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**IMPLICATIONS ON GREENLAND: THE GEOPOLITICAL
UMBRELLA AND CLASSICAL REALISM IN THE CONTEXT
OF THE ARCTIC**

Bachelor's thesis

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I hereby declare that I have compiled the paper independently and all works, important standpoints and data by other authors has been properly referenced and the same paper has not been previously presented for grading. The document length is 10 849 words from the introduction to the end of conclusion.

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ABSTRACT

Greenland is a self-governed region of Denmark which is emerging during a time of changes not only in the environment but also in the political atmosphere of the Arctic. The importance of this research is examining how the emerging opportunities, such as shipping and hydrocarbon exploration in the Arctic, affect strategic approaches of the major states. The recent attempt of President Trump to purchase Greenland from Denmark draws the attention of the public on the strategic importance of this island. This paper focuses on the external and domestic actors in Greenland, and, more precisely, on the actors' effect on Greenland's recent political developments in an international environment. Classical realist theory based on thematic analysis is applied to this research. Countries including Denmark, China and the United States have a strategic interest in Greenland due to its geopolitical position in the middle of the Arctic. Greenland offers a "foothold" to the Arctic opportunities, particularly for Denmark and China. The research also demonstrates that the United States has a less significant role in Greenland than President Trump's purchase offer implies. Finally, a new concept "geopolitical umbrella" is defined in this paper.

Keywords: Greenland, Denmark, Arctic, China, the United States

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INTRODUCTION

Greenland re-emerged in the world headlines in August 2019 as the President of the United States expressed the desire to purchase Greenland from Denmark. This statement was disclosed on President Trump's Tweet on the 20th of August, in which the President postponed a state visit to Denmark since Denmark's Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen stated that Greenland was not on sale. (@realDonaldTrump, 2019). The United States has expressed a strategic interest in Greenland, starting from Abraham Lincoln's Administration.¹ During 1916, the United States negotiated over the purchase of the West Indies and Greenland from Denmark. However, the condition for the sale of the West Indies is the recognition of the Danish supremacy over Greenland. Later, in 1946 the United States unsuccessfully re-tried to purchase Greenland from Denmark, but instead, they negotiated a defence agreement which formalised the United States military presence in Greenland in 1951. (Kristensen & Rahbek-Clemmensen, 2018, p. 4)

Greenland has actively promoted for greater independence from Denmark, which culminated in the Self-Government Act of 2009. President Trump's offer comes at a time when Greenland has experienced a decline in investments by international investors. Greenland still expresses great hopes for more independence from Denmark fueled by a self-sufficient economy. Additionally, multiple non-Arctic countries among which China, Japan, and South Korea, have shown increasing interest in the Arctic region, especially in the commercial shipping and hydrocarbon sectors. (The Faroe Islands - a Nation in the Arctic, 2013). Such interest represents an opportunity for Greenland to diversify its future revenues. (Kraska, 2011, p. xxiv). As a result of global warming, the natural resources and the shipping possibilities in the Arctic region are increasingly accessible due to the reduced ice coverage. (The Faroe Islands - a Nation in the Arctic, 2013).

The purpose of this paper is to examine and identify the current domestic and external actors which influence Greenland's geopolitical situation. Since Greenland was declared to be under the interest of the United States by President Trump, it offers an initiative to examine whether other great

¹ Alaska was purchased from Russia by the Abraham Lincoln Administration in 1867 and at the same time the purchase of Greenland was discussed in the Administration.

powers have strategic interests in the Greenlandic region. Specifically, the paper focuses on the domestic and external conditions influencing the interests towards Greenland. The assumption is that considering the geostrategic position of Greenland in the middle of the melting North Pole, there is increasing interest by international actors to have a “foothold” in Greenland. Research on this assumption is conducted to answer a research question: How do the recent political developments in Greenland affect its geopolitical importance in the international environment?

Thematic analysis is applied to analyse the research question mentioned above by identifying patterns and themes in the literature combining them under different topics. Therefore, an extensive and flexible database is collected to determine the prominent actors and their interests in Greenland. (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017, p. 3352). The method’s viability lies in the diverse literature examined, which includes both primary and secondary sources. The primary sources when reviewing the national strategic interests are the official government releases, such as Denmark, Greenland and Faroe Islands: Kingdom of Denmark Strategy for the Arctic 2011-2020, The United State’s Department of Defense Arctic Strategy of 2019, Russian government website’s releases of On the Strategy for the Development of the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation and Ensuring National Security for the Period Until 2020, (2013), On approval of the state program “Socio-economic development of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation for the period until 2020”, (2014), and On the new edition of the state program "Social and Economic Development of the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation", (2017). Also, Faroe Island’s Prime Ministers Office strategic report on The Faroe Islands - a Nation in the Arctic (2013), is used to diversify the strategic outlook on Denmark’s Arctic Strategy. Secondary sources used are books, papers and Arctic journals to increase the amount of data on Greenland and the Arctic. Finally, the data is analysed considering classical realist theoretical framework. The limitations of the methodology chosen are related to the strategic nature of the topic. Since Greenland’s geostrategic position in the centre of the Arctic is prominently between the major powers, not all facts may be reflected in the literature.

Structure-wise, this paper is divided between theoretical background, results and implications, and discussion. First, the theoretical background is determined, and the “geopolitical umbrella” of Greenland is theorised in this paper. Second, results and implications examine the external and domestic influence on Greenland. Lastly, the discussion draws together the occurring themes in the national strategies and literature, analysing it according to classical realist theoretical assumptions and intends to predict the implications of Greenlandic affairs.

1. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Classical realist theory on international relations is applied to examine the strategic interests of the states. There are multiple variants of realism, but classical realism offers tools to explore the strategic interests of the great powers in the Arctic and their implications to Greenland individually. Consequently, the external strategic interest in Greenland is considered as the geopolitics of Greenland in this paper. The common core characteristics of realism are the state-centric approach prioritising states as sole rational actors in the international relations, which function in an anarchical world system leaving the states to rely upon themselves. Realists see “power” directly influencing the state’s survival, and national interest is the priority of a rational state. For realists, cooperation can take place between states if it serves national security interest. (Jackson & Sorensen, 2013, p. 66).

The state-centric approach of classical realism theory emphasises the role of the state in international relations. States are rational and the most important actors in international relations, leading the international relations to be primarily relations between the states. States national strategies can be independently examined through classical realism, since the other bodies, such as international organisations and individuals, come secondary due to their limited powers. (Antunes & Camisao, 2017, p. 15). Classical realism emphasises state power, especially the importance of military capabilities. When a state’s capacity overall increases, the national interests changes accordingly and the state will pursue greater dominance over its external environment. (Lee, 2018, p. 46). State’s survival is dependent on the state power due to the uncertain nature of the anarchical world order. Therefore, the most important states are great powers and their actions. For realists, national security is the most critical characteristics of states foreign policymaking, and defending and advancing the national interests are the primary tasks of the state. (Jackson & Sorensen, 2013, p. 66).

Classical realism views cooperation between states in correlation to the state's national security interest. States are rational actors and presuppose that they all act on the basis that benefits outweigh the risks. (Antunes & Camisao, 2017, p. 20). Since all states pursue their national

interests, no other states can be trusted unless their national strategic interests share more or less the same ambitions. International treaties are, therefore, solely based on the interest of the states to follow them, and there are no international obligations between countries. (Jackson & Sorensen, 2013, p. 72).

1.1 Defining Greenland's "geopolitical umbrella."

Greenland's future touches the high political issues involving major powers such as Arctic agenda of the United States, the regional governance structures in the Arctic and the Chinese strategic resource interest (Kristensen & Rahbek-Clemmensen, 2018, p. 2). Multiple non-Arctic states are interested in the regions commercial opportunities in fishing, shipping and energy sources (Connolly, 2017, p. 5). Greenland also has substantial deposits of minerals. Even though hydrocarbon development seems halted, Greenland possesses nine out of the 14 rare metals that, for example, the European Union needs and are hard to find in the international market. (Tomala, 2017, p. 34) Particularly China has a vast interest in Greenland's deposits of rare earth, zinc, lead, iron ore, uranium and gemstones (Dadwal, 2014, p. 817). Also, the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, need raw materials, which are, for instance, used in electronics. Tomala (2017) also notes that it is essential for the European Union to strengthen its position in the Arctic since the commercial opportunities emerging from the shipping industry.

Greenland has emerged as a meeting place for Asian, European and American interest as multiple actors intend to gain a foothold in the Arctic due to Greenland's geopolitical location (Tomala, 2017, p. 33). The emergence of greater Arctic interest is seen in the extended parties in the Arctic Council as the number of Observers Nations, non-arctic countries, are increasing. The People's Republic of China, Republic of India, Republic of Korea, Republic of Singapore, and Japan have expressed growing interest in the region's economic possibilities. (The Faroe Islands - a Nation in the Arctic, 2013; Observers, Arctic Council; Kraska, 2011).

Due to the increased interest in the Arctic and Greenland's central location in the middle of the Arctic – and therefore within the surrounding strategic interests - Greenland has a particular "geopolitical umbrella" in international relations which this paper examines. The concept aims to combine the geographical location of the Arctic, its geostrategic importance for the major powers,

and its implications on the geopolitics on Greenland. Considering the lack of an international treaty for the Arctic, and the relative size of Greenland, the “geopolitical umbrella” aims to enlighten the future of Greenlandic affairs in the Arctic concept.

2. RESULTS AND IMPLICATIONS

2.1. An International Perspective on Greenland

2.1.1. Arctic Shipping Routes

The seas around Greenland, including the Barent Sea, the Kara Sea, the North of Alaska and Canada become ice-free for increasing amount of the year which eases access from and to Greenland (The Faroe Islands - a Nation in the Arctic, 2013, p. 17). The seas are accessible for increasing amount of the year, creating significant commercial shipping opportunities (Figure 2). An “Arctic highway” called Central Arctic Shipping Route will eventually emerge across the North Pole and open up the traffic to the Greenland Sea and the Farm Straight located in the northeastern coast of Greenland (Petersen, 2011, p. 149). It reaches from the Pacific Ocean across the North Pole and holds perhaps one of the most considerable commercial importance. For instance, China plans to transport 10 per cent of its exports to Europe through the Arctic once its ice-free. (The Faroe Islands - a Nation in the Arctic, 2013, p. 15). Another passage through Arctic waters is the Northwest Passage locating North of Canada. Canada treats the Northwest Passage as its internal waters which creates tension with the United States (Sinha & Gupta, 2014). The United States argues that the passage is part of international waters and should be accessible for everyone. However, Canada does not want to commercialise the Northwest Passage due to environmental concerns. On the other hand, Russian territory’s the Northeast Passage or Northern Sea Route is an alternative shipping route replacing the current shipping route through the Suez Canal. Originally Northern Sea Route was developed by the Soviet Union as the key shipping route in the Arctic, and it is still enjoying significant investment, but it still lacks access to safety facilities near the sea. The Passage is likely to increases its importance when there is a need to transport hydrocarbon cargo through the Arctic as the conditions are warmer. (The Faroe Islands - a Nation in the Arctic, 2013, p. 15).



Figure 1. Emerging Arctic Shipping Routes
Source: (The future of Arctic Shipping, 2019)

Greenland is essential for the Northwest Passage since its ideal location for much-needed infrastructures such as maritime supervision, ports and emergency systems (Tomala, 2017, p. 34). Nonetheless, some argue that the expectations for the opening of the Arctic for commercial shipping over the Suez Canal are over-estimated (Farré & al, 2014; Stephen, 2019). There are multiple issues: Firstly, the shallow waters limit the size of the cargo, and there is a lack of infrastructure as modern deepwater ports and, search and rescue (SAR), capabilities are in short. Second, there are difficulties on navigation due to the weather conditions and floating ice which impact the punctuality, and necessity of high-standard expensive ship construction. Lastly, it is essential to note the operation cost, which impacts the economic viability of the projects. (Farré & al, 2014, p. 299). Additionally, jurisdictional disputes such as the extension of continental shelf claims can create political uncertainties (Farré & al, 2014; Ackren & Jakobsen, 2014; Petersen, 2011).

2.1.2 Extended Continental Shelf Claims Under UNCLOS

Possible serious conflict can emerge from the future partition of the continental shelf in the Arctic Ocean (Petersen, 2011, p. 151; Connolly, 2017, p. 2; Dadwal, 2014). The extended continental shelf claim procedure determines the sovereign rights to the natural resources of the continental shelf. But, the sovereign right only affects the soil and sub-soil, not the airspace or water column subjacent to the continental shelf (Groenning & Tolpa, 2019). UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) states that all of the Arctic nations surrounding the Arctic sea have a right to an exclusive economic zone (EEZ) 200 nautical miles (approx. 370 km) from their coastal baselines. According to the Article 76 of the Convention, ten years after the accession of the treaty parties may submit claims before the UN Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS) extending their exclusive economic zones. The claims on the parts which reach up to 150 nautical miles beyond their already claimed EEZ's, or up to 100 nautical miles beyond the 2500 meter isobath depending on the various technical details, are called extended or outer continental shelf (ECS).

Greenland and Denmark have an exclusive economic zone, whereas the Faroese Fisheries territory is still pending claim. Greenland has submitted three documentations for the extension of its continental shelf locating around the North Pole, and Faroese Islands submitted two claims. (Kingdom of Denmark Strategy for the Arctic 2011-2020, p. 14). Denmark has filed a claim in 2014 via Greenland for an area size of 895 square kilometres including the whole Lomonosov Ridge. Also Russia, Norway and Canada have submitted claims including Lomosov Ridge and multiple of the claims are on top of each other. (Groenning & Tolpa, 2019). The Law of the Sea is questioned whether it is a sufficient framework to deal with maritime disputes. Mainly due to questions over the freedom of navigation in the high seas of the Arctic, and whether a new international treaty is required to respond to the changes in the Arctic. (Sinha & Gupta, 2014, p. 874). The Arctic littoral states see the Ilulissat Declaration and the Chelsea ministerial meeting of 2010 of the same topic reaffirming the commitment to UNCLOS sufficient framework for the Arctic. The United States has not ratified UNCLOS but conducts actions and policies according to it. (Sinha & Gupta, 2014, p. 874). Currently, all the Arctic coastal states have expressed their commitment to the UNCLOS framework. Four of the five Arctic states have taken action in defining their outer continental shelf and its delineation with the region in the manner defined by the UNCLOS Convention, such as submitted their extended continental shelf claims. However,

the process is likely to be significantly delayed due to the enormous amount of work there still is to complete in UNCLOS. (Todorov, 2019, p. 80).

2.2. Main Actors' Strategies

2.2.1. Denmark's Arctic Strategy

Denmark addresses its policy priorities for the Arctic in its current Arctic Strategy: "Denmark, Greenland and the Faroe Islands: Kingdom of Denmark Strategy for the Arctic 2011– 2020". The Strategy aims to strengthen Denmark's status as a global player in the Arctic. (Kingdom of Denmark Strategy for the Arctic 2011-2020, p. 11). The Arctic is re-emerging in the global arena due to effects of the environmental change, region's economic potential and consequently the geopolitical opportunities which follow from the changes. The strategy points out the potential of the region to lay in the exploitation of oil, gas and mineral sources. Also, there are significant economic possibilities in the new shipping routes, which would save up to 40 per cent of transportation time from East Asia to Western Europe and be a more sustainable solution. (Kingdom of Denmark Strategy for the Arctic 2011-2020, p. 9). Denmark, Greenland and Faroese industries have a key position in those opportunities due to the know-how they have gathered which will be in demand when the Arctic develops further (The Faroe Islands - a Nation in the Arctic, 2013). When it comes to the stability of the Arctic region, Denmark's Arctic Strategy states that: "Overall we can expect a multi-faceted boom in activities in the Arctic over the coming decades. The basis for the future of the Arctic is being created now, and the Kingdom must play a key role in the future international cooperation that lies ahead." (Kingdom of Denmark Strategy for the Arctic 2011-2020, pp. 9-10).

The premise for Denmark's Arctic strategy is in the international Arctic Council declarations and in the political commitments of Ilulissat Declaration of 2008, which includes the coastal states of the Arctic Ocean: Denmark with Greenland, Canada, Norway, Russia and the United States. The Ilulissat Declaration prioritises peaceful problem-solving mechanism in handling disputes, opportunities and challenges in the Arctic. (Kingdom of Denmark Strategy for the Arctic 2011-2020, p. 10). The security policy approach of the Ilulissat Declaration is to avoid the militarization of the Arctic region by acknowledging the international law and forums for cooperation (mainly the work of Arctic Council, UN's International Maritime Organization (IMO) and UN's Convention of the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)). Denmark uses maritime safety and the tasks of

the Danish Armed Forces as the enforcement of sovereignty and cooperation. (Kingdom of Denmark Strategy for the Arctic 2011-2020, pp. 13-14).

However, the premise of the Ilulissat Declaration can be seen in a different light. Geographically the Declaration benefitted some Arctic states in the expense of others; Finland, Iceland and Sweden were left out from the meeting, and no representatives from the Indigenous people's organisations were invited or let enforce the declaration (Dodds & Nuttall, 2018, p. 147). The Inuit Circumpolar Council later organised a summit with a Declaration of Inuit Sovereignty over the Arctic territories (Ibid.). Even though the ministerial meeting leading to the Declaration were held in Greenland, it was an outcome of both governments interests. Greenland as Inuit subnational polity gave credibility to Denmark's initiative and benefitted Greenland's future statehood ambitions. The Arctic Inuit groups have protested against Greenland's right to speak on behalf of them since the Ilulissat Declaration was seen to benefit the capitals far south from the Arctic Circle. (Kristensen & Rahbek-Clemmensen, 2018, p. 1). Therefore, the standard story considering the Ilulissat Declaration is state power. Participants of the Ilulissat Declaration had the ambition and influence to institute an order which greatly benefitted themselves since the Declaration was a way to silence the frequent calls for Arctic Treaty, following the Antarctic model, to secure peace. The internationalisation of the Arctic region with a treaty would have shifted the power away from the coastal states. (Kristensen & Rahbek-Clemmensen, 2018, p. 1).

During the Cold War, the Arctic experienced the polarised tension from the Soviet Union and the United States. NATO allies of the time Canada, Norway, Iceland and Denmark, divided the area into armed camps (Kraska, 2011, p. xxii). The main interest in the Arctic region arises from its geopolitical position. Strategic weapon systems and other operations concerning the use and placement of nuclear-powered submarines with ballistic missiles which were especially active during the Cold War. (Ibid.). The United States had established four navy bases and 13 military bases in Greenland by the end of the Cold War due to four reasons: Greenland's geostrategic position is to prevent any hostile power's access through north to the United States, it is the key transit point to Europe, Greenland provided crucial meteorological information, and aircraft industries of the United States and Canada had a great value for the minerals found in Greenland. (Ackren & Jakobsen, 2014, p. 405). On the other hand, by the end of the Cold War, the United States interest in Greenland declined, and all military bases except Thule Air Space were closed (Ackren & Jakobsen, 2014, p. 406).

Currently, the defence of Greenland is in Danish hands by presence and surveillance, which is also the Danish claim to sovereignty. The Danish also perform activities supporting the local society and search-and-rescue missions (SAR). In the southern part of Greenland rests the Greenlandic Command at Naval Station Grønneidal comprising of about sixty military personnel including civilians. (Worm, 2011, p. 169). Danish defence military agreement of 2010-2014 acknowledged Greenland's future in the hydrocarbon extraction industry due to the higher energy prices and in general the increased shipping opportunities in the Arctic. (Worm, 2011, p. 170). The agreement outlined some main actions for the Danish defence. Denmark sees the Extended Continental Shelf Claim (UNCLOS) agreement as an appropriate framework for the Arctic, and no greater international treaty is needed. Also, the Strategy sees that the Faroese and Danish defence should be combined and other cooperation with Nordic nations should be extended. Additionally, the extended use of Thule Airspace and services means closer collaboration with the United States, as outlined in the Danish Defense Agreement of 2010-2014. (Kingdom of Denmark Strategy for the Arctic 2011-2020, p. 20) The Arctic Strategy upgraded into 2011-2020 in which also the Faroe Islands and Greenland subscribe (Kingdom of Denmark Strategy for the Arctic 2011-2020).

2.2.2. Greenland's Environment and Politics

Greenland and Faroe Islands are the remains of the Kingdom of Denmark's 18th-century empire (Petersen, 2011, p. 147). Currently, Greenland is a self-governing territory under the Danish realm and has an indigenous population of 55 000 people inhabiting an area four times the size of France (Petersen, 2011, p. 148). Its geostrategic position between North America, Europe and Asia held great importance during the Cold War due to security reasons but lost momentum by Post-Cold War. The Arctic has been gaining international attention due to the impacts of climate change and new access to natural resources, such as oil and gas reserves, in the region. (Ackren & Jakobsen, 2014, p. 404). A question over the ownership of the natural resources in Greenland has been on the surface since the 1970s and is crucial for Greenlander's aspirations to gain greater independence from Denmark (Poppel, 2018, p. 3). A system of Home-Rule was established in Greenland in 1979 after protests and active discussion by Greenlanders. The Home Rule Act was a step forwards acknowledging Greenland's rights over its sub-surface, and Self-Governance Act on 21st of June 2009 altered the Home Rule status into a Self Rule status. (Ibid.).

The differences between Home Rule and Self Rule are not vast, but the latter gave Greenland the sole ownership and supremacy over its natural resources. Importantly, the Self Rule status of Greenland offers the possibility to take over policy areas from Denmark under the legislative

power of the parliament of Greenland. (Petersen, 2011, p. 147). Nonetheless, major authority tasks remain under Denmark's legal control such as the Constitution, Foreign Affairs, Supreme Court, Defence and Security Policy and the Monetary Union which cannot be taken over by Greenland's Self-Government (Worm, 2011, p. 166). A preliminary requirement for Greenland's independence is a self-sufficient economy, but currently, it is still financed and dependent on the annual Danish Block Grant. During 2017, the value of the Block Grant was 3.7 billion DKK, translating into roughly 500 million EUR. (Poppel, 2018, p. 18). Greenland's strategy for greater autonomy is to gain revenues from the exploitation of its natural resources which are estimated to locate in great quantities, particularly, since the global demand for hydrocarbon resources is expected to increase up to 30 per cent by 2040 (The Faroe Islands - a Nation in the Arctic, 2013, p. 17).

Greenland holds great optimism for future independence from Denmark. The optimism is interconnected with the supremacy claims and the economic development of the natural resources in the region. As early as 1935, a judicial departure on Royal Decree stated that all mineral resources belong to the state of Greenland (Poppel, 2018, p. 3). When Denmark issued the first exploratory drilling licenses on the fishing grounds north of Sisimut in Greenland in 1975, the Association of Young Greenlanders (Unge Grønlanderes Råd) responded by taking over the Ministry of Greenlandic Affairs in Copenhagen. The association protested because it saw Denmark profiting from the hydrocarbon resources at the expense of Greenland. To calm the Greenlandic public, Copenhagen and Naalakkersuisut² concluded the establishment of joint Danish-Greenlandic Home Rule Commission. The wording of the establishment of Home Rule, or in other words local autonomy, in 1979 did not guarantee Greenland a fundamental right over its resources and majority of the policies such as political decisions, rules of procedure and administration were all regulated by the Danish Parliament. The Joint Committee on Mineral Resources was established between Denmark and Greenland creating stronger co-operation between the parties to grant exploratory licenses starting from 1985. (Poppel, 2018, p. 5).

U.S Geological Survey "Circum-Arctic Resource Appraisal" of 2007-2008 paved the way for Greenland's Self-Governance Act of 2009. The Survey concluded a mean estimate of 412 Billion Barrel of Oil Equivalent (BBOE) in place to lay north of the Arctic Circle, mounting up to 13 per cent of the world's undiscovered oil reserves. For natural gas, the total estimation rose to 1,669 trillion cubic feet (Tcf). (Petersen, 2011, p. 149). The U.S Geological Survey also named the four

² The Government of Greenland

most significant hydrocarbon reserves in the Arctic. First, the Russian West Siberian Basin with 132 (BBOE). Second, The United State's Arctic Alaska with 72 BBOE. Third, Russian East Barent's Basin with 61 BBOE and lastly, East Greenlandic Rift Basin with 31 BBOE. Additionally, Greenland was estimated to hold at the West Greenlandic province a 17 BBOE and in the North Greenlandic Sheared Margin 3.3 BBOE. (Petersen, 2011, p. 149). The US Geological survey greatly added value to the projected hydrocarbon wealth in Greenland.

In June 2009 Greenland's citizens voted in favour for a system of Self-Rule Government with optimism to be able to cover its expenses sustainably and therefore, eventually, gain greater autonomy from Denmark. The Self-Governance Act guaranteed Greenlanders fundamental rights over their natural resources and full legislative power over them. (Poppel, 2018, p. 4). Greenland can gain sovereignty over new policy areas as the annual Danish block grant is reduced from the future income gained from the natural resources. Also, the left-over budget needs to be fully financed by Greenland's Self-Government (Petersen, 2011, p. 147). The block grant was negotiated each year to cover the costs of Greenland's activities, but after the establishment of the Self Rule, the grant froze at real 2009 levels. Greenland aims to slowly reduce its dependence on the block grant with revenues gained from mineral exploitation (Boersma & Foley, 2014, p. vi).

Greenland issued a Hydrocarbon Strategy of 2009 containing optimistic policies for the potential hydrocarbon resource development. Also, the Arctic Strategy of the Danish Kingdom in 2011 (containing Greenland and Faroe Islands) states great optimism for Greenland's oil-fuelled economy (Kingdom of Denmark Strategy for the Arctic 2011-2020). Following the strategy, the number of active exploration activities significantly increased from the period of 2008-2010 from two to 13, and up to 20 in 2011. Notably, the Scottish oil company Cairn Energy conducted three exploratory offshore drillings in 2010 and further five in 2011. (Poppel, 2018, p. 11). The global petroleum contexts view on Greenland during the time of Cairn Energy drillings were beneficial. The U.S Geological Survey on 2008, Greenland's Hydrocarbon Strategy of issuing multiple licences, and the oil price peak of 2011-2014 reaching beyond 100 USD a barrel of crude oil were the main reasons for the investment Greenland saw during that period (Poppel, 2018, p. 13). No commercial oil was found, but Greenland issued high expectation Mineral Strategy for the period of 2014-2018. The Mineral Strategy estimates that with an establishment of two oil fields, one in 2020 as a 500 million barrel field, and another in 2025 as a 2 billion barrel field, could generate the national Mineral Resource Fund approximately 435 billion DKK by 2060 (around 75 billion USD). (Boersma & Foley, 2014, p. 16) A majority of the indigenous population of Greenland

perceives the possibility of independence to rely on the gains from extractive industries (Dake, Veland, & Hansen, 2019).

The connection between Greenland's state-building process and hydrocarbon exploitation is great, but it is essential to note the historically different sporadic nature of Arctic oil and gas exploration. In general, the total explorative drillings conducted in the Arctic are in low hundreds, when comparing the number in the Gulf of Mexico is in thousands. The relative sparseness of geological data affects the Arctic region's estimations of its natural resource wealth. Most of the survey's results are educated guesses based on geological assumptions because the actual extent of hydrocarbon resources remain unknown. (Emmerson, 2013, p. 209). Nonetheless, the warmer climate creates new opportunities in the Arctic such as new emerging commercial, or military shipping routes across the North Pole, focusing the spotlight in the Arctic, and Greenland. Also, according to the analysis, it can be seen that Greenland's focus on hydrocarbon strategies fuelling economic development policies are a key aspect of Greenland's peregrination to independence.

After 2013 the international interest Greenland had enjoyed started to decline. No commercial hydrocarbon resources were found, and Cairn Energy had drilled eight commercially unviable dry wells spending a total of 1.2 billion USD on the program (Henderson & Joe, 2014, p. 13). Starting from 2009 till 2013 the licensing rounds in North-West Greenland, off-shore North-East Greenland, West Coast of Greenland, Central West Greenland and the Baffin Bay were all declared commercially dry. Also, on 2014 explorations were conducted on offshore West Greenland, onshore Jameson Land, East Coast of Greenland, Disco and West Nuussuaq, the Baffin Bay and West Greenland which made no commercial discovery. (Dake, Veland, & Hansen, 2019, p. 327). Paradoxically, the world crude oil price continued to decline to reach its depth of 26.21 USD per barrel in 2015 (Figure 1). At first, the decrease of the world's crude oil price placed the hydrocarbon exploration activities on hold. Soon after the operating licenses were dropped one by one. (Dake, Veland, & Hansen, 2019, p. 374).



Figure 2. WTI Crude Oil Prices - 10 Year Daily Chart
Source: (WTI Crude Oil Prices - 10 Year Daily Chart, 2019)

The Arctic is renewed as majorly contributing to the global energy supply in the future, but it is emerging during an age of a great global crude oil market flux and environmentally influenced agendas. This period is marked with sizable concerns over global environmental sustainability and relatively low trust in oil and gas companies, and a major drop in the oil price since the 2010s (Emmerson, 2013, p. 207). The exploration in the Arctic is dependent on the world crude oil price, and the International Energy Agency evaluates the cost of production curve in the Arctic to vary between 32 USD per barrel to 100 USD per barrel. Greenland has the highest cost curve conditions because of its harsh climate. (Emmerson, 2013, p. 208). Additionally, if Greenland were to produce oil and gas, it would be up against competition from other providers in areas such as the deepwater Gulf of Mexico, offshore West Africa and offshore Brazil where the production can be more environmentally friendly (Henderson & Joe, 2014, p. 16). According to Emmerson (2013), an investment in the Arctic has a “multi-decade timeframe” and especially the group of higher operational costs including Greenland, offshore Alaska, Canada and East Siberia are distant projects. These parts of the Arctic region require specific conditions to develop further. The first of these conditions is a significant commercially viable discovery in their territory. The second is environmentally, and therefore politically, permissive context, including adequate and safe means to supply the global energy market. Last, some degree of confidence in the market conditions up

to 10-20 years is required after the production would have started. (Emmerson, 2013, p. 208). This analysis could mean that it is unlikely that Greenland will develop its hydrocarbon resources and further its independence aspirations within the near future.

Effects of global warming are seen particularly fast in the Arctic. The climate becomes warmer, but the weather conditions in the Arctic remain unpredictable and harsh. Firm ice layers characterise the Arctic region, strong winds, low temperatures and ocean ice in drifting floes or icebergs, which particularly define the Eastern part of Greenland (Petersen, 2011, p. 150). The technical challenges in the region are demanding conditions for operating functions. Long Arctic nights and unpredictable quickly changing weather can create problems for equipment stability and function. Examples of technical and operational risks are the geographically remote location which leads to a narrow window of operations, lack of transport infrastructure, and accessibility to communication. The technical difficulties and their proper management have a direct political and reputational impact for actors in the Arctic. (Emmerson, 2013, p. 218).

Harsh climate conditions lead to the cost of hydrocarbon development activity to remain high. One exploration well cost circulates in 100 million USD in favourable geological circumstances (Boersma & Foley, 2014, p. 16). Besides, the estimation of the cost of developing an entire oil field rests around six to seven billion USD (Ibid.). According to Boersma & Foley (2014), exploring East of Greenland is technologically extremely challenging, and several ice breakers and helicopters are demanded to collect sufficient data to have a clear view of sea conditions. West Greenland is also filled with icebergs, and they often are towed away if possible. When icebergs are unmovable, the rig has to change location. Paradoxically, as the nordic ice melts, it will increase the number of icebergs in the ocean. (Boersma & Foley, 2014, p. 16).

The Arctic is considered relatively peaceful region but several actors such as Alaska, Canada and Russia have certain military preparations in the Arctic which can dangerously cause military pollution. Especially the spread of military pollution such as radioactive waste in nature would cause severe complications for the Arctic societies. (Sinha & Gupta, 2014, p. 880). The local environment and people's livelihoods are dependent on each other, especially the traditional livelihoods of fishing and hunting. More importantly, the question over the one responsible for the clean-up missions in the areas affected by military waste is raised. For example, the United States neglected In Greenland, the clean up of the environment surrounding the Thule Air Space in Greenland, according to Ackren & Jacobsen (2014). Danish authorities had to clean the

environment in 2012-2013 even though a memorandum since 1991 between the three parties (Greenland, Denmark, and the United States) acknowledges that the responsibility for the waste belongs to the United States. Therefore, Greenland's traditional livelihoods are dependent on the actions of external actors.

When it comes to oil companies operating in the Arctic, and this case in Greenland, the security guarantees are among the highest. The reason for that is due to active environmental lobbying of locals engaged in traditional Inuit livelihoods and efforts by Greenpeace. (Henderson & Joe, 2014, p. 16). If the Arctic were to see a dramatic oil spill, it would directly affect the political decisions of countries and the future of Arctic exploitation and affect the whole oil and gas industry (Emmerson, 2013, p. 218). For instance, in the aftermath of the Deepwater Horizon's disastrous oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico in 2010 led to the United States, Norway and Canada to put on hold their deepwater drillings aspirations in the Arctic due to severe environmental concerns (Petersen, 2011, p. 150). Also, some companies have consciously chosen not to engage in the Arctic, such as the Chief Executive officer of Total, Christophe de Margerie advised in the Times. He has guided the compies not to engage in the Arctic due to the considerable damage it would cause for the public image. (Emmerson, 2013, p. 208). Nevertheless, significant oil discovery in the region would likely bolster the exploration activity in Greenland (Henderson & Joe, 2014; Emmerson, 2013).

However, Danish and Greenlandic view on Greenland's independence contradicts. Considering Greenland as a semi-autonomous territory with divided policy areas gives the impression that the policies are a separate unit of each other. There is a collision on Danish authority over Greenland's agreements with foreign governments on foreign investment for Greenland's natural resources. Ackren & Jakobsen (2014) see this is a sign that policies on foreign relations, security questions and defence issues are not as separable as it is claimed. The public authorities of Greenland have promoted mapping and seismic services, and made other data accessible for the petroleum industry, intending to attract big companies investments. Greenland's efforts to diversify the source of revenue aims to gain greater independence from Denmark. (Poppel, 2018, p. 9). On the other hand, without the continued constitutional connection to Greenland, Danish identity and claim of Arctic stateness would be in jeopardy. Dodds & Nuttal (2018) also note that Denmark wants to reinforce a view of the Kingdom of Denmark as the "middle power" with a vested interest in the governance of the Arctic ocean. The Strategy of 2011 reinforced the role of the Danish military in terms of protecting Danish sovereignty in Greenland and the wider Arctic region.

One notable clash in Danish-Greenlandic affairs relates to Chinese investment which has continuously tested the width of Greenland's Self-Government's autonomy (Zeuthen & Raftopoulos, 2018, p. 129). Both Greenland and Denmark have viewed the Chinese activity in a manner which legitimises the persuasion their own contradictory goals. For Greenland, the diversified foreign investment is an opportunity to gain greater independence from Denmark, and for Denmark, the potential foreign investment collides with national security issue of ensuring continuous, partial control over Greenland's natural resources. (Zeuthen & Raftopoulos, 2018, p. 129). Denmark has authority over Greenland's Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and by that argument has halted some investments in Greenland. For instance, when a Hong Kong-based mining company in 2016 intended to buy an abandoned naval base in Grønnedal, Denmark decided to block the transaction. (Andersson et al., 2018, p. 103). Recently in 2018, a Chinese Communication Construction Company planned to build airports in Greenland which prompted a response from Denmark to secure half of the financing. When the partial investment was accepted in Greenland's Self-Government, it resulted in a walkout by the local political elite. They considered a future of vibrant mining sector fuelled by Chinese investment as one of the most conceivable economic opportunities to benefit Greenland's independence. (Andersson, et al., 2018, p. 103). However, the Chinese actions have not materialised in a way that Greenland hoped, or Denmark had feared since none of the Chinese mining projects has reached production phase (Zeuthen & Raftopoulos, 2018, p. 122).

Greenland actively seeks investment in new industries including hydropower, mining and tourism, in addition to the possibilities of mining minerals and hydrocarbon activities (The Faroe Islands - a Nation in the Arctic, 2013, p. 18). Mining projects in Greenland cannot realise without attracting considerable international attention and therefore, investment (Zeuthen & Raftopoulos, 2018, p. 124). Additionally, Greenland cannot respond to the challenges in and around its territory's physical security with purely national resources, even with increased Danish involvement. Therefore, Denmark and the indigenous people's communities participating in negotiations over the Arctic have stressed the cooperation between Arctic states in the case of significant security incidents, such as accidents on offshore infrastructure and ships. (Ackren & Jakobsen, 2014, p. 409).

2.2.3. The United States Arctic Strategy

The United States Department of Defence (DoD) Arctic Strategy report of June 2019 outlines the desired end-state for the Arctic region, considering an Arctic nation narrative of the United States. The DoD is based on the United States 2017 National Security Strategy in which the national security interests in the Arctic are defined. First, Arctic is considered as U.S homeland and, therefore, is to be defended accordingly protecting U.S security interests. Secondly, the Arctic is a shared region with a domain of shared interests. Cooperation through principles such as national sovereignty in the Arctic is necessary. Lastly, the Arctic is a potential corridor for strategic competition. Considering Arctic's geographical location, it is critical, the potential base for the expanded great power competition. Such great power competition is identified between Indo-Pacific, Europe, and the U.S homeland, according to the DoD report. (Department of Defense Arctic Strategy, 2019). Also, China and Russia are seen as the main competitors for the United States interest in the Arctic.

The strategical approach of the DoD report emphasises securing the U.S homelands interests. The report names strategic goals to be, primarily, the defence of the U.S homeland, cooperation with the Arctic coastal states and sustaining competitive military advantage in the key regions of Indo-Pacific and Europe. Also, maintaining credible deterrence in the Arctic region is one of the key strategic priorities. (Department of Defense Arctic Strategy, 2019, p. 2) The Arctic has direct implications on the United State's security environment, according to the DoD report (Department of Defense Arctic Strategy, 2019). The central location of the Arctic is crucial for the United State's security since it can be both vendors for the possible attacks and power projection. The strategic corridor is the maritime traffic which also concerns Greenland due to naval operations of Arctic and North Atlantic. The DoD report concludes its agenda for the Arctic: Firstly, continue the preparedness of Joint Force military in the Arctic, which is to secure the Arctic region's stability and safeguard U.S interests. Second, defend the U.S homeland, and third, support the agenda of Arctic nations to cooperate in common challenges. The department approach of the strategy is to support the measures of Joint force to secure sufficient deterrence in the Arctic, while also maintaining an existing rules-based organisation of the Arctic. (Department of Defense Arctic Strategy, 2019, p. 13).

The United States does not officially recognise other states claims for an Arctic status other than the Arctic eight. The Arctic eight³ are the countries with territory in the Arctic and are permanent

³ Canada, The Kingdom of Denmark, Norway, Russia, Sweden, The United States, Iceland and Finland.

members of the Arctic Council. For instance, the United State has not ratified the United Nations Convention of the Law of the Sea. Reasons behind it are the complexities of negotiating and ratifying such broad agreement, the relative inflexibility of the outcome, and the perennial issue of resolution and enforcement mechanism which would require tremendous efforts from all of the Arctic littoral states. The broader treaty regime has been collectively rejected through the Ilulissat Declaration, which implies that the signees have no interest in such a major change in the governance of the Arctic. (Chapter six: The Future of Arctic Governance, 2013). Multiple of the Arctic coastal states are allies in defence or part of NATO frameworks, such as Denmark, the United Kingdom, Canada, Iceland and Norway. Also, Finland and Sweden are NATO Enhanced Opportunities Partners. (Department of Defense Arctic Strategy, 2019, p. 4) However, NATO's greater role in the Arctic could inverse the potential for Arctic cooperation with Russia (Chapter six: The Future of Arctic Governance, 2013, p. 155).

Considering Greenland's territory, keeping Thule Air Space open is one of the key priorities of the United States in the Arctic. (Sorensen, 2018, p. 84). During the Second World War and Cold War Greenland served as a fence between the United States and the Soviet Union, where the United States also hid a nuclear weapon. (Dodds & Nuttall, 2018, pp. 143-144). Only one of the Cold War -period military bases stay currently active in Greenland, but the Martin-Nielsen (2012) argues that the United States faced major difficulties in the Arctic environment of Greenland. Particularly the military had issues with the ice-sheet, and therefore the United States chose to enter into a cooperative relationship with Denmark/Greenland instead of a strategy to conquer and control for the territory.

The United States interest in Greenland is also economical, which an interview with an American ambassador to Denmark shows: "US interests in Greenland are not limited to Thule, however. Also, in general sense, the US has an interest in keeping Greenland as a member of, an American led, global community and to ensure that American businesses are well-positioned to move into Greenland if and when it should prove profitable" (Olesen, 2018, p. 73). However, the economic cooperation between Greenland and the United States has remained marginal, and the ambassador's statement is vague in comparison to the United States national security agenda for the Arctic.

2.2.4. Russia's Arctic Strategy

The Russian state program of “Socio-economic development of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation for the period until 2020” was implemented in 2015 but has been extended till 2025. The program goals are to enhance the positive impact of the Arctic's economic development while ensuring national security objectives. (On approval of the state program “Socio-economic development of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation for the period until 2020”, 2014; On the Strategy for the Development of the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation and Ensuring National Security for the Period Until 2020, 2013). The strategic goal remains the same: increasing the level of economic development in the Arctic zone, achieving strategic interest and ensuring national security interests. The state program includes three subprograms which aim to enhance the socio-economic development, further develop the Northern Sea Route and accelerate the development of the hydrocarbon sources within Russia's economic zone. (On the new edition of the state program "Social and Economic Development of the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation", 2017).

Russia is the key Arctic nation: It holds the greatest population, territory, and has the relatively biggest economy within the Arctic region. Exceptions are Greenland and Iceland, which entirely lie within the Arctic territory. Therefore, maintaining the Arctic as a peaceful zone is important since its economic opportunities are great in absolute and relative terms. On the contrary, by these variables, the country with the least Arctic importance is the United States. (Chapter six: The Future of Arctic Governance, 2013, pp. 142-143).

When it comes to Russia, Tamnes (2018) sees that there is a need for protection of the sea lines to contain Russia's actions in the region and on the bases in the Northern Triangle. The Northern Triangle bases are in Iceland, Norway and the in the United Kingdom because they are an essential part of strategic geometry of the region. Tamnes (2018) also says that Russia's priorities in the High North are determined by the geostrategic position of the region and remains vital in Russia's nuclear strategy. There is increasing investment in the infrastructure in the Russian Arctic. However, Greenland's Self-Government does not officially consider Russia as a threat (Jacobsen & Gad, 2018). The Greenlandic identity politics are based on the idea that Us Inuits are peaceful, and notable in this regard has been the near-total absence of Russia in the foreign policy narratives of Greenland. When there is a rare demand for greater military investment in Greenland suggested by the Greenlandic politicians, the arguments mostly relate to civil missions such as Search and

Rescue, oil spill response and fisheries. (Jacobsen & Gad, 2018, p. 16). Additionally, Greenland does not occur in the latest Russian Arctic state programs mentioned above.

Koptelov's (2012) analysis in the Russian Council forum of Denmark's Arctic Strategy of 2011-2020 sees the strategy in harmony with the Russian vision for the development of the region. They both, Russia's Fundamentals of the state policy of the Russian Federation in the Arctic for the period to 2020 and beyond, adopted in 2008, and Denmark's Arctic Strategy, adopted in 2011, acknowledge the Ilulissat Declaration's framework (Koptelov, 2012). The Declaration aims to settle the extension of continental shelf claims peacefully through UNCLOS and in general, the Declaration gives both countries freedom to continue their similar agendas for the Arctic. (Ibid.). Denmark's Arctic Strategy for 2011-2020 in section 5.3 "Bilateral Safeguarding of the Kingdom's Interest" speaks of close cooperation between the Danish-Russian interest in the region. Such as strengthening the safety of navigation, scientific cooperation on the continental shelves, information exchange and cooperation between Danish and Russian defence. (Kingdom of Denmark Strategy for the Arctic 2011-2020, p. 54). This could suggest that even though Denmark is a prominent NATO member, it has similar objectives with Russia to keep the governing of the Arctic in the hands of the Arctic coastal states and therefore benefit from the emerging opportunities. Also, Greenland has an interest in developing the economic potential of the region since it would benefit its statehood ambitions.

2.2.5. China's Arctic Strategy

A question over the Asian countries having observer status in the Arctic Council mainly rests on scientific analysis of the geological data, the melting of Arctic ice, and the necessary precautions taken in that spirit. However, a great deal of curiosity is in commercial possibilities. Sinha & Gupta's (2014) strategic analysis of Asian countries in the Arctic stresses their interest in the emerging sea routes. Notably, the opening of Northern Sea Route (NSR) will bring significant gains for China, Japan and South Korea due to the reduced shipping voyage. Therefore, Asian countries and particularly China, are linked to Russia. Sinha and Gupta (2014) analyse that China is likely to increase its exports to Europe and greatly import the hydrocarbon sources from the Arctic through NSR. Therefore, the emphasises China-Russia economic relationship as a major variable in the development of the Arctic.

The Greenlandic governments have been welcoming to Chinese investment in their territory with high hopes (Zeuthen & Raftopoulos, 2018, p. 122). China has taken steps to protect its interest in

the High North, notably in Iceland, Svalbard, and in Greenland (Connolly, 2017, p. 8). Publicly such high interest is suppressed, but since 2016 there has been increasing mentions of Greenland by the Chinese scholars (Andersson et al., 2018, p. 105). Notably, China incorporated the Arctic to its plans on Maritime Cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative in its envisioned “blue economic passage” which links Europe and China via the Arctic Ocean (Connolly, 2017, p. 8). The key component of China’s Arctic policy is to establish strong bilateral relationships with the Arctic states and stakeholders gradually increasing Chinese influence in the multilateral institutions dealing with Arctic (Sorensen, 2018, p. 84). Greenland’s value in China’s eyes is a source to import essential minerals and to have a foothold for Arctic access. The Chinese state is building an Arctic knowledge which can be analysed to facilitate investment in Greenland in the future, as well as support China’s full participation in the Arctic matters. (Andersson et al., 2018, p. 113).

Greenland is expected to play a crucial role in China’s emerging Arctic strategy because of its proximity to the Arctic shipping passages and potential for mineral resource exploration, but this evaluation is based on academic guesses. The main condition for more significant Chinese economic commitment is the energy and resource prices together with the cost of exploration and extraction, which needs to be economically more favourable. Also, greater agreements between China and Greenland requires reassurance and support from Copenhagen. (Sorensen, 2018, p. 88). In general, China has operated in the Arctic carefully, and it is still an open question of how strong of a partner would China become with Greenland (Sorensen, 2018, p. 90). There is an additional United States component, since it is Denmark’s strategically closest ally and has a long-standing vision for the military-strategic presence in Greenland, as is also the purpose of the Thule Air Space. Therefore, a greater presence of China in Greenland is monitored closely by the United States. (Sorensen, 2018, p. 84; Dadwal, 2014, p. 816). Zeuhen and Raftopoulos (2018) analyse the situation that the idea of Chinese coordinated approach has mainly been created by the competitive approach of contradictory images presented by the governments of Greenland and Denmark when promoting their interest. (Zeuthen & Raftopoulos, 2018, p. 122). Also, the development of the Arctic governance interests China since it is a question of distinguishing international and national waters, which has an impact on the position China has in the Arctic. (Sorensen, 2018, p. 89)

3. DISCUSSION

The results of the analysis show that Denmark's and China's strategic developments in the Arctic are likely to have a considerable influence on Greenland's domestic affairs. Both countries have significant economic interests in the Arctic. For both, the strategic importance of Greenland is enhancing their strategic "foothold" in Arctic governance and economic development. According to Denmark's Arctic Strategy for 2014-2020, Denmark aims to strengthen its position in the Arctic and take advantage of the emerging possibilities of the exploration of hydrocarbon, minerals, and the emerging shipping traffic in the Arctic. Copenhagen is a distant capital of the Arctic coastal states. The only claim that Denmark has on the Arctic governance and the opportunities originate from its self-governing territories of Greenland (and Faroese Islands). The statehood development of Greenland contradicts with Denmark's national interest to benefit from the Arctic opportunities. The differentiation of the natural resource, foreign affairs and security policies under separate entities create duplications of interests.

According to classical realism, Denmark acts in Greenland following national security interests. Also, as Worm (2011) stated, Denmark's military presence and surveillance is a claim for sovereignty over Greenland. The military stationed in Greenland is Danish, and according to realists, it shifts the power relations to favour Denmark. Denmark's Arctic Strategy indicates the Danish Armed Forces to enforce sovereignty and cooperation in the Arctic. The military is of primary importance in the state-centric realist view on securing and enhancing national interest, primarily the state's survival. Therefore, following from a classical realist inference, the wealthier the state's economy and the higher the military presence, the more influential the state is in the anarchical world order. Consequently, it is against Denmark's national interests to allow Greenland to achieve greater independence. The greater Greenland's independence, the more of a threat Greenland becomes to Denmark's national interests. Realists note that no other state can be fully trusted, due to the anarchical world order.

Also, China seeks to establish bilateral relations with Greenland with a strategic sphere to support non-Arctic state participation in Arctic governance. Greenland's proximity to shipping passages and potential for the extractive industry needs of China are the primary reasons behind China's interest in Greenland. Notably, emerging commercial shipping opportunities in the Arctic greatly benefit China since they reduce the distance between China and the European continent. The tremendous interest in the Arctic is economical. The more China can participate in the Arctic

framework, the more it can promote its national interest. According to realist thinking, the Arctic offers significant economic gains which in turn benefits China's influence in international affairs. However, China's quest for the Arctic is much dependent on the relations with Russia and its Northern Sea Route development. Additionally, the United States has a traditional military presence in the Arctic and in Greenland.

The Arctic Strategies of the United States and Russia are significantly realist in nature. The United States Department of Defence Strategy of 2019 considers Arctic as the U.S homeland, which is to be defended accordingly. The Arctic is a shared region with a domain of shared interest, and cooperation with the principles of national sovereignty is necessary to remain a balance of power in the Arctic. Therefore, the Arctic is a potential corridor for expanded strategic competition. The United States sees its main competitors be China and Russia, which are increasing their powers in relation to the United States. Russia's Arctic Strategy states to enhance economic development in the Arctic while ensuring national security objectives. More precisely, to improve socio-economic development, further the NSR development, and accelerate the hydrocarbon industry in the Russian arctic. Russia has the most northern population, territory, and relatively biggest economy in the region. The economic benefits of the Russian Arctic are great.

Koptelov (2012) mentions Denmark's Arctic Strategy to be in harmony with the Russian vision for the development of the region. Denmark's Arctic Strategy also indicates cooperation with Russia in state-centric governance of the Arctic. This could suggest that even though Denmark is a prominent NATO member, it has similar objectives with Russia to keep the governing of the Arctic in the hands of the Arctic coastal states and therefore benefit from the emerging opportunities. According to classical realism, since Russia and Denmark have similar national interests in the Arctic state-centric governance, they remain in stable cooperation between each other to avoid internationalisation of the Arctic. Also, Greenland has an interest in developing the economic potential of the region since it would benefit its statehood ambitions. Therefore, the parties of Denmark, Russia and Greenland have interests in cooperation based on their similar national interests.

The current international framework is the outcome of the Ilulissat Declaration, which initiated cooperation in the Arctic. The premise of the Declaration comes from the more influential coastal states desire to maintain political control over their Arctic territories. Classical realism characterises cooperation between nations to take place when it benefits both of the parties. The

Ilulissat Declaration, Arctic Council membership restrictions, and UNCLOS commitments are all based on coastal states desire to maintain control over their national waters and pursue their national interest with a common understanding. Additionally, the signees of Ilulissat Declaration, the kingdom of Denmark, the United States, Canada, Russia and Norway ignored the other bodies in the Arctic affairs. Organisations, individuals and Arctic states without coastal line such as Finland and Sweden were not to take part in the Ilulissat Declaration since, according to classical realists, they are secondary powers. The fear of conflict in the Arctic arises from a great number of actors. One of the reasons behind the United States failure to ratify the UNCLOS agreement is the realist assumption that it would not serve the national interest and national security since it would be a step closer of an Arctic Treaty.

Greenland is unlikely to achieve independence. In a classical realist sense, Greenland does not possess enough power to do so. Specifically, Greenland lacks military presentation. Economically, Greenland has not developed its major revenue opportunity of hydrocarbon resources due to the lack of infrastructure, financial capital and human resources. After all, Greenland is a country of 55 000 habitats. Greenland can have a great role in the energy industry, but the country is still in the middle of its power struggle, gaining independence from Denmark. Independence would require a sustainable economy and strong enough state to be independent of the hands of major international corporations and external nations exploitation. But, it can be stated that Greenland will hold steady international interest due to its natural resources, even if the hydrocarbon development remains halted for the unforeseeable future. The international interest will bring security concerns, and according to classical realist assumption on power relations, the small country of Greenland will not gain independence unless the great powers see it as their national interests.

The Arctic is a particular international environment since there is not any unanimously accepted international treaty, even though the number of actors is not high. Contradictory claims by the main world powers have made the situation more complicated. Therefore, Greenland's role in the Arctic can be defined through "geopolitical umbrella". This is due to the fact that the Arctic draws together the interests of North America, Europe and Asia through economic and security related incentives. Greenland is located in the middle of the Arctic issue, and therefore, the international environment can be considered as an "umbrella". This could mean that when it comes to the implications that the umbrella has on Greenland's external and domestic affairs, the term "geopolitical umbrella" is created. In other words, the "geopolitical umbrella" combines the

geographical location of the Arctic between multiple great power states, geostrategic implications the former has on foreign policies, and their geopolitical consequences on the limits of Greenlandic future affairs. This could suggest that both internal and international affairs of Greenland, including its independence, mineral resources exploration or military pacts should be analysed under the shadow of its geopolitical position and main powers interests regarding this. Therefore, the concept “geopolitical umbrella” supports the discussion on Greenland since it acknowledges the peculiarities of the Arctic political environment.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this paper was to examine the geopolitics of Greenland. The research was conducted identifying the domestic and global actors in Greenland influencing Greenland's geopolitics. The military-strategic approach to Greenland during the Cold War is transparent, but more recent President Trump's offer to purchase Greenland re-emerges the geostrategic question of Greenland. To fulfil the research goal, a research question was formulated: (1) How do the recent political developments in Greenland affect its geopolitical importance in the international environment? Accordingly, a method of thematic analysis was applied because it allows categorising the different actors in Greenland based on direct and indirect characteristics.

Greenland places significant weight on achieving greater autonomy via hydrocarbon resource exploitation and the revenues from it. The peregrination from the Home Rule Act in 1979 to the current Self-Governance Act of 2009 was greatly influenced to guarantee Greenlanders rights over their natural resources. With the latter they did, but multiple policy areas which are still formulated in Copenhagen and contradict with the natural resource policies. Greenland actively promotes its natural resource wealth and seeks to diversify its revenues and therefore reduce the dependence on Denmark. Significant exploration activity took place in Greenland at the beginning of the 2010s enjoying high oil price, but consequently, as the oil price plummeted, so did the activity in Greenland. The fact that no commercial discovery was made also plays a role.

Denmark's presence in Greenland is necessary to guarantee a share in the economic opportunities of the Arctic. For instance, the Kingdom of Denmark's Arctic Strategy for 2011-2020 clearly states its aim to become a prominent actor in the Arctic. A starting point for Denmark to strengthen its position can be seen in the Ilulissat Declaration which established the Arctic coastal states view of how the Arctic should be governed: through the cooperation of coastal states and therefore avoid internalisation of the Arctic waters. Ilulissat Declaration and later Arctic Council, and UNCLOS provide peace for the Arctic region as the territorial disputes are dealt with accordingly. However, it can be questioned whether they are sufficient enough for the management of the Arctic when the commercial activity increases.

The opening of the Arctic presents another lucrative opportunity of Arctic shipping, which multiple of the Asian countries have also shown great interest. It can be seen, that large entities such as the European Union, China, Japan, South Korea and Russia are to benefit significantly from the

opening of the Arctic passages since it dramatically reduces the shipping voyage. Especially Northeastern Passage pursued by Russia reduces the shipping time from China to Europe. Greenland's geological location in the middle of the Arctic holds a place for the much-needed infrastructure and safety operations when the cargo traffic is to increase. Greenland itself sees the increasing interests towards the Arctic as an opportunity to receive more significant foreign investment and gain greater autonomy from Denmark.

According to the analysis, Greenland most likely will not develop oil and gas industry activities in the visible future. Primary reasons behind the claim are related to the harsh environmental conditions, global petroleum context's uncertain nature and therefore, the lack of investments. It is notable to mention that lack of success in the exploration activity and the environmentally influenced agendas contribute to the recent, "unpopular" image Greenland as a petroleum country. However, other possibilities are emerging from a high demand for minerals and raw materials which Greenland has plenty. For the Arctic region, in general, the emerging shipping passages are elevating the interest it received internationally, and Greenland can hold a significant part in it.

When analysing the geopolitical strategies of some of the significant Arctic coastal states and non-Arctic states have on Greenland, the interest is visibly on its position in the middle of the Arctic. Especially Actors such as the United States, Denmark and China have a great interest in Greenland, which is to offer them a connection and claim to influence the Arctic matters. Greenland needs international investment to strengthen its position against Denmark, but Greenland seems too essential for Denmark's own quest in the Arctic. The result can be seen as the "geopolitical umbrella" which determines the options Greenland has on shaping its future. The research question seemed to bring up two countries which influence Greenland's geopolitics the most: Denmark and China. The United States was expected to have a more significant role, but it does not translate into greater practical cooperation with Greenland.

Findings indicate that the research question can be too ambiguous to answer such a well-rounded and complex entirety of national interests. Limitation of this paper is the strategic nature of the topic. Since Greenland is located in the middle of the Arctic, it can hold great military strategic importance, and it may lack relevant research. Future research should focus on military preparation in the Arctic, and its security implications on Greenland.

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