

Kalaallit Nunaat as a foreign and security policy actor¹

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The management of foreign and security policy within the Kingdom of Denmark has continually undergone a series of changes in response to shifting great-power dynamics and structural conditions. Not least, Kalaallit Nunaat's Home Rule Government and later Self-Government has attained increased formal and substantive authority over aspects of foreign policy, as well as a distinct influence on the Realm's security policy in the Arctic. Both the evolving geopolitical environment and the internal reconfigurations of the Realm generate new strategic challenges for the Kingdom as a whole, for its individual constituent parts, and for external powers. In this context, understanding Kalaallit Nunaat as a security-policy actor becomes essential.

This chapter first outlines the formal frameworks that constitute the Self-Government as an actor, along with the historical developments that produced them. It then characterizes Kalaallit Nunaat's foreign-policy identity and the central goals and interests pursued on that basis. Finally, it examines the information and decision-making structures between Denmark and Kalaallit Nunaat and within the Self-Government, shaping how these goals and interests are pursued both proactively and reactively in practice. The chapter concludes by discussing how the boundary between "security policy," on the one hand, and "ordinary" foreign policy within legislative areas taken home by Kalaallit Nunaat on the other, emerges as the central challenge for both the realization of Kalaallit Nunaat's long-term ambition for further self-determination and for its internal decision-making structures.

Introduction: Kalaallit Nunaat in foreign and security policy²

Increased attention and activity in the Arctic due to climate change and shifting global great power dynamics have created new strategic challenges for both the Kingdom of Denmark (hereafter the Realm) and its constituents namely Denmark, Kalaallit Nunaat (Greenland) and the Faroe Islands. These challenges have highlighted significant shifts in the handling of foreign and security policy in the Realm: The Danish state can no longer exercise the same level of authority over Kalaallit Nunaat in foreign and security policy as it did when Kalaallit Nunaat was a colony. In contrast to most other non-sovereign countries and regions, Kalaallit Nunaat's paradiplomacy (Kuznetsov, 2014; Kristensen & Rahbek-Clemmensen, 2018) extends to parts of security policy. Since interests

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are not always seen as overlapping, the major political challenges continuously give rise to tensions between Nuuk (Kalaallit Nunaat) and Copenhagen (Denmark).

From a strictly Realist perspective, Kalaallit Nunaat 'disappears' as a foreign and security policy actor on the international stage in an analysis that focuses on military capabilities and economic might - much like Denmark would be unable to make much of a difference in the event of a war between great powers. However, reality is more complex. The US maintains an agreement with Denmark that facilitates its military actions in Kalaallit Nunaat - and in parallel, Denmark no longer conducts foreign and security policy without Kalaallit Nunaat's consent. Understanding this dynamic requires, that one consider international politics as more than pure power politics. It highlights a need for analyses that consider how international politics unfolds in a manner that creates opportunities for the participation of even the smallest actors. The current challenges and tensions thus pose two questions for our understanding of the Realm's relationship with the outside world: First, how has Kalaallit Nunaat, as a relatively small actor, carved out a role for itself in international politics? Second, what are the underlying tensions within the Realm related to foreign and security policy?

To address the first question, this article provides an analysis of Kalaallit Nunaat's gradual emergence in the international society, through the application of well-established sociological concepts of norms, roles, and legitimacy. Moreover, this analytical approach is useful in the way it provides a conceptual apparatus that can be used to answer the article's second question. Specifically, the article conceptualises the 'Realm' as a 'society' where Kalaallit Nunaat and Denmark produce legitimacy in relation to a set of norms and roles. Finally, the same concepts allow the analysis to narrow its focus to how specific actors in the parliamentary system responsible for Kalaallit Nunaat's foreign and security policy in order to examine how they engage in the processes. In doing so, the article thus offers a better understanding of the tensions that increased great power interest in the Arctic have created in the Realm.

The analysis focuses on Kalaallit Nunaat's relationship with the United States, as this relationship has been pivotal for significant shifts in the norms governing Kalaallit Nunaat's role in its foreign and security policy. This focus is particularly relevant because the relationship has been unambiguously defined as security policy – and thus belongs in the part of foreign policy where the formalized norms afford the most restricted role to Kalaallit Nunaat.

The following section introduces the sociological framework that underpins the analysis. The main body of the article examines three social spaces - or 'societies' - that structure the analysis: the international community, the Realm and the parliamentary system. These analyses lead to the broader conclusions about the challenges facing the Realm as a community.

The concluding discussion argues that the delineation of 'security policy' from 'ordinary' foreign policy and from international dimensions of domestic affairs constitutes an independent challenge to the two key objectives: Denmark's ambition to let the Realm speak with one voice, and Kalaallit Nunaat's long-term ambition for increased self-determination. Together with fundamental Kalaallit-Danish conflicts of interest on the one hand and various concrete parliamentary and bureaucratic procedures on the other, the impossibility of delineating security policy puts the Realm under pressure.

Analytical framework: Norms, roles and legitimacy – three social spaces

The aim of this article is to present an analytical narrative that explains how Kalaallit Nunaat, even though a very small actor, has been able to play its part in international relations and how the difficulties of advancing into this field can be understood. The article argues that the history of Kalaallit Nunaat in international relations can be understood with the concepts of norms, roles and legitimacy.

This analysis rests on the premise that relations between states are not just a question of how much power they have. Rather, states build a society that can be described using concepts developed by sociology to understand human relations within a society.³ Like a group of children in a schoolyard, states will have different roles in relation to each other; and there are norms for how children and states ‘should’ behave (Finnemore 1996: 15). Some norms are formalized in the form of international law, but unlike in the schoolyard there are no adults watching the international society. If a state does something ‘illegal’ or ‘inappropriate’, the result is rarely a concrete punishment – rather, the other states will adjust their expectations of how to deal with the state in question in the future. Even if the teacher has gone for coffee, there are consequences if you smash a ball in the face of a classmate – but norms and sanctions are unevenly distributed, depending on your role in the social structure. If you are a small child who has been bullied by a classmate, direct payback might be acceptable to your peers. If you are a big-time bully who could easily beat up the smaller kids, several strategies become available. You can continue fighting and cement a position based on fear – or you can show care, and in this way gain legitimacy within the community. In this way, you may not have to fight all the time and can avoid others ganging up on you in the long run. Formally, we can define ‘norms’ as the expected, socially accepted behaviour; ‘roles’ as a collection of norms linked to a specific position in a society; and ‘legitimacy’ as the ‘license to act’ that comes with adhering to roles and norms associated with one’s position (Finnemore & Sikkink 1998).

The article is grounded in an analytical distinction between three spaces or ‘societies’ as conceptualised here. (1) The international society of states, (2) The Realm consisting of Denmark, Kalaallit Nunaat and the Faroe Islands, and (3) the parliamentary system responsible for managing Kalaallit Nunaat’s foreign and security policy, including the Danish Government and Parliament (Folketinget) together with the Government of Kalaallit Nunaat (Naalakkersuisut) and parliament (Inatsisartut). The three ‘societies’ differ notably in levels of formalisation: when a norm is written down as legislation, deviations become more visible. If there is a formal authority at the head of the table, it is expected that violations will be sanctioned. However, a more fundamental distinction among the three societies lies in the criteria determining who qualifies as legitimate actors.

The international society is fundamentally composed of sovereign states (Watson 1992). However, the concept of ‘society’ has evolved (1992: 278), in large part due to the concept of popular sovereignty (1992: 294-5). Once a European monarch could no longer legitimately say ‘the state is me’ but had to act as a representative of ‘their’ people, it became even more difficult to exclude colonized peoples from demanding their own state or separate rights precisely because the state was not their own (Watson 1997). Collective identities – states and peoples – are, of course, represented by concrete individuals, but it is precisely as a collective that one becomes a meaningful actor in the international society (Manning 1962: 101-3).⁴ When the Realm does not merely act as a (Danish) unitary state but a more complex ‘society’, this is – as we shall see – linked to the development of a number of norms in the international society regarding how one can best be a

state and a people. More generally, sovereign states are the typical actors in international society, but an increasing number of other types of collectives are attaining (partial) recognition as legitimate actors.

As a society, the Realm is clearly delineated, and everything except its three parts is positioned outside of it.⁵ Formally, 'Kalaallit Nunaat' and 'Denmark' emerge at intervals as distinct collective actors, for instance, when a minister or authorized official signs a document 'on behalf' of either polity. In less formal contexts, it may be less clear how much of a representative a given individual is, when speaking on behalf of 'his' or 'her' country. Often, prejudices about and observations of how ordinary Kalaallit or Danes behave lead to expectations about how Kalaallit Nunaat or Denmark will act in relation to different norms.

To grasp these ambiguities surrounding the norms that determine who can assume different roles in relation to representing Kalaallit Nunaat, Denmark, and the Realm, we must examine norms, roles, and legitimacy in the third social space: the parliamentary arena. In this context, only individuals appear as actors. There are, of course, formalized procedures that govern how individuals can assume roles - or, in other words, where they can legitimately act as representatives. Entry into this 'society's' hierarchy of roles is secured through election to parliament by the population, appointment as a minister by parliament, or employment as a civil servant to act 'on behalf of the minister'.⁶ However, as will be demonstrated, the lack of formalization of parliamentary norms in Kalaallit Nunaat can create ambiguity about the scope of representativity and legitimacy, even when a Prime Minister of Naalakkersuisut speaks on behalf of 'Kalaallit Nunaat'.

First space: Global norms and Kalaallit Nunaat's political identity

Before we delve into the specific review of the norms that Kalaallit Nunaat and the Realm have developed, it is necessary to provide an introduction to Kalaallit Nunaat's integration into the Western state-based international society from 1721.⁷ In real terms, it began with the meeting between the Inuit and Hans Egede and the subsequent colonization project that followed. During their first meetings with Christian missionaries, Inuit had an identity that was fundamentally different from that of the Norse People, European whalers, and other explorers. A distinct political identity towards the colonizing power – a self-understanding as an acting collective based on the island of Kalaallit Nunaat – emerged when encountering the Danish colonial power. This process unfolded partly in opposition to the *Qallunaat* (the white people) (Sørensen 1994: 109), and partly through interaction with the shifting norms introduced by colonizers regarding what it meant to be a People – or in other words; the norms that would allow Kalaallit as a collective identity within the world order the colonizers brought with them (Sørensen 1994: 168-9; Petersen 1991: 20; Gad 2017a: 45). European notions of their own racial superiority were, however, distinctly challenged by Inuit's obvious technological superiority under Arctic conditions (cf. Hastrup 2000:4), and for extended periods, the colonial project relied on maintaining cultural difference. In fact, the economic viability of the Danish colonial project was dependent on Inuit maintaining the part of their material culture that made seal hunting possible (Graugaard 2018). Hence, Denmark could – both towards Kalaallit Nunaat and externally – legitimize its supremacy by contrasting the continuation of Kalaallit identity with the miserable fate of “native” people elsewhere (Rink 1817).

Formal decolonization

This division of roles was rendered impossible by the new norms established by the United Nations in the aftermath of the Second World War. On the one hand, overt racial hierarchies were now delegitimized (Watsson 1992). On the other hand, the right of peoples to self-determination was extended to previously 'non-self-governing territories' (1992: 294-5). The UN Charter articulated several principles relating to the development and advancement of self-government, the establishment of free political institutions among colonized peoples, and the fostering of interethnic harmony and security (UN, 1945). In response to these emerging norms, the Danish state formally integrated Kalaallit Nunaat as an equal part of its Realm by the constitutional amendment in 1953 (Beukel et al 2010). Whether Kalaallit politicians and decision-makers at the time were fully informed about the range of options for decolonization processes discussed in the UN remains a matter of debate (Kleist 2019; Beukel et al. 2010). Nonetheless, the Kalaallit Nunaat public initially embraced this approach as part of a broader narrative of Kalaallit Nunaat's rise from poverty (Heinrich 2012).

1721	Hans Egede's landing
1941	Kauffmann's agreement with the U.S. on the defence of Kalaallit Nunaat
1951	Renewed agreement between Denmark and the U.S. on the defence of Kalaallit Nunaat
1953	Kalaallit Nunaat is absorbed into the Danish Constitution
1973	Kalaallit Nunaat becomes member of the European Community together with Denmark
1979	Home Rule Government is introduced
1982	Kalaallit Nunaat by referendum decides to leave the European Community
1985	Inatsisartut - the Parliament of Kalaallit Nunaat establishes its Foreign and Security Policy Committee
1991	The Home Rule Government takes over Kangerlussuaq airport and joins the Permanent Committee that oversees US military activities in Greenland
2003	The Itilleq Declaration on Kalaallit Nunaat's participation in foreign and security policy decision-making is signed
2004	The Igaliku Agreement on Kalaallit Nunaat as a party to the Defence Agreement and the relation to the U.S. is signed
2005	The Authorization Act formalises the Itilleq Agreement
2009	Self-Government is introduced
2014	The base maintenance contract at Thule Air Base (now Pituffik Space Base) is awarded to an American company rather than to Greenland Resources, part-owned by the Government of Greenland
2020	The U.S. announces an 'aid-package' and a new framework agreement on the base maintenance issue is signed

Figure 1. Timeline of the changes in Kalaallit Nunaat's status in relation to foreign and security policy.

During the 1960s and 1970s, however, an increasingly broad segment of the Kalaallit population reacted to the stark contrast between the ever-increasing influx of Danes tasked with building the welfare state in Kalaallit Nunaat and the population that was to be modernized. The acute cultural contrast gave rise to a distinct nationalism (Dahl 1986), which over the decades culminated in aspirations to realize the prevailing international norm of peoplehood: having one's own state (Gad 2017a). The result was a political identity grounded in the norm of the nation as a community of destiny – Kalaallit Nunaat understood as a culturally conditioned collective, responsible for its own development (Thuesen 1988; Gad 2017a).

Home rule

Kalaallit Nunaat achieved Home Rule in 1979. The Home Rule Act established a separate parliament, *Inatsisartut*⁸ and executive *Naalakkersuisut* (The Prime Minister's Office 1979). At the same time, a number of Kalaallit actors participated in building international cooperation among peoples who had been left behind by the wave of decolonization following the Second World War (Dahl 2012). Legally, these efforts culminated in the UN Declaration that Indigenous Peoples are peoples equal to other peoples with the right to self-determination, the right to self-identification, and the right to determine their own development (UN 2007). Alongside this formalized legal norm, a more diffuse, informal norm exists that gives parts of the international public an expectation that Indigenous Peoples are positioned as a minority either in opposition to or with special rights in relation to a 'foreign' state (Jacobsen & Gad 2017). Kalaallit Nunaat's geographical separation from Denmark, however, made it evident for Kalaallit politicians that the obvious way forward would be pragmatically merging their identity as an Indigenous People with the desire for self-determination and the national project of establishing a state of their own. This pragmatic fusion gives Kalaallit Nunaat more leeway in international politics in certain contexts (Jacobsen & Gad 2017; Petersen 2006), just as this 'constructive ambiguity' provides a certain flexibility in relation to which contexts and from which angle Kalaallit Nunaat can approach foreign and security policy matters. Conversely, it can also cause outsiders to misread Kalaallit Nunaat's course if underpinned by outdated notions that associate 'Indigenous' with something primitive or traditionalist (Dahl 2012).

Self-government

In 2009, home rule, again at Kalaallit Nunaat's initiative, was transformed into self-government. While the two arrangements are broadly similar in their institutional structure, they differ significantly in terms of their relation to international law. Specifically, the Self-Government Act affirms the recognition of the Kalaallit people under international law. Politically, the Act is not only regarded as the framework for expanding the competencies that began under home rule but also as an explicit pathway towards enhanced self-determination, with the ultimate goal of achieving full independence.⁹ Throughout the period of Home Rule and Self-Government, the pursuit of increased self-determination and, ultimately, independence have been a central driver in both the development of the legal framework and in relation to the specific goals pursued within and on the margins of the legal framework. While there may be disagreement about the speed and choice of path, the direction for Kalaallit Nunaat is focused on increased self-government, increased economic self-reliance, increased political independence internationally and ultimately statehood. There is broad agreement (Isbosethsen 2018) that economic self-reliance is a prerequisite for actual secession from Denmark, but this does not mean that economic self-reliance is a prerequisite for

an independent voice internationally. When the path towards independence and self-reliance intersects with foreign and security policy, a grey zone arises within the Realm.

Second space: Formal and informal frameworks for the Government of Kalaallit Nunaat as a foreign and security policy actor

In the international society, the prevailing norm is that a state speaks with a single, unified voice. As described, however, Kalaallit Nunaat has - by virtue of international norms on decolonization - gradually gained an unusually significant space to manoeuvre despite not being a sovereign state. Specifically, this has occurred because the Realm has gradually developed a number of internal norms that establish a framework for how Kalaallit Nunaat can act in foreign and security policy. Consequently, the Realm contains a constitutional ambiguity that can be difficult for outside actors to grasp. This section examines these norms and how Kalaallit Nunaat has fought for them, based on concrete experiences and needs, particularly in relation to the American military installations.

Official interpretations of Danish constitutional law continue to assert that what we know as the Realm is legally a unitary state (Gad 2020b; Harhoff 1993: 73; Spiermann 2007: 11). From this perspective, the competences of the government of Kalaallit Nunaat – including in the foreign affairs area – are delegated from the Danish government (Gad 2020b). By contrast, legal scholars argue that the home rule and self-government arrangements have become a constitutional custom (above or alongside the written constitution expressed in the theConstitutional Act of Denmark, so to speak) that cannot be unilaterally revoked (Harhoff 1993; Spiermann 2007). Moreover, Kalaallit Nunaat – most recently in the preamble to the Self-Government Act – is now recognized as a subject under international law. Because the Self-Government Act is based on an agreement between two subjects under international law, it cannot be unilaterally revoked by one party. This recognition entails the right to independence – and Spiermann (2007: 120-3) argues that when one can ‘take home’ all sovereignty through independence, taking home parts of sovereignty, including, e.g., over foreign and security policy competences, must also be possible. Successive Danish prime ministers have responded ambiguously when formally questioned on the matter in parliament. They have nonetheless tended to conclude that the Home Rule and Self-Government Acts constitute practically and morally binding agreements that should not be changed unilaterally by Folketinget (the Danish Parliament) without the consent of the authorities in Kalaallit Nunaat (Rasmussen, 2018). The development of these formal and informal norms within the Realm has, in practice, pushed the international community's norm of the unitary state's monopoly on security policy into the background. Ultimately, the relationship is more political than legal: Denmark cannot rely on an outdated colonial interpretation of how foreign and security policy competencies are distributed because such an interpretation would propel Kalaallit Nunaat toward declaring independence.

Over the past decade, Denmark has sought to communicate more consistently when, in foreign policy contexts, there is a '*unity* of the Realm' acting and when there is a '*community* of the Realm', or - as previously referred to in, e.g. the Arctic Council, "Denmark, Greenland and the Faroe Islands" (Jacobsen 2019a). When U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo spoke about his meeting with "the three ministers" from Kalaallit Nunaat, the Faroe Islands and Denmark during his visit to Denmark in 2020, it was important for the Danish Foreign Minister and in particular the Danish press to refer to the meeting as a meeting between two foreign ministers - the Danish and the American - with the participation of "representatives from Kalaallit Nunaat and the Faroe Islands"

(Krog 2020). Kalaallit Nunaat has formally insisted on equality by using the English terms Minister and Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

International aspects of devolved competencies

The practical implementation of Home Rule involved Kalaallit Nunaat taking over legislative and executive powers in a wide range of areas. The Self-Government Act expanded the scope of areas devolvable to encompass virtually all the powers required for a nation to be considered self-governing. However, official Danish interpretation of constitutional law lists a series of core competencies that cannot be devolved because they are deemed crucial for the formation of a state as such. These include foreign affairs, security and defence affairs, citizenship, the Supreme Court, as well as currency and monetary policy (Naalakkersuisut 2008).¹⁰

On the one hand, foreign, security, and defence policy remain the prerogative of Copenhagen, and the Self-Government Act explicitly states that none of the devolved powers of the Self-Government formally constrain the constitutional responsibilities and powers of the Danish authorities in international affairs. On the other hand, Chapter 4 of the Act describes Kalaallit Nunaat's powers in foreign affairs. These powers are largely a formalization of practices that were developed by Kalaallit Nunaat's parliament and government, who demanded and gained influence before being formally 'allowed' to do so (Spiermann 2007:126-7; Gad 2017a). Denmark's preferred role as a Nordic-style benevolent good participant in the international community (Ren et al. 2020; Gad 2016; Thisted 2014) further necessitates flexibility in the application of the international norm of state unity. The result is that Kalaallit Nunaat's creative paradiplomatic practices have been institutionalised over the years as norms of the Realm.

From Thule over Itilleq to Igaliku

The relationship between Kalaallit Nunaat and the United States has been a key driver in the expansion of the competencies of Kalaallit Nunaat in foreign and security policy during both the Home Rule and the Self-Government era. Notably, the one US military base in Kalaallit Nunaat that remains active today, Pituffik Space Base, produced – when it was still known as Thule Air Base – a series of controversies that makes it hard for Denmark to deny Kalaallit Nunaat's demands for transparency and participation in decision-making. This challenge is further compounded by the fact that the establishment of the Defence Agreement with the U.S. in 1951 occurred under evidently colonial conditions, which sharply contrast with current global discourses on the right to self-determination of all peoples. In the final months before the extension of constitutionally enshrined civil rights to Kalaallit Nunaat in 1953, several hundred Inughuit were forcibly relocated to facilitate an expansion of the base (Brøsted & Fægteborg 1985). Later, in 1968, a B-52 bomber crashed on the ice-covered fjord by the base, making it clear that the Danish policy of not accepting nuclear weapons on its territory was not being adhered to in Kalaallit Nunaat (Amstrup 1997). Since then, concerns have emerged regarding pollution from the base and abandoned defence installations, particularly the nuclear-powered Camp Century, located beneath the inland ice sheet (Nielsen & Nielsen 2016), as well as occasional complaints about how the management of the base has obstructed economic development in the district (Gad 2017b). Based on findings from Danish archives (Brøsted & Fægteborg 1985) and supported by the Indigenous Peoples' Organization Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC), a group called *Hingitaq'53* [the displaced] obtained a court ruling affirming that the Inughuit's relocation was indeed forced. In parallel, in 1995, a secret agreement from 1957 between Denmark and the U.S. was revealed. This agreement allowed the U.S. to store

nuclear weapons in Kalaallit Nunaat (Brink 1997), making Denmark more clearly responsible for the pollution from US defence activities. The revelations understandably spurred a distrust of Denmark in Kalaallit Nunaat and became a clear incentive for Kalaallit Nunaat and Kalaallit to identify and show solidarity with the world's Indigenous and colonized Peoples. In particular, it was an incentive to insist on Kalaallit Nunaat's involvement and full information. Moreover, the revelations made Denmark vulnerable to being exposed as a hypocritical colonial power (Kristensen 2005).

Kalaallit Nunaat's involvement as a party in negotiations between the U.S. and Denmark was triggered by the U.S. government's plans to upgrade the base to incorporate it into its missile defence system (Kristensen 2004; Dragsdal 2005). Kalaallit Nunaat's primary concern was directed more towards participation and self-determination, rather than towards questions regarding what role it should play in relation to world peace and the militarization of the Arctic (Dragsdal 2005).

As an initial outcome of this process, a joint Kalaallit Nunaat-Danish declaration, named after the settlement Itilleq, formulated a number of basic norms in 2003, stating that it is "natural" that Kalaallit Nunaat is involved and has influence on foreign and security policy issues of importance to Kalaallit Nunaat, that "the natural starting point" is that the Government participates in international negotiations of special interest, just as it is "natural" that the Government can be a signatory to agreements binding under international law on behalf of the Realm (The Foreign Ministry of Denmark 2003).¹¹

Building on the constitutional concession by the Danish state explicated in the Itilleq Declaration, tripartite negotiations were initiated with the Americans. These negotiations were held partly to modernize the 1951 defence agreement and partly to upgrade the radar at the base (Kristensen 2005; Jacobsen 2019b). The outcome was a series of agreements known as the Igaliku Agreement. Firstly, the defence agreement was supplemented with a new document, in which Kalaallit Nunaat, as a co-signatory, is recognized as a party. Central to the main text of the agreement are provisions on involvement which describe:

- How the U.S. is obligated to 'consult with and inform the Government of the Kingdom of Denmark, including the Greenland Home Rule Government, prior to the implementation of any significant changes to United States military operations or facilities in Greenland.' (The Foreign Ministry of Denmark 2004)
- How the parties 'shall consult without undue delay regarding any question which one of the Parties may raise concerning matters pertaining to the U.S. military presence in Greenland and Defense Agreement and [the Igaliku] Agreement' (The Foreign Ministry of Denmark 2004).

The agreement's preamble also includes a provision obligating Denmark to "always consults and cooperates closely with the Home Rule Government of Greenland in affairs of state of particular importance to Greenland."

A joint declaration on environmental protection further placed the mitigation of pollution from the base on the agenda of a new subcommittee of the Permanent Committee where the U.S., Denmark, and - now also formally - Kalaallit Nunaat have been discussing practical matters regarding the base areas since 1991 (The Foreign Ministry of Denmark 1991). Moreover, a joint declaration on economic and technical cooperation established a so-called Joint Committee with

the aim of creating a “broad technical and economic cooperation” between the U.S. and Kalaallit Nunaat. Kalaallit politicians viewed the economic agreement between Kalaallit Nunaat and the United States not only as a means to address and redress the historical subordination of Kalaallit Nunaat’s interests but also as an opportunity to secure revenue for the country - revenue that could, over time, reduce Kalaallit Nunaat's dependence on Danish subsidies. The entire agreement thus pointed both backward, toward the historical injustices committed against Indigenous Peoples under colonial conditions, and forward, toward greater independence of Kalaallit Nunaat, both politically and economically.

From Joint Committee over base maintenance contract to purchase offer

None of the forward-looking perspectives immediately fulfilled expectations, but the responsibility for this shortfall appears unevenly distributed. In particular, the Joint Committee intended to foster economic and technical cooperation between Kalaallit Nunaat and the U.S. never clearly defined areas where American grants could address specific Kalaallit Nunaat’s needs beyond a scholarship here and a study tour there. Economically, the relationship with the U.S. reached a low point when, in 2014, the U.S. awarded the maintenance contract for the base to a U.S. company. This decision came about as the combined result of American bureaucratic sleep walking, the Danish Foreign Ministry's reluctance to engage, and bizarre mis-prioritizations on the part of the Government of Kalaallit Nunaat leadership (cf. Spiermann 2015), which deprived Kalaallit Nunaat of the three-digit million DKK income it had enjoyed for decades through co-ownership of the Danish-Kalaallit company that previously held the maintenance contract.

Soon, a renewed U.S. security policy focus on the Arctic took a more assertive stance, signalling a shift in the regional strategic environment. Trump’s 2019 offer to purchase was clearly out of step with the norms of the international community as well as those of the Realm but behind the scenes both the Pentagon and the U.S. State Department had been preparing concrete advances. However, Kalaallit Nunaat had “more birds on the roof than in its hand”: A U.S. Deputy Secretary of Defence stated that the U.S. was prepared to co-finance dual-use infrastructure in Kalaallit Nunaat (U.S. Embassy Denmark 2020b). The situation was further complicated when Denmark effectively precluded Chinese involvement in Kalaallit Nunaat’s new airports by offering a lucrative financial package (Sørensen 2018), leaving the public uncertain about the specific contributions the U.S. intended to make. In October 2020, an agreement - acceptable to all parties - was reached concerning the terms for the next tender for the base maintenance contract which took effect in 2024. However, apart from the ‘aid package’ of consultancy services announced by the Americans in April 2020 (U.S. Embassy Denmark 2020a), a direct benefit for the Kalaallit Nunaat’s treasury and society from the base maintenance contract itself was still uncertain (Rahbek-Clemmesen 2020b).

The Danish government has placed considerable emphasis on the inclusion of Kalaallit Nunaat, not least after Trump's first intervention. After the establishment of the U.S. consulate in Nuuk, some communication has bypassed Copenhagen. Even so, Copenhagen insists in principle on the right to decide when devolved issues are of such importance security-wise that they cannot be left to Nuuk – even though the Government of Denmark prefers dialogue and payment rather than pulling the constitutional handbrake. The Danish identification with the role of the benign (de)colonizer pushes the norm of the unitary state's monopoly on security policy into the

background. However, as we shall now see, this shifts the pressure on the Realm to the practical bureaucratic and parliamentary norms in the daily management of foreign and security policy.

Third space: The information and decision-making structures between Denmark and Kalaallit Nunaat and internally within the Government of Kalaallit Nunaat

To recapitulate: international society is composed of collective actors, which are typically sovereign states. Similarly, the overall norms in the Realm describe the division of competencies between Denmark and Kalaallit Nunaat. However, the Realm - formally involving the two collective subjects, namely Denmark and Kalaallit Nunaat - is in practice embodied in a number of specific individuals endowed with distinct authority, including particularly parliamentarians, government ministers, officials, and diplomats. Kalaallit Nunaat's foreign and security policy is therefore conducted within a political system that includes individuals and institutions in both Copenhagen and Nuuk. The following discussion is focused on the norms and roles that Kalaallit Nunaat has developed for conducting foreign policy, as well as on the implications of how Kalaallit Nunaat's and Danish parliamentary and bureaucratic systems are linked.

Secure communication

The need for meetings to take place and information to be exchanged and processed under strict confidentiality has grown substantially in recent years. Secure rooms and communication channels in the Self-Government approved by the police intelligence service have only been established in recent years. Prior to that, the usefulness of a phone call from a Danish minister to Kalaallit Nunaat's minister (Kongstad and Maressa 2019) may have been severely limited. An increasing number of security-cleared Kalaallit officials therefore long commuted to the headquarters of the Danish Joint Arctic Command at the harbour in Nuuk, where meetings and conversations could take place in a secure room and where documents could be exchanged via secure email. These documents might include briefings from the Danish government, either intended exclusively for the Kalaallit Nunaat Government or to be read out to the Foreign and Security Policy Committee of Kalaallit Nunaat's parliament.

Parliamentary inequity and the Norm of Simultaneity

The Danish Parliament has a constitutional guarantee that the Government 'consults' with its Foreign Policy Committee (Udenrigspolitisk Nævn, UPN) before making decisions regarding major foreign policy implications (Folketinget 1953; Krunke 2003). Naalakkersuisut's obligations towards the Danish Foreign Policy Committee's equivalent in Kalaallit Nunaat, the Foreign and Security Policy Committee (Nunanut Allanut Sillimaniarnermullu Ataatsimiititaliaq, NASA) of the Inatsisartut, is significantly looser: NASA is tasked with 'dealing with foreign and security policy matters and presenting the questions and comments to which these matters give rise. It is the committee's responsibility to keep itself closely abreast of developments within its field of expertise' (Inatsisartut 2010). The committee works under the same strict confidentiality as the Danish Foreign Policy Committee but does not have the same constitutionally guaranteed right to be consulted by the government. In practice, this inequality between UPN and NASA has demonstrably created an imbalance in the level of information given to members of the Danish Parliament vis-à-vis the parliament of Kalaallit Nunaat. Usually, bias is in UPN's favour. Nonetheless, when the initiative originates from Nuuk, the roles, as we shall see, may be reversed.

With respect to the obligations towards Inatsisartut on the part of the Government of Denmark and Naalakkersuisut, the Danish Minister of Foreign Affairs has stated that ‘according to mutual understanding between the Danish Government and Naalakkersuisut, [a] fixed practice has been established that information on issues of particular importance for Kalaallit Nunaat is given simultaneously in the [Folketinget’s] Foreign Policy Committee and Inatsisartut’s Foreign and Security Policy Committee’ (The Foreign Ministry of Denmark 2018). NASA members often, nevertheless, experience learning first about crucial and important foreign and security policy developments through the press rather than by being informed about them in the committee (Inatsisartut, 2018, 2019, 2019a). For example, when considering Danish co-financing of airport expansions, NASA expressed concern about the lack of information regarding the security policy aspects of the airport facilities (Kristiansen, 2019; Inatsisartut, 2018, 2019). A key factor contributing to this inequity is that the lack of secure communication channels previously mentioned has a doubly negative impact at the parliamentary level. Parliamentarians of Kalaallit Nunaat meet only a few months a year, and committee meetings are therefore often held over the phone or online.

The Parallelism Norm and the South-to-North Norm

The official Kalaallit articulation of the ‘simultaneity principle’ states that ‘information to the Foreign Policy Committee of the Danish Parliament on matters of importance to Kalaallit Nunaat is communicated to the government of Kalaallit Nunaat, so that to the greatest extent possible, the Foreign and Security Policy Committee can be informed simultaneously’ (Inatsisartut 2010). This formulation highlights that, in addition to the norm of simultaneity, two further separate norms operate in parallel.

First, the procedure is grounded in the norm that the Danish Parliament and Inatsisartut are two separate but parallel parliamentary systems: the Danish Government is responsible for involving the UPN, while Naalakkersuisut is responsible for involving the NASA. This norm implies that the Danish Government sends briefings to Naalakkersuisut, which are then read out loud to the NASA. This norm thus involves Naalakkersuisut members perhaps being compelled to read documents out loud, which they disagree with in terms of content.

Second, the workflows established were designed to secure northbound information from Copenhagen to Nuuk: Basically, these workflows were established when the norm was for foreign, and especially security policy initiatives and information to come from Copenhagen. The primary purpose of the simultaneity procedure was to facilitate Kalaallit Nunaat's efforts to gain insight into security policy, thereby aligning with international norms for decolonization.

The obsolescence of this South-to-North norm – and the practical procedures generated by it – became apparent in connection with the publication of the U.S.’s so-called ‘aid package’ for Kalaallit Nunaat in the spring of 2020. The agreement was largely achieved through a bilateral process between Kalaallit Nunaat and the United States, with secondary involvement from the Danish government (Petersen & Synnøstvedt, 2020). Kalaallit Nunaat took the opportunity afforded by its rights under the Self-Government Act to negotiate and conclude international agreements ‘which fully concern devolved issues’ (The Prime Minister’s Office, 2009). As previously noted, the Igaliq Agreement stipulates that the parties “shall consult each other without undue delay” on all issues concerning the American military presence in Kalaallit Nunaat, as well as matters arising from other parts of the agreement, including technical and economic cooperation

(The Foreign Ministry of Denmark, 2004). In practice, the 2020 agreement resulted in a briefing from Kalaallit Nunaat to Denmark, after which the receiving Danish minister briefed UPN in writing and not orally and not simultaneously. This may thus be a contributing factor to several Danish parliamentarians appearing both surprised and duped by the agreement reached when they learned about it from the press (Krog 2020).

International aspects of devolved issues and/or security policy

These practical challenges and unclear or outdated parliamentary norms contribute to confusion in addressing an already complex issue. A central norm within the Realm establishes three different divisions of responsibility and procedures: a) international aspects of issues devolved to Nuuk, b) “general” foreign policy, and c) security policy. Yet the boundaries for determining when a domestic policy matter becomes foreign or security policy, or when a foreign policy matter that falls within the scope of the Authorization Act assumes a security policy character or in other ways becomes an issue for Copenhagen, are unclear.¹²

This ambiguity was highlighted when the U.S. ambassador circumvented parliamentary norms by disclosing the “aid package” and its contents to the Danish press before the Government of Kalaallit Nunaat had the opportunity to publish the agreement itself. Moreover, in her launch and subsequent interviews, the ambassador chose to frame the U.S. priority as securitizing Chinese and Russian Arctic ambitions rather than as a bureaucratic follow-up to old commitments (Sands 2020). At first glance, the “aid package” could be interpreted as a delayed implementation of the Igaliku Agreement’s objective to increase technical and commercial cooperation between Kalaallit Nunaat and the U.S. However, Kalaallit parliamentarians later complicated this reading by asserting that the package had nothing to do with what was agreed on in Igaliku in 2004, even though the content covered the same agenda quite precisely (Inatsisartut 2020). Instead, the committee began its story of the genesis of the new agreement with the Memoranda of Understanding that Kalaallit Nunaat entered into with the U.S. in 2019, which specifically included mineral exploration. This framing likely aimed to underscore Kalaallit Nunaat’s authority as enshrined in the Self-Government Act to deal also with international aspects of devolved legislative areas without the need to legitimize this with separate agreements with Copenhagen. Both the Danish Foreign Minister and the U.S. Embassy in Denmark issued assurances that the agreement on the “aid package” had been made in coordination with the Danish government.

Taken together, this episode illustrates how three things are intertwined: Outdated procedures and conflicting long-term goals muddy the grey area between foreign policy aspects of devolved issues and security policy. In this context the pursuit of transparency and coordinated decision-making faces significant structural and procedural challenges.

Conclusion: One voice is not possible – and outdated procedures are a hindrance

Kalaallit Nunaat has carved out a distinct role for itself in international politics by virtue of the need that both Denmark, which formally has sovereignty over Kalaallit Nunaat, and the United States, which has military sovereignty, have to legitimize their roles and actions in relation to international institutions and global discourses: It is no longer legitimate for European states to reduce previously colonized populations to chess pieces in geopolitics by making decisions over their heads. It is, even under an American administration with a confrontational approach to the

Arctic, unnecessarily costly for the United States to take what it wants in Kalaallit Nunaat. It is far cheaper to 'buy' acceptance by having Kalaallit Nunaat serve as a co-signatory to the Defence Agreement and establish a consulate with an 'aid package' of consultancy services. This international norm of self-determination of peoples is reflected in the norms of the Realm explicated in the Self-Government Act's in three ways. First, Kalaallit Nunaat can reclaim areas and thereby gain substantial self-determination. Second, Kalaallit Nunaat can declare itself independent. Third, the norm of Kalaallit Nunaat's participation and insight is also crucial for Denmark's foreign and security policy on behalf of Kalaallit Nunaat to be legitimate.

Consequently, Kalaallit Nunaat occupies a place in international politics that the Self-Government can strategically use to work towards increased self-determination, also in areas that are reserved for Danish authorities under the Self-Government Act. In this context, the Danish desire for the Realm to present a unified voice in foreign policy is not always achievable.

Conversely, a distinct genre has emerged among Danish opposition politicians, where they wake up in dismay and 'discover' that the Self-Government believes itself entitled to conduct foreign and security policy in relation to devolved issues (Mouritzen 2020). In other words, there is neither agreement on whether the formalized norms are legitimate nor whether there is compliance. Behind the disagreements lies a more complicated reality. Specifically, Inatsisartut and Naalakkersuisut are empowered under the Self-Government Act to act internationally in a wide range of areas; however, the changed great power approach to the Arctic means that an increasing number of these areas have security policy dimensions. Several experts have called for clarification of the division of competencies as a prerequisite for the Realm as such—and for Kalaallit Nunaat and Denmark as its constituent parties—to maximize the benefits of great power attention (Rahbek-Clemmensen, 2020a). Yet, a codified delineation of competences that recognises that security overrides a broad portfolio of areas of competences will erode the autonomy embodied in the Self-Government Act. Conversely, a line drawn the other way around so that issues administered by Kalaallit Nunaat are 'safeguarded' from Danish interference will be intolerable for a constitutional interpretation that insists on the Danish government's monopoly on conducting security policy. Consequently, future cases will have to be handled on an ad hoc basis, making it all the more important that procedures for coordination across the Realm are strengthened.

Several practical issues within the information and decision-making structures, both between Kalaallit Nunaat and Denmark and especially within Kalaallit Nunaat itself, constraints Kalaallit Nunaat's capacity to actively and proactively pursue its goals and interests. Paradoxically, these challenges also undermine the legitimacy that Denmark seeks by including Kalaallit Nunaat in the foreign and security policies that Copenhagen conducts on behalf of the Kalaallit Nunaat. Neither the decision-making processes between Denmark and Kalaallit Nunaat nor the internal Kalaallit ones are fully adapted to the new geopolitical and institutional reality. First, the volume and complexity of the caseload are increasing. Second, Nuuk's increased competencies mean more instances where devolved issues and security policy overlap. Third, Nuuk's increased ambitions mean that initiatives and information no longer originate only from Copenhagen, rather they may spring from Nuuk. Moreover, it is unclear whether the Government of Kalaallit Nunaat has the same attention or willingness to let information about its initiatives flow south. Fourth, the fact that Denmark and Kalaallit Nunaat suddenly have an urgent need to discuss their relationship with the U.S. with some certainty that the subject of discussion is not listening in, stresses the need for

secure lines of communication. By clarifying and strengthening the procedures and dialogues that legitimize the Realm's foreign and security policy in Kalaallit Nunaat, it may become possible to discuss the real content of the relations to intrusive great powers – parallel to debating procedures and wrestling the injustices of the colonial era.

Notes

1. The article is an English translation of the chapter Olsvig, S., & Gad, U. P. (2021a). Grønland som udenrigs-og sikkerhedspolitisk aktør. In Rahbek-Clemmensen, J., & Sørensen, C. T. N. Sikkerhedspolitik i Arktis og Nordatlanten (pp. 168-93). Djøf Forlag. As such, the analysis presented here covers a period ending in 2020, and serves as a background for the events following the re-election of the current U.S. president. The original version of the book chapter was included in Sara Olsvig's PhD dissertation, defended at Ilisimatusarfik – the University of Greenland (Kalaallit Nunaat), which also includes an epilogue on the current situation.
2. The authors choose to use the Indigenous Kalaallisut language name of the country Kalaallit Nunaat rather than the colonial Greenland. Greenland is used when it appears in quotes. Kalaallit is used for Greenlanders and Kalaallisut for Greenlandic.
3. This approach to international relations was originally known as the English School; lately, various variants of the approach have been termed *constructivism*.
4. It would not have had the same significance if Trump had offered to buy Greenland when he was still just a real estate developer and thus did not represent the US as a state.
5. A US president, diplomat, or soldier is a foreign element in relation to the Realm.
6. An actor whose loyalty lies with a foreign power or, for that matter, with a particular commercial interest is considered illegitimate.
7. Inuit live across Kalaallit Nunaat, Canada, Alaska (U.S.) and Chukotka (Russia) and were only divided by colonization and the emergence of state borders. Prior to colonization Inuit homelands and settlements spanned across the current state borders. Myths suggest that Inuit, before the arrival of Western colonizers, were part of what can be thought of as an Indigenous society of peoples considering themselves as distinct from each other.
8. The parliament replaced the National Council, an advisory body consisting of elected Greenlanders, which had existed in various configurations since 1911.
9. The Self-Government Act describes Greenland's access to independence and contains a financial agreement on a gradual reduction of the block grant that was frozen with the adoption of the Self-Government Act (The Prime Minister's Office 2009). The legislative complex also contains a description of Greenland's right to prepare its own constitution. This is an opportunity that Inatsisartut took advantage of in 2016 when it decided to establish a constitutional commission. The commission presented a draft constitution in 2023, including the ambition of independent statehood.
10. Two appendices to the Self-Government Act list areas of competences that can be devolved - without (List I) or after negotiation (List II) with the Government of Denmark.

The Self-Government Act itself does not list areas that cannot be devolved. Such a list, however, is found in the Self-Government Commission's report and is referenced from there on the website of the Greenlandic Government. Nevertheless, repeated revisions of the home rule and self-government arrangements have demonstrated that the official Danish interpretation of the constitution regarding what cannot be devolved have changed over time.

11. The content of the Itilleq Declaration was formalized in 2005 in the so-called Authorisation Act in which *Folketinget* formally gave Greenland the right to “negotiate and conclude international agreements, including administrative agreements, which fully concern devolved areas” with foreign states and international organizations (The Prime Minister’s Office 2005). These formulations have since been incorporated into the Self-Government Act and similarly formalised for the Faroe Islands.
12. One can mention the decision-making process regarding the expansion of international airports (Rasmussen 2019), where Greenlandic politicians for a long period treated the matter as a domestic political issue related to the location of civilian airports and only late in the process began to include security policy aspects of the airports. The same applies to the decision to lift the zero tolerance towards radioactive minerals (Kristensen & Rahbek-Clemmensen 2018) and investment opportunities in large-scale projects (Schrøder 2013), where Chinese companies have shown interest. Here, security policy aspects have not played a major role in the local Greenlandic debate, while the focus of Danish Parliament politicians has largely been on the security policy implications of, for example, the possible extraction of critical minerals in Greenland (Andersson et al. 2018).

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