are other provisions in the Self Rule act concerning foreign affairs that give Greenland the right to gain membership in international organizations that welcome non-state entities or association of states. Greenland also has the right, expanded from the Home Rule Act, to appoint representatives of the Government of Greenland to Danish embassies "to attend to Greenland interests within fields of responsibility that have been entirely assumed by the Self-Government authorities." This means that Greenland representations abroad—in 2020 that is in Brussels, Washington, D.C. and Reykjavik—answer to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Nuuk on topics for which Greenland is responsible, while issues such as security and defense, which currently cannot be transferred to Greenland as long as it falls under the Danish constitution, are *jointly* coordinated between Nuuk and Copenhagen when it comes to issues of direct interest and relevance to Greenland.⁸

Over the years, Greenland has gained extensive autonomy, and therefore political and legal control, both internally as well as externally over many sectors, not least those addressed by the Arctic Council. The government in Nuuk has increasingly taken over from Copenhagen responsibilities for taxation, commerce, fisheries and management of marine mammals, industry, energy, education, culture, social services, health, environment, management of nature, infrastructure and transportation, housing and country planning, as well as resources management, i.e. oil, gas and minerals.⁹

The Arctic or the Arctics

What does Greenland and its evolution within the concert of Arctic states mean for our understanding of the region? When the word “Arctic” is used, most people imagine endless frozen landscapes with snow- and ice-covered oceans, mountains, glaciers, where polar bears roam and fur-clad, spear-bearing peoples hunt. That is the clichéd answer to “what is the Arctic”? In reality, what is meant by the “Arctic” seems to be expanding geographically, as it also has come to include subarctic regions with different characteristics. As the “Arctic” becomes more and more relevant to the rest of the world, it has come to encompass areas south of the Arctic circle, Siberia, Southern Greenland, Iceland, and so forth. It is not necessarily new that the concept and area of the Arctic has been expanding further south or that the subarctic has in that sense moved north. But the more that stakeholders exogenous to the Arctic have declared an interest in the region, the term and its meaning have rapidly come to be embraced by a plethora of states. Today, if you can simply label your country as part of the Arctic, you can claim a place at the top table of global and regional authorities when they deal with the circumpolar North. It is in this vein that China’s effort to describe itself as a “near-Arctic nation” or Britain’s embrace of itself as the Arctic’s “nearest neighbor” have come to bear political clout.

Should we therefore concern ourselves with the southern borders of the Arctic? Yes, because whoever is represented in various regional bodies represents political decisions taken in national capitals. As interest and pressure for inclusion in the Arctic club from geographically distant, non-Arctic countries (from further south) grows, the newbies all advance different arguments as to why they should be included in “the Arctic.” China might call itself a near-Arctic nation, a term never heard before, but does that mean that the Arctic is also near-Chinese and therefore has a role to play in Chinese affairs related to UNCLOS, including in the South China Sea? Beijing would be quick to deny the latter, which reveals the importance of reciprocity and mutual respect. This seems to have been lost on many who make their Arctic stakeholder claims.

What is it then that makes states and peoples on the southern borders of the Arctic different or similar with those further up north?

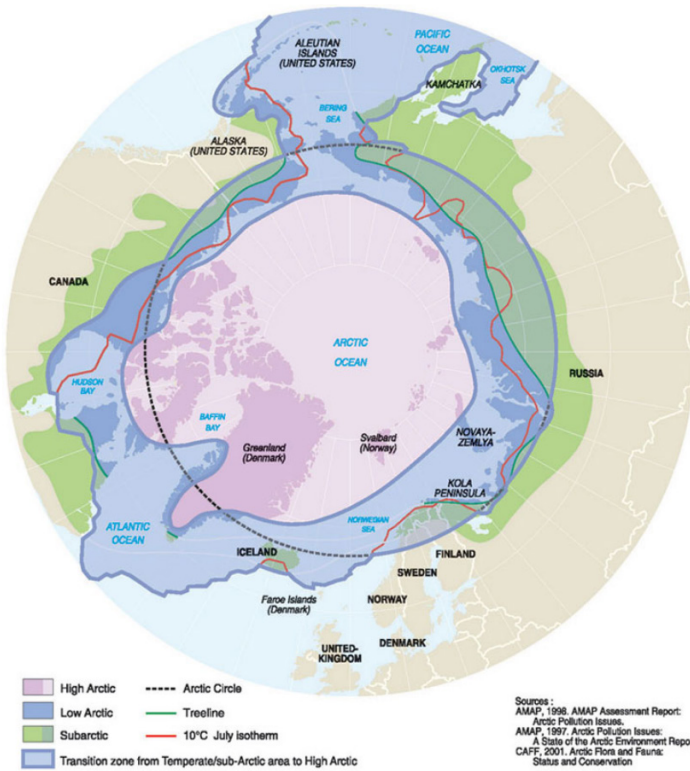
The Arctic has a long history of colonialism and conquest, as different nation-states competed for resources and land in their desire to establish themselves as global powers. Even today, as Greenland's case shows, questions of identity, sovereignty, self-determination and statehood matter. As Shelagh D. Grant puts it in her book *Polar Imperative*, "Arctic sovereignty is no longer simply a legal right to land ownership, but has developed into a broader concept characterized by many shades of grey." More recently, she adds that "recognition of the Inuit rights to their lands and self-government has been added to the discourse."¹⁰

Who belongs to the Arctic, what counts as Arctic, and who is an Arctic stakeholder remain contested questions. There is not one agreed definition of the Arctic, which is a problem when it comes to representation and who represents whom in various Arctic bodies. There are different maps and ways to delineate the region. One way to delineate the circumpolar or Arctic North is by pointing to the most simple and recognizable line on the globe—the Arctic Circle at 66°33'. Here the sun does not set during the summer months and does not rise during the winter months. Another way of defining the Arctic is the 10 degrees Celsius average summer temperature or the tree line which leads to a demarcation that looks a bit like a roller coaster ride as you go around the globe.

One of the Arctic Council working groups, the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program (AMAP), sought to deal with the different geographical lines by suggesting a compromise definition in 1998 for a demarcation line that "incorporates elements of the Arctic Circle, political boundaries, vegetation boundaries, permafrost limits, and major oceanographic features. The region covered by AMAP is, therefore, essentially the terrestrial and marine areas north of the Arctic Circle (66°33'N), and north of 62°N in Asia and 60°N in North America, modified to include the marine areas north of the Aleutian chain, Hudson Bay, and parts of the North Atlantic Ocean including the Labrador Sea."¹¹

Take for example the Kingdom of Denmark, which includes Denmark, the Faroe Islands and Greenland. Denmark and the Faroe Islands are part of the Arctic because of Greenland. And Denmark is the official member of the Arctic Council because Greenland is not a sovereign country yet—despite Greenland's extensive autonomy and

Figure 1. AMAP Definition of the Arctic



Source: Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program (AMAP). <http://www.amap.no>.

rights to negotiate and enter into international agreements that deal with Greenland alone and in areas where Nuuk—not Copenhagen—is legally in charge. Because of the way the laws and practice have evolved, the political institutions in Copenhagen always try to have a balanced approach towards Greenland and the Faroe Islands—meaning that whenever the latter have stated interests they are directly involved in various policy-making processes. This includes, for example, work in the Arctic Council from which originally the Faroes were excluded.

What though, makes the Faroe Islands Arctic, apart from the fact that they are part of the Kingdom of Denmark? If we look at AMAP’s working area and zoom into the North Atlantic we see the small de-

viation south in an otherwise straight line—that is because the Faroes' capital Torshavn is located 62°N. Climatic, biological or other parameters do not make the small deviation necessary; it is done for political reasons. Considering that the highest decision-making power in the day-to-day running of the Arctic Council lies with the biannual meetings of Senior Arctic Officials from member states' foreign ministries, it is obvious that views from capitals matter, even if these capitals of the Arctic states (while representing their complete territory at the Council) themselves often lie outside the area designated as the Arctic.

U.S. and Canadian Definitions of the (North American) Arctic

The United States has defined the Arctic in a law. Section 112 of the Arctic Research and Policy Act (ARPA) of 1984 (Title I of P.L. 98-373 of July 31, 1984) defines the Arctic as follows:

As used in this title, the term "Arctic" means all United States and foreign territory north of the Arctic Circle and all United States territory north and west of the boundary formed by the Porcupine, Yukon, and Kuskokwim Rivers [in Alaska]; all contiguous seas, including the Arctic Ocean and the Beaufort, Bering, and Chukchi Seas; and the Aleutian chain.¹²

Interestingly enough, the delineation along the Porcupine, Yukon and Kuskokwim Rivers cuts off approximately two-thirds of Alaska. At the same time, it includes the Aleutian Islands, which go as far south as 52°N, roughly the equivalent of London, while the rest of the Arctic is defined by the Arctic Circle. An answer as to why that is the case might be found in an U.S. archive. But we should ask for example, whether or not the people living in the approximately two-thirds of Alaska that lies south of the above-mentioned rivers feel that they should be included as part of the Arctic, if the Aleuts are? Were the peoples, Indigenous or not, who were left off the Arctic definition asked or included in the processes of drafting the law? Did it matter at the time of drafting the legislation? Or does it matter now? I am sure there were extensive considerations given to the parameters and substantive discussions leading up to the writing of this Act.

Canada is a huge landmass that encompasses a considerable part of the global Arctic—in fact, the second largest chunk after Russia. This also means that there is considerable diversity from coast to coast as

well as from the north to the subarctic, which adds to the complexity of how to exactly define the Arctic region and more specifically the sub-Arctic region.

While the geographical line extends mostly across the 60th degree parallel north and then south along the edges of the Hudson Bay, it is noteworthy that the federal Canadian government took a more people-centric and policy approach when it modernized its Arctic Strategy in 2019. It stated:

The area covered by the word “Arctic” has many definitions. As we worked together on the policy framework, several partners, including First Nations in Yukon as well as First Nations and Métis in the Northwest Territories, expressed concerns that they did not feel included in the term “Arctic.” Inuit also drew attention to the way in which terms can include and exclude. Often, strategies, policies, programming and investments targeted for the “North” have been directed towards the three territories and excluded Inuit. In response to these concerns, Canada’s vision for the framework takes into account both the “Arctic” and “Northern” character of the region and those who live there; it is a policy framework for Canada’s Arctic and North that includes the entirety of Inuit Nunangat — the Inuvialuit Settlement Region in the Northwest Territories, Labrador’s Nunatsiavut region, the territory of Nunavik in Quebec, and Nunavut — the Inuit homeland in Canada.¹³

It is interesting how the Athabaskan peoples have decided to represent themselves in the Arctic Council. The Athabaskan peoples occupy a vast landmass across Alaska and Canada in the region of 3 million square kilometers and with over 23 languages.¹⁴ Besides parts of Alaska both north and south of the official U.S.-defined Arctic, the Yukon Territory, the Northwest Territory, the Athabaskan peoples occupy large parts of British Columbia and extend eastwards to Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. When the Arctic Athabaskan Council, that has status as one of the Permanent Participants at the Arctic Council, was formed in 2000, a treaty was signed, according to which the members are the different Indigenous governments in Athabaskan Alaska, the Yukon and Northwest Territories, i.e. those areas that encompass Arctic United States and Canada. However, there is no language that prevents other Athabaskans living further south from joining the Council, as the treaty is open for other members as long as they represent Indig-

enous governments in areas where the majority is Athabaskan.¹⁵ It is at the same time noteworthy that the treaty does not define in more detail what constitutes specifically the “Arctic North America” where the Athabaskans reside and therefore allows them to be part of the Council.

In sum, the term “Arctic” is used widely without distinction regarding geography, climate, polity and culture. It is difficult to use one perfect word that addresses adequately both the similarities and unifying elements as well as the multiple differences and layers. Those differences—climatic, political, developmental and more—are quite noticeable when it comes to the various sub-regions of the Arctic in Asia, North America, Greenland, and Northern Europe.¹⁶

Greenland and the Arctic Council

Although Greenland is part of the Danish kingdom and, due to its colonial past, politically and economically tied to Copenhagen, it is part of the North American continent geographically, ethnically, linguistically and culturally. What’s more, Nuuk has been increasingly pushing for more political and decision-making powers in areas touching specifically on Greenland’s interests related to the Arctic.

It is the nature of the Danish realm that makes Denmark an official member of the Arctic Council, even though the territory of Denmark is relatively distant from the circumpolar North. Within that reality, Greenland has always played an active part in the Arctic Council, including in the negotiations leading to the forum’s establishment in 1996, and before then by participating in the Council’s predecessor, which formalized cooperation under the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (AEPS) in 1991.

As an Arctic nation, the Home Rule and now Self-Rule governments believe it imperative that Greenland take part in and contribute to regional policy discussions in a political forum like the Arctic Council, specifically when those decisions affect Greenland and its people.

The Danish government has historically tended to recognize the critical role of Greenland on the Arctic Council through to today. At the inauguration of the Arctic Council, for instance, the then Premier of Greenland, Lars Emil Johansen, signed the Ottawa Declaration on

behalf of the Kingdom of Denmark—a symbolically significant act. Likewise, in the early years Ministers from Greenland often served as Head of Delegation for Denmark (e.g. in the making of the Barrow Declaration in 2000 and Reykjavik Declaration in 2004). Greenland has also been consistently active in many of the working groups including its role as the lead delegation as well as chair of various working parties. Currently, Greenland represents the Kingdom of Denmark in working groups on sustainable development and the protection of the Arctic marine environment.

It is noteworthy that throughout the 2000s the Danish delegation to the Arctic Council consisted of the Faroe Islands, Greenland, and Denmark. All political entities participated on equal terms. There were three chairs at the table and all three parties participated in the executive meetings as well as ordinary meetings of the Senior Arctic Officials (SAOs). The country label was ‘Denmark/Faroe Islands/Greenland’ and all three flags were prominently displayed at the table. These displays did not imply a change in the membership status from the Ottawa Declaration, but there was tacit agreement that this was how the Kingdom of Denmark represented itself.

Denmark has made it longstanding practice to include Greenland and the Faroe Islands in all delegations where all three bodies have vested interests. Denmark’s practice of conducting foreign policy has not always been well understood by other countries’ diplomats; its political and diplomatic structures differ greatly from those of other Arctic countries. Still, when it came to the Arctic Council, the tripartite Danish delegation quickly become accepted practice—until the 2011-2013 Swedish Chairmanship.

The Kingdom of Denmark concluded its 2009-2011 Chairmanship of the Arctic Council with a Ministerial meeting in Greenland that adopted the Nuuk Declaration of May 12, 2011. The Declaration strengthened the Arctic Council by establishing a permanent secretariat. It also created a task force under Sweden’s chairmanship to look into rules of procedures.¹⁷ The result was a kind of “Westphalianization” of the Arctic Council. Greenland and the Faroe Islands suddenly found themselves excluded from executive SAO meetings—the place where most high-level political negotiations and decisions are made. The exclusion, interestingly enough, came to light not in a formal

letter or other official protocol, but in the form of fewer chairs at the table. Suddenly, the designated spot for the Kingdom of Denmark at the negotiating table went from three chairs to one. Greenland and the Faroe Islands were left to find seats away from the table (which sometimes included finding a place located outside of the negotiation room altogether). It can only be speculated as to why the Swedish chairmanship decided to do this. But some member states might have viewed the procedural review as an opportunity to reduce Greenland's role in the Council. As a result, Greenland boycotted the Kiruna Council Meeting in spring 2013.

The period leading up to Greenland's re-engagement with the Arctic Council in August of the same year was driven by a combination of four main factors: the international media attention generated by Greenland's boycott; internal Arctic Council reactions to the boycott; political deliberations by Denmark with the Arctic Council on behalf of Greenland; as well as extensive debates at home in Greenland about the boycott and its ramifications.¹⁸

With the start of the Canadian Chairmanship in summer 2013, Greenland, the Faroe Islands and Denmark set out to negotiate with Canada a satisfactory solution to the issue of representation at SAO meetings.¹⁹ The negotiations lasted several months; finally on August 19, 2013, an agreement was reached. All three political bodies of the Danish Delegation would have full participation rights at Arctic Council meetings. When the number of seats accorded each delegation was to be less than three, the person or persons who would sit at the table would be determined according to which representative of the Kingdom of Denmark had competence on the matter under discussion. Greenland agreed to resume its participation on the Arctic Council. The August 2013 decision was consistent with the Self-Rule Act of 2009, which states that Greenland can enter into and negotiate international agreements in matters where it has taken over competence from Denmark on issues that pertain to Greenland, and further that Greenland will gradually take over new areas of responsibility.

Not everyone was content with the new arrangements. Though Greenland and the Faroe Islands were once again allowed to sit and participate at the table of the Council, the transition of the Chairmanship from Sweden to Canada did not unfold without a new form of

exclusion. Once Canada was in charge, the small flags that were conventionally placed at the table spot designated to each participant were taken away. The three flags representing the Danish Kingdom disappeared. Instead, large full-sized flags of only each member state and of each of the Permanent Participants were erected behind each chair.

The main opposition party in Greenland questioned whether or not the new situation restored the Greenlandic position on the Arctic Council in much weaker form. Opposition leader Kuupik Kleist remarked that at the end of the day, the Kingdom of Denmark only had *one* vote on the Arctic Council.²⁰

Despite ongoing domestic debates about its status, Greenland has since resumed its participation and work on the Council. It has a seat at the table at SAO meetings as well as in the working groups (thanks to internal recognition and flexibility shown within the delegation of the Kingdom of Denmark). Even if the constellation of representation was always a domestic issue, other Arctic states had clearly attempted to dictate what the delegation of the Kingdom of Denmark should look like. Greenland's advantage was that it had already acquired the domestic legal capacity to make all decisions on issues that directly affect Greenlanders. Greenland, as such, has the right to be involved in the work and decision-making processes of the Arctic Council. Nonetheless, the reality is that, for Greenland, the Arctic Council looks increasingly like an intergovernmental regime. It is also only one venue among a number of emerging platforms for Greenland to engage in Arctic and global politics.²¹

State of Play

Greenland's Parliament holds an annual debate, based upon a report by the government in Nuuk on the status of Greenland's foreign relations activities over the previous year, and discusses current international issues of importance to Greenland. During the fall 2019 debate, Greenland Minister of Foreign Affairs Ane Lone Bagger said the tendency of Danish officials to head the Kingdom's delegations at international Arctic meetings, including the Arctic Council, had created a democratic deficit at the Arctic Council that "should be addressed in the coming years." Hjalmar Dahl, Greenland chair of the Inuit Cir-

cumpolar Council (ICC), which represents Inuit from Russia, Alaska, Canada and Greenland, supported Bagger: “On numerous occasions, I have experienced that the Danish delegation at the Arctic Council has overruled Greenlandic, possibly also Faroese, wishes. The Realm consists of on paper of three equal partners but in reality that equality does not exist.” He proclaimed further that while the ICC has eminent cooperation with all parties that represent the Kingdom, most Danish diplomats lack extensive knowledge or understanding of Greenlandic realities and wishes.²²

Greenland’s Premier Kim Kielsen reiterated his country’s central position in the Arctic as well as its strategic location between the world’s biggest powers, underlining other countries’ interest in the opportunities that Greenland held for them. The Premier asserted that Nuuk was responsible for numerous sectors; and setting the country’s own course of development also means that it sees itself as a “reliable, equal and responsible partner” in the cooperation among Arctic countries.

From 2021, the Kingdom of Denmark intends to embark on a new Arctic strategy. The strategy that will emerge will be based on a wide range of input from both local and governmental departments, private industry, non-governmental organizations and scientists in Greenland—as well as other actors in Denmark and the Faroe Islands. As the work to produce and negotiate the strategy was commencing, Bagger insisted that “It is Greenland that is the Arctic part of the Kingdom and an updated Arctic strategy should reflect that.”²³ She also highlighted that players outside of the Arctic continued to show interest in how the Arctic should be managed and governed, stressing that such players had in the past sometimes taken decisions with great consequence for those who live in the region. This was one of the main reasons why the new Danish Arctic strategy should prevent outside players from access to decision-making processes that might yield outcomes over the heads and even to the detriment of those who call the Arctic their home, e.g. Greenlanders. Cooperation in the Arctic, in her view, was a fundamental prerequisite for a positive development of Greenland. As a logical consequence, the people who live in the Arctic should be the ones who have a say on how the region is developed.

The government of Greenland therefore wants the new Danish Arctic strategy to reflect its political representation on the Arctic

Council, as the Council's mandate and work covers sectors for which Greenland is now responsible. It is an issue of democratic deficit were Greenland not to represent itself in international forums such as the Arctic Council.²⁴

Conclusions

The effects of climate change are felt intensely in the polar regions, and especially in the Arctic. Sea ice is diminishing, permafrost is thawing, and new species are appearing from the south. The Greenland ice cap is melting at an increasing rate. The physical world is changing around us.

Within the region we are experiencing calls for continued economic development and for improved living conditions by utilizing the Arctic's plentiful natural resources. At the same time, non-Arctic nations and economic actors who feel they will be impacted by the dramatic physical, environmental, economic and political changes underway in the Arctic are insisting that they should be able to address issues being handled by Arctic bodies.

These pressures could change the very meaning of the term "Arctic."

How will the family of Arctic nations respond to these pressures, and those of a changing world order?

It might be time for discussions to start on how the Arctic should be kept in the Arctic family with equal representation from those who live there. People who live in the Arctic demand to be part of national and international decision-making processes. They do not wish to be remotely controlled, either from governments down south or those who claim to be part of the Arctic, but are not. In some respects, Greenland leads the way—having developed and expanded its autonomy and political and legislative responsibilities in areas that include an international dimension. If regional fora are to be democratically representative, they should be composed of the people of the region.

Part of the problem is that there is not one definition of the Arctic, nor is there agreement on who exactly belongs to it. The central question is, how far south does the Arctic go? Is it defined by state boundaries or peoples? This has ramifications for representation if one includes

areas that are geographically in the “grey area” on the southern latitude of the Arctic. Representation matters as decisions taken in those regional bodies that act in and for the Arctic have an effect on those who call the region home, and how the region is developed. The different definitions of the Arctic are all founded in political decisions—by states or regional fora. Beyond the Arctic Eight (of the Arctic Council) or the Arctic Five (the Arctic Ocean littoral states), which are comprised of state actors, there is the notion of Arctic representation through Arctic Indigenous communities’ representations (six of which sit as permanent representatives on the Arctic Council)—in other words, people. But how do people (non-state actors) and polities (state actors) align with actual territory, and how does people power translate into political power? As the case of Greenland/ Denmark shows, these relationships are complicated. They raise serious questions over adequate representation (both in real terms and symbolically, as the Arctic Council chair and flag crisis revealed).

There is a general reluctance to take up the issue of defining what/ who is Arctic and what/who is not. These questions will become more relevant as climate and environmental changes speed up and non-Arctic countries want to have a greater say on how the region is developed and governed, which may set them on a collision course with the existing Arctic “owners.”

Notes

1. Naalakkersuisut/Government of Greenland, Premier Kim Kielsen's Speech at the Arctic Circle Assembly, October 10, 2019. URL: <https://naalakkersuisut.gl/en/Naalakkersuisut/News/2019/10/101019-Arctic-Circle-Assembly>.

2. Grønlandsk-dansk selvstyrekommission, Grønlandk-dansk selvstyrekommissions betænkning om selvstyre i Grønland, (Report of the Greenlandic-Danish Commission on self-rule in Greenland), p. 14.

3. Grønlandsk-dansk selvstyrekommission, Grønlandk-dansk selvstyrekommissions betænkning om selvstyre i Grønland, (Report of the Greenlandic-Danish Commission on self-rule in Greenland), pp. 24-6.

4. Prime Ministers Office, The Constitutional Act of Denmark, pp. 24-6, https://www.stm.dk/_p_10992.html.

5. Prime Ministers Office, Circular Note, pp. 2-3, https://stm.dk/multimedia/CirkularNote_GR.pdf.

6. Report of the Greenland-Danish Commission on Self Rule in Greenland, annex 6, pp. 368-374.

7. Report by the Commission on home rule in Greenland, p. 23, https://www.elov.dk/media/betaenkninger/Hjemmestyre_i_Groenland.pdf.

8. Thomas S. Axworthy, Sara French, and Emily Tsui, eds., *Lessons from the Arctic: The Role of Regional Government in International Affairs* (Oakville, Ontario: Mosaic Press, 2019), pp. 273-274.

9. *Ibid.*, pp. 269-270.

10. Shelagh D. Grant, *Polar Imperative—A History of Arctic Sovereignty in North America* (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre 2010), p. 401.

11. The Arctic Council, AMAPs 1998 Assessment Report, ch. 2, p. 9 and 10, <https://www.amap.no/documents/download/88/inline>.

12. Congressional Research Service, "Changes in the Arctic: Background and Issues for Congress," updated March 30, 2020, p. 2, <https://crsreports.congress.gov/R41153>.

13. Government of Canada, 2019, *Canada's Arctic and Northern Policy Framework*, <https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1560523306861/1560523330587>.

14. The Arctic Council, 2020, *Arctic Athabaskan Council*, <https://arctic-council.org/en/about/permanent-participants/aac/>.

15. Arctic Athabaskan Council, 2018, <http://www.arcticathabaskancouncil.com/aac/>.

16. Lisa Murkowski, the senior U.S. Senator from Alaska, has been a regular speaker at Arctic Circle Assemblies in Reykjavik and in 2014 perceptively spoke about different Arctics—the North American (Alaska, Canada and Greenland) and Russian ones that lag behind the European Nordic region when it comes to infrastructure and communications, affordable energy and reliable transportation. See The Arctic Circle, 2014, *Senator Lisa Murkowski at #ArcticAssembly 2014 Opening Session*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nq-JpdT1YgDo>.

17. Arctic Council webpage: Nuuk Declaration p. 2 and Senior Arctic Officials Report to the Ministers, Nuuk, Greenland, May 2011, p. 3.

18. The Chair of the Greenland Parliament's Permanent Committee on Foreign Policy and Security, Per Berthelsen, publicly argued ahead of the Kiruna conference that he had serious doubts that the ensuing Canadian chairmanship would be more open to Greenland's demands. According to Berthelsen, since Inuit in Canada are a minority, if Greenland achieved direct participation in Arctic Council negotiations, Canada's Inuit kinsmen would probably demand the same role as Greenland. See N. Mølgaard. Sermitsiaq, May 16, 2013, <https://sermitsiaq.ag/node/154284>. The opposition leader at that time, former Premier Kuupik Kleist, criticized Greenland's absence from the Ministerial Meeting in Sweden, noting that the superpowers were averse to giving Indigenous peoples influence while keen to keep power for themselves. U.S. access to the Arctic Council, he argued, was only due to Alaska's position, and the government in Ottawa only had access to the Arctic Council because of Canada's northern provinces, which are inhabited by the Inuit. See N. Mølgaard Sermitsiaq, May 14, 2013, <https://sermitsiaq.ag/node/154189>.

19. Naalakkersuisut/Government of Greenland, *Om Arktisk Råd: Danmark, Grønland og Færøernes deltagelse i Arktisk Råd samarbejdet*. Press Release. May 21, 2013.

20. Kleist went on to point out that Greenlanders now preferred to see that the subject matter of the self-governing countries' [Greenland's and the Faroe Islands'] role in the Arctic Council be discussed as a separate agenda item during an Arctic Council meeting, rather than Greenland raising it alone. See N. Mølgaard, Sermitsiaq, August 20, 2013, <https://sermitsiaq.ag/kl/node/157750>.

21. Kristian Søbø Kristensen and Jon Rahbek-Clemmensen, eds., *Greenland and the International Politics of a Changing Arctic: Postcolonial Paradiplomacy Between High and Low Politics* (London/New York: Routledge 2018), pp. 131-135.

22. Sermitsiaq. September 17, 2019, *ICC: Vi vil kæmpe for mere indflydelse*, <https://sermitsiaq.ag/node/216127>.

23. Walterm Turnowsky, Sermitsiaq, February 25, 2020, *Bagger: Vigtigt at debatten om den arktiske strategi starter i Grønland*, <https://sermitsiaq.ag/node/219586>.

24. Ane Lone Bagger, “Grønlands Selvstyre: Skab et ligeværdigt arktisk partnerskab med Danmark,” Altinget, March 4, 2020.

