

# The Socioeconomic Development of Greenland in the Pursuit of Economic and Political Independence



Bachelor Project

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## Introduction

The public sector of Greenland has evolved much from its founding stages in the 1850-60's as 13 local boards, until today as a well-established national welfare government and five municipalities. The extent and the development of the governmental structures has largely been shaped around the philosophy of the welfare ideology. The origin of the public system in Greenland initially sprang from local initiatives which through corporations using the historic ties with the Danish State, who as a former colonizer, missionary, and commercial and pioneering explorer of Greenland had shared a fate spanning from the Middle Ages, lasting to this day, were Greenland as Kalaallit Nunaat now is exploring even more self-government while partaking in the union, that is, the Danish Realm. A majority public plea and political will to be free of Danish influence has led Greenland on the ongoing path of independence, which in political science terms is interpreted as meaning the strife for a declaration of a sovereign state. Today the Greenlandic people enjoy a strong social infrastructure and steady economic flow with the help of financial support from both Denmark and the EU. As the public sector of the nation relies heavily on the foreign aid from the membership of the Danish Realm, Greenland find itself caught in a financial struggle to claim sovereignty.

The current course of Greenland in the 21st century is a continuation of a long-standing Greenlandic wish, combined with the UN agenda of 1945, which requires a responsible decolonization and furthering of self-determination in former colonies. The Inuit of Greenland, being a majority of their own country, is overwhelmingly in favor of building a sovereign state free from foreign interference in their international and domestic workings. Being tied politically, historically, and financially to the Danish Realm, the prospect for sovereignty has evolved over time from being a political and legal issue, to a financial question today.

The topic of independence and economic self-sufficiency is one of the hottest topics in the political and cultural discussions in Greenland in our times. Hence as a student of social sciences, I have been inspired to pursue the topic of economic and political independence, in search of understanding of the foundation and evolution of the independence process, via the research of the historic and current developments of the Greenlandic political and government institutions, economic explorations, and the emergence and progress of the socioeconomic welfare system which visibly governs much of the national budget today.

## Thesis Topic

In this thesis, I outline the historic socioeconomic development, the evolution of the design of the Greenlandic welfare state, and the variants of national prospects for potential financial self-sustainability as a mean to state sovereignty. I will look into what it takes financially and politically to claim sovereignty while still theoretically maintaining the living standard of today as a modern welfare state.

## Research Topic

Based on the research of the historical and current development of the socioeconomics of the Greenlandic government's welfare society, a model is set up for what a sovereign Greenland must financially expand, to maintain the current welfare level as it claims its sustainable independence.

## Theory

This thesis is written with a basis in four social science theory principles, within three areas of science. The first of which is the political science of representative democracy as a foundation of the government of the Greenlandic nation. One theory is of the science of economy, which is used to distinguish between economic data. Here I use positive and normative economic in the interpretation of public spending and

political planning of the government of Greenland to see how a national financial management plan can be projected to satisfy the demands of the flowing economic mission of Greenland. Finally, two theories of the science of sociology are used to understand the development and socioeconomic requirements in the potential goal of the development of a Greenlandic sovereign state.

### *Theory of Representative Democracy*

Representative democracy is the democratic principle of elected people that representant a group of people through for example a parliament or presidential system. In Greenland parliamentary representative democracy is exercised as the means of government, and is the core principle in the development of the political maturation of the nation in the pursuit of independence and sovereignty.

### *Theory of Positive and Normative Economy*

John Neville Keynes is attributed to distinguishing in his book '*The Scope and Method of Political Economy*' (1891), the difference of *normative* and *positive* economics by Milton Friedman in his *Essey in Positive Economics* (1966). Milton defines that: "Positive economics is in principle independent of any particular ethical position or normative judgments."<sup>1</sup> The definition of normative economics Milton defines as: "normative economics and the art of economics, on the other hand, cannot be independent of positive economics. Any policy conclusion necessarily rests on a prediction about the consequences of doing one thing rather than another, a prediction that must be based – implicitly or explicitly - on positive economics."<sup>2</sup> It is thus then important to know that there is a difference in "what is", being the historic and current economic situation, and what "can be" or "ought to be", that is in relation to the endeavors of economic independence and subsequent statehood. In my thesis I document the development and the economic and infrastructural foundation needed for the ultimate achievement of said statehood.

### *Theory of the Nordic Welfare Model*

The earliest discussion of welfare models in state policy were based around a structural or functionalist welfare approach to the development of industrialization in 1900s. In Clark Kerr et al., *Industrialism and Industrial Man*, (1960) Kerr identifies the need for a caretaking of the working force and their family for a smoother operation of the industrial nation.<sup>3</sup> In the west there was the functionalist use of the welfare, where as in Greenland there had for a longer time been expressed the wish for a welfare-based administration, especially to help the needy people. I document the emergence of welfare in Greenland and the gradual growth of the welfare framework up to this day. I will later in this writing specify what the ideal of the Nordic Welfare Model entails and how it is used in Greenland today.

### *Theory of a Sovereign State*

The idea of a sovereign state has changed over history, where in the Middle Ages sovereignty was kings and monarchs who held feudal authority over land, it has in modern times come to mean a state-body with an administration that has "supreme authority within a territory"<sup>4</sup> over internal and external affairs. I will in this thesis document how Greenland still is quite a few steps away from gaining sovereignty, even as the political and international will supports the move towards independence and sovereignty. Although state sovereignty and independence differ in practicality, they will be used synonymously in this writing.

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<sup>1</sup> (Friedman, 1966,4)

<sup>2</sup> (Friedman, 1966,5)

<sup>3</sup> (Kerr et al., 1960, 153)

<sup>4</sup> (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2020)

## Methodology

To answer the research topic specified, I have parted this paper into three overall themes of what could be considered the Greenlandic independence/sovereignty process. First; I summarize the historic development up until the current government structure by gathering from the historic and current documents on the matter at hand, from which I draw a picture of the Greenlandic political growth of a representative democracy in the process for self-determination and greater independence.

Second; I describe the current government's socioeconomic infrastructure. To measure the economics of the current welfare state of Greenland I will be using the latest official financial reports from 2020 for the Government and the Municipalities. I then compare these data with rappers concerning an estimated on the expansion towards Full Self-Government (but not sovereignty), and finally calculate the financial means required for Greenlandic national, political, and economic self-sustainability with full self-governance.

Third; I calculate the economic requirements and possibilities for the development of full independence and sovereignty including the infrastructure and operation of the policies not allowed within the Self-Government Act. I use socioeconomic data and official rappers that deal with detail for cases of financial endeavors within mining, and oil exploration-projects as well as a potential of an expanded tourism sector in the likeness of the Icelandic tourism industry. By comparing the economic operation and maintenance costs of the infrastructure needed for full sovereignty with these initial viable financial means of reaching them, I finally illustrate the possibilities for a socioeconomic sovereign Greenland and what it really will take. I finish the paper with a discussion and a conclusion based on the research and discoveries, and my considerations and understandings thereof.

Most of the economic data is converted from Danish Kroner (DKK) to United States Dollars (USD) with the exchanging rate of 1 DKK = 0.15 USD and rounded to nearest first or second whole decimal. Rigsdaler also mentioned is an outdated currency of Denmark from the 1700-1800s and cannot easily be calculated into any up-to-date currency, and is thus not converted.

All informational source material is appropriately attributed in footnotes and in the bibliography.

## Independence gauge

Throughout this writing I have added an illustration of the process of the development of infrastructure, welfare, economy; both with grants from the outside, and from total income including taxes and other revenues to the governing administration of Greenland. As the goal point set in mind of a fully reached functioning welfare-state with a self-sustaining economy, I have set up a point system of; 10 points for a fully functioning **infrastructure** and **welfare**; including government and local government, housing, health service, education, eldercare, child care, benefit and help for the socially disadvantaged, as well as access to electricity, water, heating, justice, and defense. As a 10-point system of the economy, I have set up the estimated amount needed to run a fully functioning welfare-state, divided by the **grants** and **total income**. When Greenland is governing all policies of that equal to a sovereign state, and is able to sustainably pay for the welfare administration and infrastructure without grants from outside sources, I in this writing consider it possible to declare independence, and state sovereignty. A such scenario is illustrated in the figure 0 here.



**Fig. 1 From Nomads to Settlers**



33\*25,000 years ago

The first people crossed from Asia to North America



6-4,500 years ago

The first Inuit crossed from Canada to Greenland



900AD

1,100-600 years ago  
The Thule People settled in Greenland



982-1410

Vikings came and went



400-300 years ago

First European infrastructure in Greenland

1600-1800

European whalers



1721

Hans Egede lands in Greenland

1774

KGH is created



<sup>5</sup> (Ardelean et al., 2020).

## From Arctic Nomads to a Settling People

More than 6000 years ago in 4000BC, the first waves of Inuit are estimated to have crossed from Canada into Northern Greenland. It would be the firsts of several arrivals of Inuit from Canada into Greenland. These travelers were the beginning of the Greenlandic people, whom would spread and live across the coast, relatively homogenously for many centuries. In the year of 982 Eric the Red, as possibly the first Viking ever, on his western bound travels from Iceland, sat food on the land that he then named Greenland. After deeming the newly discovered land a good place to call home, he 3 years later after a return to Iceland, settles with his people of 14 ships in what is now called Southern Greenland. Here his descendants would live for more than 400 years before leaving.

Eric's people would meet and interact with the local Inuit who was the early Thule People. The Thule People had arrived in a later wave of migration and wandered the land of Greenland since the early 900s and are the first descendants of the people now living in Greenland.

From the 11<sup>th</sup> century to the 14<sup>th</sup> century, there would be continuous interactions between the Inuit and the Norse people documented, though some hostile, many peaceful. Later on due to a harshening climate the Vikings could no longer sustain their stay, and in 1410 the last Norse are reported to have left Southern Greenland,<sup>6</sup> and the Vikings of Iceland lost all contact with the people in Greenland for a while. For 200 years communications with none-Inuit stopped, and the relationship between the Inuit and foreigners grew only again in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century as European whaling-ships made it to Greenland in the hunt of whales.

As the now more modern world met with the Indigenous people, new commodities were traded, and commercial interest was found for the land. The Inuit now had the opportunity to trade for pearls and tobacco, which they bought with such as artisanry, and ivory of the narwhale, which for the traders on their return to Europe would be sold for its weight in gold as Unicorn horns.<sup>7</sup> The first Danish commercial interests in Greenland were first peaked when the west coast became used as an increasingly important source of European whale oil, after the number of whales had fallen significantly around Svalbard in the 1600s.<sup>8</sup> The oil that was a source for lamp fuel and soaps were an important commodity at the time.

### First Danish-Greenlandic Trade, Commerce, & Missionary Work

Between 1652 and 1654, the Danish King Frederic the 3<sup>rd</sup> organized three whaling and trading expeditions to the west coast of Greenland.<sup>9</sup> Here the whalers met and traded with the Inuit in and around the Nuuk area. The expeditioners documented their position, meeting with the locals, and their living conditions. As the potential for greater commerce in Greenland was weighed profitable, the king added the Greenlandic polar bear in 1666 for the first time to national coat of arms, where it stays until today.

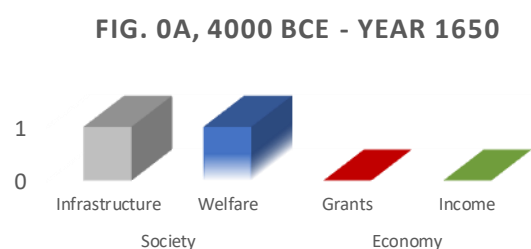
In 1714, the Missionary Collage in Denmark was established, with the goal in mind of making sure that the Danish people in the Danish colonies were christened in the Lutheran faith. Greenland was not yet a colony of Denmark back then, but as it was believed that there were still descendants of the Danish-Norwegian Norse people in Greenland a mission was organized. In 1721 an expedition to Greenland was prepared by the Danish-Norwegian Lutheran priest Hans Egede who wanted to reestablish contact and christen the Norse in Greenland, who would had still been heathens or Catholics, had they existed on his arrival.

<sup>6</sup> (Visit Greenland, 2020).

<sup>7</sup> (NarwhalTusks.com 2018).

<sup>8</sup> (Mikkelsen, Naja et al. 2019,2).

<sup>9</sup> (Engell 2020).



## The Greenlandic Colony

As Egede arrived on the coast of Grenland, he was not able to find any Viking descendants and had to give up on his initial goal. He then landed at a place on the west coast, on a peninsula in an area were he had read of documented Inuit camps. As he argued that there was a chance that the locals could be descendants of Norse people, he then founded a small settlement, from where he would do his priestly work with the Inuit that lived there. Egede established a church and a trading post, and quickly the settlement and the Inuit camps became the foundation of the first socioeconomic and educational era in Greenland. In the close years after Hans Egede's missionary settling in Nuuk, other settlements were established on the west coast, which all would become small colonies with trading posts and churches.

In 1726, King Christian the 7<sup>th</sup> declared Greenland as an official crown colony and became the directly responsible for the Danish colonies.<sup>10</sup> Now the Inuit, who had roamed the land as partially nomads, started settling in their first houses build with imported European lumber and the trade between the Inuit and Danes gained greater importance for both parties. The first groundwork for the infrastructure after 1721 started to take shape and already in the following years, the first attempts at an education system had been established as means of the missionary work, and the first creation of a literary language for Greenlandic was made.<sup>11</sup> To the priest Egede, it was important that the local population would learn to read and write as direct means to learn the lessons of the bible.

As trade, whaling, and overall European presence grew over the 1700s, the Danish commercial initiatives were all focused into a single company in 1774, where Kongelig Grønlandsk Handel (KGH) was founded. The king gave KGH monopoly on trade in and out of Greenland and KGH became responsible for all the Danish commercial endeavors in Greenland from 1776 all until 1950. In 1800, all colonized Inuit had been baptized and the missionary work was considered fruitful. Hans Egede's effort at christening and teaching the Inuit had meanwhile become the first steps in the development of a formal Greenlandic education system.

The Danish-Greenlandic commercial endeavors grew with the local production of oil and fisheries and in 1828, out of 478 workers, 172, about 36% of the total fixed workforce working for KGH were of native decent.<sup>12</sup> The importance of the literacy groundwork could also be seen as Greenland became the first country in the world to declare practically 100% literacy in 1856.<sup>13</sup> The mission and the church in Greenland, which begun in 1721, would continually be responsible for all education until a the reform much later in 1950. In 1847 higher education was introduced in Greenland, with two teacher colleges, one in Nuuk and one in Ilulissat. With a new law passed in the Danish parliament called "*Greenland's Church and Ecucation Act*" on April 1st, 1905, Greenland passed from being a mission ground to a fully christened place with its own Greenlandic church. This concluded almost 200 years of missionary work in Greenland, and as *The Church and Education in Greenland Act* was introduced a new college was built in Nuuk, which finished in 1907 and offered new higher education curricula for the first time. 20 years later on the "*1925 Act*" was enacted, and two years high school was offered as a part of the Greenlandic education system, aimed as a lower education for those who wanted to get an apprenticeship in such as office work and craftmanship. At the same time, Danish became compulsory in the Greenlandic schools.

The Inuit had in 200 years gone from being an isolated people with a nomadic lifestyle to settlers in villages and cities. Currencies substituted bartering, and history was being written and read instead of told orally from elders. The Inuit cosmology with drumming shamans was replaced with church preaching of the bible.

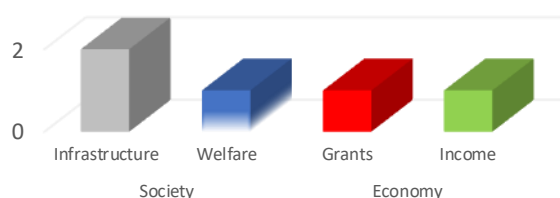
<sup>10</sup> (Bjørnsson 2016).

<sup>11</sup> (Gunther 1969,1).

<sup>12</sup> (Marquardt 1997,45).

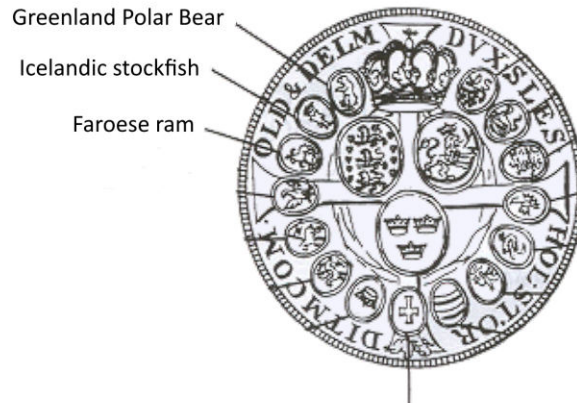
<sup>13</sup> (Gunther 1969,2).

FIG 0B, YEAR 1726 - 1856





## Fig. 2 Danish-Greenlandic Colonial Commercial History



2 Rigsdaler silver coin by Frederic III around 1666  
1652-1700

Danish whaling and minor trade

1726

Greenland becomes a Danish crown colony  
Search for minerals and gems intensifies

1734-1750

With the help from the Royal Danish Army  
4 English and Dutch trading posts are closed in Greenland

1774-1776

King Christian VII founds KGH,  
gives it monopoly over Greenlandic commerce

1800

All colonized Inuit have been christened

1850-1900

Greenlandic commerce becomes lucrative, Kryolit mining  
More self-governing and more Greenlandic employment

1900-1917

Conversion from hunters to fishermen  
Establishment of fishing stations

1936

62 municipalities becomes 32

1948

UN Agreement

1950

Reform and G-50  
Industrialization

## The First Democratic Initiatives, The Boards of Trustees

In the mid-1850s four men, H. J. Rink, Samuel Kleinschmidt, Carl Janssen, and J. F. T. Lindorff<sup>11</sup> who were all from the Egede founded Nuuk (Godthåb) colony and the surrounding area, agreed to write a proposal to the Danish government asking for support for the creation of the first posts for Greenlandic local officials, who were to deal with the betterment of Inuit living-conditional matters. The proposal was called: *"Submissive Proposal to the Ministry of the Interior on the Establishment of a Kind of Board of Trustees at the Colonies in Greenland for the Board of the Common Affairs of the Indigenous Communities and in particular their Support with Materials for House Improvement, with Tools for Hunting, with Food during Illness and Distress, etc."*<sup>14</sup> In each town, a representative of the inhabitants was to be chosen from among the locals. The proposal showed the early signs of public political will to develop towards a certain type democracy, self-government and a kind of welfare foundation.

In 1856, as a result of the submission, the first Board of Trustees were constituted under the Danish Ministry of Interior, and by the end of 1862 Greenland had gained its first kind of local governance and a basic welfare system, through the twelve Boards of Trustees, which dealt with financial support, disaster aid, local strife and social problems in the thirteen colonies in Greenland. The Board of Trustees aided in distributing disaster aid and resources to the needy and advocated towards the greater inclusion of Inuit in the workforce of KGH. The advocacy proved effective, and in 1880 230 out of 339, 67,8% of the total KGH fixed workforce were Inuit.<sup>15</sup> In each colony district a Board of Trustees was established where the colony manager, the local priest, the assistants and the chief catechist were permanent automatic members and from each of the districts a hunter was chosen who was or had been a skilled kayaker.<sup>16</sup> By the introduction of these local councils, the first steps were taken in the development towards local governance. The Board of Trustees was the beginning of "a municipal self-government in Greenland, independent of the Trade Administration and the Mission (KGH)",<sup>17</sup> as it was called in the original proposal for their creation.

The economic means to finance the activities of the Board of Trustees were obtained by charging 20%-25%<sup>18</sup> from the local trade and procurement and was added by raised procurement prices by KGH by the same amount. In addition to the indirect economic contribution by KGH, two new foundations for regional initiatives were established, for North Greenland and for South Greenland, respectively, which were under the supervision and administered by the Greenland inspectors and the Danish Ministry of the Interior. The funds from the foundations were to be used partly to support activities for the needy, and partially to support Greenlanders to acquire their own kayaks, hunting and fishing gear, and furnish homes. One of the first jobs of the Boards of Trustees were to financially aid people who had been hit hard by a famine followed by an epidemic of lung disease in the recent years prior to the constitution of the boards.

The Boards of Trustees had expressed that they found the situation of the balance of power in Greenland problematic, in that the KGH had too much power over the population through their monopoly on trade and control in local administration without any parliamentary oversight. The subject was something that were to be dealt with unceasingly and seen as a symbol of the need for balancing of power between the colonizing force and the locals.

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<sup>14</sup> (Rendal 2006,11).

<sup>15</sup> (Marquardt 1997,45).

<sup>16</sup> (Rendal 2015).

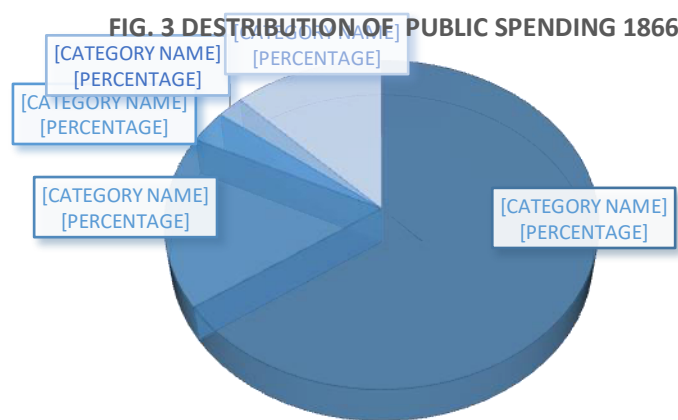
<sup>17</sup> (Inatsisartut 2011).

<sup>18</sup> (Sørensen 1983,16).

In 1866, the total public commercial and public spending including the salary of the inspectors and colony administrators in Greenland totaled 110.000 rigsdaler, with the employees of KGH earning about 90.000 rigsdaler, while those in the mission earned 17.000 rigsdaler, and the 3 doctors earned in total 3.000 rigsdaler. Each of the 13 colony administrators earned about 1800 rigsdaler a year, and the 2 inspectors earned about 2.200 rigsdaler.<sup>19</sup> (in 1875 it became possible to exchange 1 rigsdaler to 2 Danish kroner)

In 1850 there was only 1 out of the 30 colony administrators that was born in Greenland, in 1860 there was 2 out of 31, and in 1880 the number had grown to 4 out of 30.<sup>20</sup>

From the period of 1850 to 1904 the total Danish commercial activity pays about a total of 2M to 3.5M<sup>21-22</sup> Danish kroner in surplus revenues, which was a considerably positive contribution to the Danish economy of the time. The years to follow in the 1900s would however see Greenland grow less and less profitable as the public sector grew and whaling became obsolete.



| SECTOR                             | RIGSDALER | % OF BUDGET |
|------------------------------------|-----------|-------------|
| KGH (TRADE AND COMMERCE)           | 90.000    | 65          |
| COLONY ADMINISTRATORS (LOCAL ADM.) | 23.400    | 17          |
| INSPECTORS (NATIONAL ADM.)         | 4.400     | 3           |
| DOCTORS (HEALTH CARE)              | 3.000     | 2           |
| MISSIONARY (CHURCH, EDUCATION)     | 17.000    | 13          |
| TOTAL                              | 137.800   | 100         |

In 1871 one of the founders of the Boards of Trustees, H. J. Rink became the director of KGH, whom was then able to use his influence to further the agenda of the Boards by working to separate KGH from local administration.<sup>23</sup> In the following years local political demands grew for a new reform of the power structure in Greenland, which resulting in a Danish reassessment of the management of the colonies. This paved the way for the “Public Administrative Act in 1908” that was to separate trade from the rest of Greenland’s administration, thereby limiting KGH's position of power and giving the local population greater influence and opportunity to govern.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>19</sup> (Marquardt 1997,50-52).

<sup>20</sup> (Marquardt 1997,54).

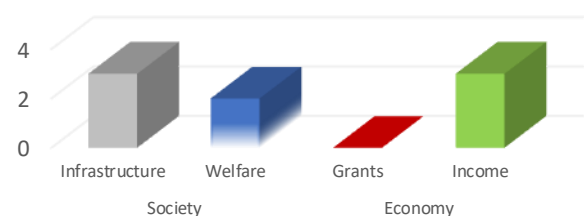
<sup>21</sup> (Engell 2020).

<sup>22</sup> (Sørensen 1983,13).

<sup>23</sup> (Rendal 2006,31).

<sup>24</sup> (Sørensen 1983,29).

**FIG. 0C, YEAR 1857 - 1907**



## Democratic Representative National & Municipality Councils

When the decision to separate trade and the rest of society's administration was realized with the Public Administration Act on the Management of the Colonies in Greenland, of May of 1908, the opening for new locally driven native governmental bodies were made. The Public Administrative Act officially divided the public administration of Greenland into two administrative regional National Councils with each a number of Municipality Councils which replaced The Board of Trustees, which had their tasks overtaken by the two new National Councils and the Municipality Councils. The Municipality Councils were to function as local administrative bodies in the new 62 municipalities, one municipality for each living area with more than 60 citizens.<sup>25</sup> The two National Councils for respectively North- and South Greenland were to handle regional national matters of the then 13,000 citizens of Greenland.

From the ratification of the Public Administration Act, it took three years until the National Councils were elected and in August of 1911, the councils were constituted and held their first meetings the same year. The members of the national councils were elected by the municipality councils. The local administration was now extended, and national matters were directly convened between the regions and the Danish Ministry of Interior. KGH still had the monopoly on trade, and the education and church were still under the Danish Ministry of Education and Church.

The National Council in the North consisted of 12 hunters in 1911, and in South of 8 hunters and 1 from the administration and 2 from the church and mission. In 1923 the North were represented by 7 hunters and 3 from the trade and administration, 2 from church and education, and the South by 4 hunters and 4 from the trade and administration and 2 from church and education.<sup>26</sup> Danes were allowed and welcomed in the Councils, but not more than 50% of the councils in each district.<sup>27</sup>

With the Government Act of 1925 the National Councils were kept, and there was added a new District Councils to help with the public administration. The District Councils took care of some of the municipality council's tasks, such as elderly care, litigation, and would provide assistance to the Greenlandic business and labor market, in the form of loans, economic supplementation and other help.<sup>28</sup> In 1926, new regulations were enacted and for the first time ever elder care was ratified in Greenland. This meant that people above the age of 55 would receive welfare benefits, if they were unable to support themselves, their wife and children under 16.<sup>29</sup> The amount for the elder welfare was supplied by Danish government. As it was believed that, the Greenlandic funds were unable to sustain the welfare expenses. The Danish Minister of Interior in 1926 worded then that this was allowed because, "the Greenlandic people in State Law must be seen as Danish citizens"<sup>30</sup>, although in the Danish constitution this wasn't the actual fact, yet.

In 1933 the International Court of Justice in Haag declared Greenland as Danish territory, in a dispute with the Norwegian government, who had tried to claim the rights to East Greenland. The Norwegian government had demanded the ownership of territory as they had led controlled hunting on whales and other mammals on the east coast as well as around Qaqortoq in the south, pursuant an agreement from 1924 with the Danish government. Another Argument was that Norway never ratified the Keiler-Treaty.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>25</sup> (Nunatta Katersugaasivia Allagaateqarfialu 2020).

<sup>26</sup> (Sørensen 1983,63).

<sup>27</sup> (Sørensen 1983,68).

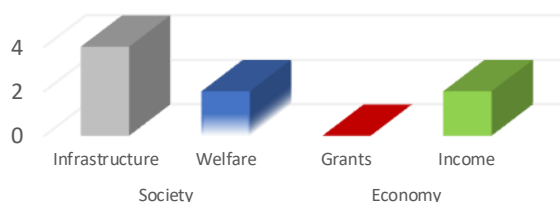
<sup>28</sup> Nielsen, Frederik (2008,2).

<sup>29</sup> (Frederiksen 1953,181).

<sup>30</sup> (Sørensen 1983,75).

<sup>31</sup> (Sørensen 1983,77).

FIG. 0D, YEAR 1908 - 1933



## Greenland In the Global Spotlight

The accidental strategic position of Greenland in the North Atlantic would prove to be a growing topic of importance in the years that followed. As Denmark was occupied by Germany in 1940 the administrative connection to Greenland was lost, and the United States became a providing trade partner of Greenland. In 1941, an envoy in Washington, led by the Danish ambassador to the US, Henrik Kauffmann, on self-proclaimed behalf of Denmark, with the *Defense of Greenland Act of 1941*, allowed the United States military access in Greenland.<sup>32</sup> A strategic deal that may very well have changed the outcome of the Second World War. In return for the Danish allowance of military use of the territory in Greenland, the United States would provide defense to Greenland, and Denmark would get a greater say in the allied powers new coalition which became NATO.<sup>33</sup> Denmark may have known little about the greater geostrategic importance of Greenland in the aftermath of the Second World War, and as the Cold War started the strategic placement became ever more internationally relevant again. As Greenland was directly between the United States and the Soviet Union, pressure and Danish influence grew and so did the interests around Greenland. Article 10 of the Defense of Greenland Act from 1941<sup>34</sup> gave the Americans the right to stay in Greenland as long as it was a question of their national security.<sup>35</sup> And as the Danish Government officially ratified the agreement in May of 1945, they may or may not have known that the Americans would stay indefinitely still until today, with the reasoning that the base is vital for their protection against adversary military might. Although the existing danger that was mentioned in the Defense of Greenland Act from 1941 was gone by 1945, the Americans quickly moved their distress of attack to the new adversary of the emerging Eastern bloc, and thus both remained and strengthened their military presence in Greenland.

The same year of 1945, the Danish government signed the UN Charter. Within the charter was among others, the promise to focus on the management of the colonies and obligated the members to work for an improvement of the conditions of the peoples of the colonies and to work towards decolonization thereof.

In 1946, Denmark received a request from the United Nations (UN) to report whether Denmark was in ownership of any colonies. Denmark reported Greenland as a colony and had then to account about its decolonization work to the UN in the following years. The question of whether Greenland was a true colony arose again in these years in Denmark, as the conditions in Greenland were different by not being commercially exploited of resources<sup>36</sup> in the likeness of those of other European colonies in Africa and Asia.

As Denmark had been obligated to decolonize, and Greenland was not being exploited for minerals and other resources to the same degree as other colonies were at the time, it gave reason to rethinking the status of Greenland within the Danish political and organizational structure. By bipartisan agreement a Greenland Commission was formed in 1948 that was to detail the new strategy for the Greenland-Danish relationship. In the *Greenland Act of 1950*, a reform was then convened. The population of Greenland was now to be educated and included on an equal footing with their peers in Denmark. That meant a lot of changes and for the first time, church and education was separated administratively in Greenland. A more modern school system was to mirror the Danish schooling. This was the start of a heavy modernization.

The leader of the national council whom was also the national dean of Greenland became an ordinary board member of Danish Board of Education. The 1950s and 60s would see a very rapid transformation and

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<sup>32</sup> (Olesen 2017,16).

<sup>33</sup> (Villaume 1997).

<sup>34</sup> (Defense of Greenland 1941,110).

<sup>35</sup> (Sørensen 1983,137).

<sup>36</sup> (Olesen 2017).

industrialization in Greenland which resulted in great change and turmoil with great prospects of renewal and establishment but also negative traceable consequences residual to this day.

## The Ground work of the Greenland Commission of 1948

When Danish-Greenlandic communication across the Realm was first reestablished after the war in 1948, the Danish Prime Minister Hans Hedtoft visited Greenland and held meetings with the National Councils in both the North and the South to hear them about their positions concerning a modernization and opening up of the Greenlandic society to the wider global society. The councils who had seen their country fall into hardships through poverty, tuberculosis, inadequate healthcare, and bad housing conditions, expressed the desire to have Greenland opened up and developed with the aim of being able to compare itself with other western societies both infrastructurally, economically, and culturally.

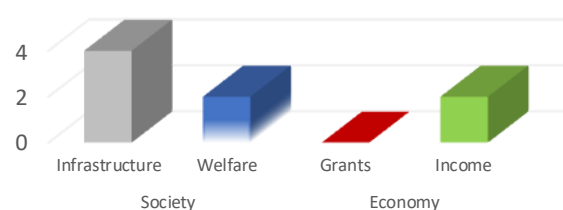
The political talks between Hedtoft and the National Councils resulted in the recommendations for the creation of the bipartisan Greenland Commission in 1948, consisting of 7 Greenlandic politicians and 7 Danish politicians and for chair a representative for the Greenland Minister of the Danish government.<sup>37</sup> Within two years the commission presented the G-50 report, in which they had come up with a plan for the modernization economically, institutionally, and infrastructurally.

With pressure from the UN on the betterment of colonial life, the Greenland Commission was to figure out a policy plan for the colony to be modernized as it was being decolonized. The establishment of the Greenland Commission meant in several ways a radical change in the previous Greenland policy. The commission made the Report of the Greenland Commission of 1950, which were ratified as a law the same year<sup>38</sup> as the *Greenland Act of 1950*. This was the largest step towards modernization in Greenlandic history and helped to contribute to the perception internationally of Denmark as a liberal decolonizing power, and it provided concrete negotiating advantages at intergovernmental and supranational level which were arguably later used to incorporate Greenland into Danish territory.

While the income and standard of living of the Greenlandic population until the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century had largely been determined by the value of the production in Greenland from fisheries and the state owned cryolite quarry, the commission proposed that there in the future should be a transfer of income from the rest of Denmark to share the burden of modernization.

Greenland went from having to provide all resources for its own industrialization to receiving monetary aid from the Danish state. The state was also to take over the expenditure on public welfare expenses, first and foremost the school and health care system. As these expenditures had previously been aligned with the modest share of exports, the change in economic policy with Danish support provided the basis for greater efforts to improve infrastructure, education, and means of production.

FIG. 0E, YEAR 1940 - 1950



<sup>37</sup> (Dahl 1986,108).

<sup>38</sup> (Olesen 2017).

**Fig. 4 The Political Process Under Colonial Rule**

1850s-60s

The first Board of Trustees were founded in South and North Greenland



1908

Act of the Management of the Colonies in Greenland was signed  
Greenland gets two regional councils,  
one in north, one in south



1911

The first National Councils held meetings

1940

(War Time)

1945

UN

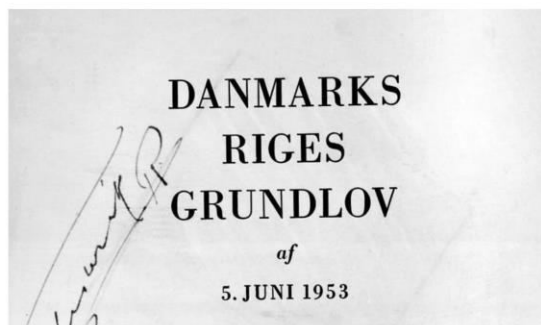
Hans Hedtoft meets with the councils

1948

Greenland Commission

1950

Unification of the regional National Councils



1953

Greenland is included in the Danish constitution

## G-50, From Colony to County

When in 1950 the Greenland Commission presented the blueprint for the modernization of Greenland, the recommendation to open the business marked for private initiatives was simultaneously given. The monopoly on trade had officially been maintained so far somewhat to protect the Greenlandic population from the free and ruthless global market, and partly to ensure the profitability of KGH. In 1950 KGH the Danish monopoly on trade to and from Greenland was finally ended, and with the “G-50” which was the name of the Greenland Commissions plan, the marked was opened up for private investors. The Danish economic system was mirrored in Greenland with a shared framework for financial infrastructure and currency. At the same time Greenland was to undergo a modernization with the intend of giving the Greenlandic population the same citizen’s rights and living standards as that of other Danes and also the means to gain income and be industrial to the same extend.<sup>39</sup>

While the UN’s pressure on the colonial system gradually increased in the early 1950s, Denmark was preparing a change in the Constitution to include Greenland and the Faroe Islands as equal members in the new Kingdom of Denmark. Before the Second World War when political initiatives were to be taken from Denmark, they had to consultate both of the national councils and find consensus agreements, which could be both time consuming and hinder progress. During the WWII, the two National Councils had been holding meetings as one single collective council, and when the connection to Copenhagen was reestablished, the national councils wanted to hold on to work as one council as it was considered more effective when the whole nation could speak as one in unison when convening their suggestions and queries abroad.

In 1951 Greenland got its first governor (Naalagaq) whom was the chairman of the 14 members of the unified National Council. The Naalagaq would, among other political workings, become the national dean of the new Greenland School Direction, and would directly supervise all school activity in Greenland.<sup>40</sup>

In the year to follow it was proposed to include Greenland as a county in Denmark in the Danish parliament, and the proposal was submitted to the Greenland National Council in 1952, which agreed to the proposal after a few days of deliberation. In 1953 Greenland was included in the updated Danish constitution of the same year, and was for the first time a part of the territorial Kingdom of Denmark, gaining the legal and political rights of Danish citizenship for every Greenlander.

Drastic measures to employ the great promises of a modern Greenland with high living standards and a flourishing private sector were put into place, and the government of Denmark worked to centralize the population into the new major cities and a great urbanization from all around the coast ensued.

Where as in the period from 1945 to 1954, Greenland had appeared on the list of non-autonomous territories under Chapter XI of the UN Charter, Denmark had to submit regular reports on the situation to the relevant UN decolonization bodies. In 1954, Greenland’s changed status from colony to county within the Kingdom of Denmark came to a vote in the UN.<sup>41</sup> In a time where the decolonization agenda was at a peak in the world it could have ended up with Denmark losing its influence and power over Greenland, but as the vote passed to agree on the new terms, Denmark managed to integrate and consolidate Greenland into the new Danish Realm and the collective history continued. As Denmark had expressed a promise of equality in the constitutional amendment with a guarantee for Greenlandic parliamentary representation

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<sup>39</sup> (Dahl 1986,109).

<sup>40</sup> (Gam 1953,155).

<sup>41</sup> (Olesen 2019).



Greenland was officially no longer a colony, and has until this day had 2 representatives in the Danish parliament which today has a total of 179 MPs.

The new political, cultural, and economic reality further assured radical change to the Greenlandic people's way of life, and the Inuit were now all to become citizens with jobs, educations, and private financial endeavors.

The new National Council was in 1953 created with closer ties to the Danish Government through a Danish Greenland Ministry. In 1951 the question of whether to allow for the sales of liquor in Greenland was at first denied, as alcohol has not been accessible in any large quantities in the country before, and only in 1954 the National Council which now had sole responsibility for Greenland, would upon review recommend the opening of sales of liquor,<sup>42</sup> a moot but probably inevitable decision. The mass uprooting combined with the quick change in identity, cultural self-understanding, and educational capital, have later been attributed to have caused dissatisfaction and desolation which broad about some heavy alcohol abuse in the new growing cities.<sup>43</sup>

Greenland had gone from being a colony of slow expansion and moderate economic action to a quickly expanding Danish territory county, and an emerging country, with growing activities in industry, welfare, and possibility. Many small and big fishing vessels and new factories became major manufactures, and the export started to increase. Modernization of the health care system meant that most people could be diagnosed and treated in Greenland for various ailments and the overall health welfare was raised greatly. At the same time new buildings in the cities were starting to house more than 100 of people from all across the coast. Where intergenerational living was preciously a norm, private housing was suddenly financed, and people could now build their own homes with help from government initiatives.

Roads were stretching in the cities and cars started to become a part of the everyday city life. Going from being a majority hunter-, fisher-society to an industrial civilization, happened in almost an instance, and many of the locals who were being inadvertently forced into cities through financial and industrial closures of their outer villages and residence areas, felt increasingly that they were spectators more than participators in their new homes. The G-50 policy was simple: "to expand the Greenlandic business community so that its yield would create living conditions that could compare with the Danish."<sup>44</sup> Economic pursuit became a ruling factor of everyday life of the new Danish citizens.

In 1953 child care welfare was for the first time legislated by the National Council. In short, Greenland would take care of the supervision of children, and the placing of children in foster homes.<sup>45</sup>

Although the G-50 initiatives were meant to make the Greenlandic people equal to their Danish peers there had been a deterioration in the share of Greenlandic people in the higher and skilled work force. From 1930 to 1958 the senior staff positions went from being held by 49% Greenlanders to 25%, the subordinate staff functionaries went from 95% Greenlanders to 76%, and skilled workers went from 92% to 28% Greenlanders.<sup>46</sup> The new situation in the work force combined with an inequality in Danish and Greenlandic pay would be some of the reasons for another rethinking of the Greenlandic political socioeconomic course. A new plan was drawn that was to create better equality and incentive for local workforce.

<sup>42</sup> (Nielsen 1955,254).

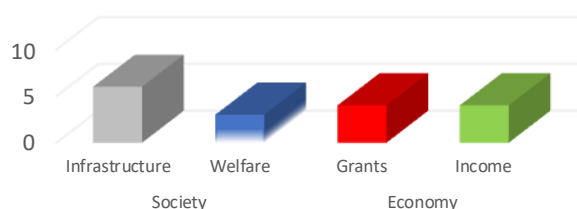
<sup>43</sup> (Danmarks Tekniske Universitet (20??)).

<sup>44</sup> (Sørensen 1983,187).

<sup>45</sup> (Frederiksen 1953,179).

<sup>46</sup> (Sørensen 1983,180).

FIG. 0F, YEAR 1951 - 1960



## G-60, Better Faster Stronger?

On the first meeting of the Greenland Committee of 1960, it was considered that the pay in Greenland was to be the same as in Denmark, and not to be determined by the Greenlandic production as it had been earlier. The higher pay, which was to be taxed, would pay for the schooling and other municipality matters.

Under G-50 many skilled workers from Greenland had moved to Denmark to work for better pay, and as the Danish work force in Greenland was being paid higher than their Greenlandic peers, aforementioned consideration was deemed as the best regulation to counter the negative trend of the loss of local workforce. With G-60 it was agreed to equalize and heighten the pay in Greenland.<sup>47</sup>

The negative economic net export from Denmark that would follow from new policy would be paid by the Danish Treasury as an investment in a more stable future for the Greenlandic economy. A socioeconomic problem later proved itself, as the requirement of higher pay would make it even more difficult for private investors to settle in the Greenlandic business arena, and private initiatives were almost none existing.

The overall economic plan in the 1960s was to expand the economic sector within the exploration of the natural resources with the efficient use of local workforce. Where there had been a great concentration policy in the 1950s, the outer residence areas had not seen much growth economically and industrially, and that was raised cautious about in the G-60 policies.

With the G-60 implementation, the Commission hence expanded the fisheries in the outer living areas, especially in the northern villages, and whole year fisheries on particularly cod was focused upon as the most viable international export source.<sup>48</sup>

With G-60 there was likewise a higher focus on self-sufficiency in the south, and sheep farming was being supported in the south. Coal mining in the southern village of Qullissat was supporting Greenland's infrastructure with cheap fuel. The groceries that had historically been subsidized through KGH via the income from production, was now regulated with state subsidizing to sustain a developing population.

The monopoly of KGH was officially broken, but at the same time a need for cheap products to feed the call on a utilitarian development through low prices and high income to initiate the new economic reality was expressed. KGH in the initial years of G-60 were thus then still selling products for negative prices in comparison to what they retailed, to accommodate the Greenlandic people.<sup>49</sup>



The modernization culminated in the construction of the biggest apartment building in all of northern Europe, "Block P" seen above here, being built in the middle of Nuuk in 1966, housing more than 1% of the total population of Greenland for many years until its demolition in 2012.<sup>50</sup>

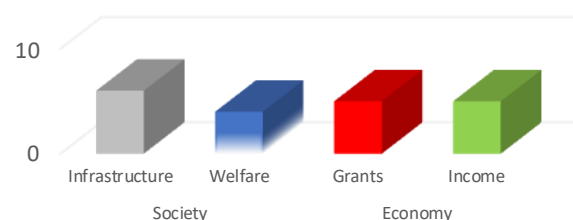
<sup>47</sup> (Sørensen 1983,188).

<sup>48</sup> (Sørensen 1983,189).

<sup>49</sup> (Sørensen 1983,191).

<sup>50</sup> (Odense ser Rødt 2014).

FIG. 0G, YEAR 1961 - 1971



**Fig. 5 Greenlandic Trade, Education, and Church History**



1714  
Missionary College



Christening  
Danish colonies

1721  
Mission in Greenland  
Missionary work & education  
Trade



1774  
Royal Greenlandic Trade was established  
The Mission & KGH



1800s the education system  
included cathesist and teacher education

1900 to 1950  
there was modanization of education



1950 to 1960s  
G50, G60  
Heavy modernization



1979  
Home Rule  
Legislations

1950  
Church and Education is seperated

1985 the Greenlandic flag is adopted  
1986 Home Rule takes over the KGH  
1992 KNI responsible for Supply



2009  
Self-Government

## Home Rule's First Order of Business

In 1972, a referendum was held in the Kingdom of Denmark on whether or not to join the EU. The result in the Greenlandic vote showed more than 70 percent opposition to the membership, yet Greenland was obligated to follow Denmark in joining the EU,<sup>51</sup> as the total vote across the kingdom resulted in about 63% voting yes to a membership. The Faroe Islands which had already gained a Home Rule government after the second world war, and thus with their own national government, did not have to join together with Denmark and Greenland. This mix of circumstances inspired a demand for Home Rule within the Greenlandic political sphere. The Greenland National Council shortly after the EU vote then created a Home Rule Committee that submitted a report on the subject in 1975, based on which the Government of Denmark with the Minister of Greenland agreed to make a bipartisan Home Rule Commission, consisting of Danish and Greenlandic politicians. Rights concerning the underground in Greenland was one of the most discussed topics in the Commission's work, as Denmark had long wanted to increase the exploitation of raw minerals as a way to subsidize the deficit of the Greenlandic infrastructure. The Commission issued a report in 1978 which set the framework for the areas that the Home Rule Government would take over. **Foreign and defense policy, administration of justice, and currency**, where still under Danish responsibility and raw materials were going to be a joint matter. As a referendum in Greenland was held, 70% voted yes, and the Home Rule Government was introduced on the 1<sup>st</sup> of May 1979. The Home Rule Government, since then consisted of the Greenlandic Government, Naalakkersuisut with a Greenlandic Parliament, Inatsisartut.

In the period of 1980-92, Greenland claimed almost all policy areas listed in the Home Rule Commission's report. The agreed policies in the Home Rule Act included; The **governance of Greenland, the governance of the municipalities, taxes and duties, church, national planning, business and competition regulation, social matters, the labor market, school, press, radio, all education, fishery, hunting, KGH's production and export, KGH's retail, health, housing, Greenlandic Technical Organization (GTO), supply, traffic, and the environmental matters**. In 1992 the Home Rule founded KNI which would replace the supplying of the Greenlandic people in place of KGH which was handed over to the Greenlandic Government in 1986.

With the Home Rule Greenland gained the ability to write laws on Greenlandic premises. Although Danish assigned workers did a lot of the law writing, and the legal measures were based on the Danish and European juridical system, it was now up to the Greenlandic people to interpret and produce law.<sup>52</sup>

Opposition to the membership of EU was mainly based on EU policies on rights to fisheries. In the 1960s, Greenlandic waters had seen much predatory fishing in particular on cod by European fishing nations, and did not trust the responsibility on fishing rights in Greenland to be determined in Brussels.<sup>53</sup> After a new referendum was held in 1982, with the same result as the initial referendum 1972, Greenland renewed the relationship with EU by exited the initial membership, but gained status as an Overseas Country and Territory (OCT). This now meant that Greenland could lead their own fruitful bilateral negotiations with the EU in Brussels on their own while keeping control on fishing rights.<sup>54</sup> Foreign policy where officially under Danish rule, but Greenland was allowed under the Home Rule Act of 1979 to lead its own international negotiations on matters exclusively concerning Greenlandic relations and territory. Greenland exercised this right by joining the Nordic Ministry Council and opening a representation in Brussels in 1992.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>51</sup> (Ackrén 2020,104).

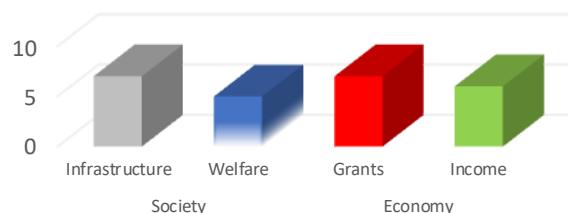
<sup>52</sup> (Petersen 1997,26).

<sup>53</sup> (Frydendahl 2014,2).

<sup>54</sup> (Ackrén 2020,104).

<sup>55</sup> (Ackrén 2020,105).

FIG. 0H, YEAR 1979 - 2000



## The Road from Disaster Aid to the Modern Nordic Welfare System

When in 1850's the proposal for the first Greenlandic Boards of Trustees was issued to the Danish ministry of interior, matters of support for people in need, either from distress or illness, or for betterment with housing, and tools for hunting were the greatest concerns. Today the ideology of welfare promises even greater social, economic, and political rights to a safe and meaningful life for citizens. Welfare means; *that no one should be left to fend for themselves in a world of fierce competition, but should be given the necessary means to build a life of which they can partake in the responsibilities of a wholistic society.*<sup>56</sup>

Today the Nordic Welfare Model will often be associated with high taxes, and strong regulations, rightfully so. The Greenlandic welfare system is based on the Nordic Welfare Model, also known as just the Nordic Model (NM). We can even say that the Greenlandic model is part of the nuances of the NM. NM is academically also known under the phrase the *Keynesian welfare state*,<sup>57</sup> named after the philosophies of the economist John Maynard Keynes, who also first described normative and positive economics.

As it is used in Greenland, the NM, is funded with grants and tax-financed public payment which in exchange support a large number of **social services**, including **government administration** and **regulative quality assurance, childcare, basic and advanced education, hospital and dental care, care and support for the elderly**, and other **social and mental health services**. The welfare theoretically includes everybody living in Greenland, and gives the rights to services independent of income and employment. Based on the modern Danish welfare state, which is said to have developed in the 1890's through 1930's<sup>58</sup> where it was recognized that the Danish State had a responsibility for the weakest and poorest in the society, Greenland was likewise dealing with the similar issues.<sup>59</sup> Especially through the great depression and after the Second World War, was it internationally agreed that the governments needed to play a stronger role in regulating economies, and helping people in need, and in the reach of education and betterment of life.<sup>60</sup>

In most socioeconomic meaningful ways Greenland has the exact same welfare system as Denmark has, with a few exceptions, such as Greenland having covered dental care. On the other hand, Greenland deals with a greater inequality in income distribution than in other NM nations, Greenland having a Gini coefficient of more than 35%, while other Scandinavian countries have a Gini Coefficient lower than 30%.<sup>61</sup>

## The Self-Government

After 30 years with the Home Rule gradually integrating the 50 policies agreed upon in the Home Rule Act, the 50<sup>th</sup> policy, high school educations, was patriated on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2009.<sup>62</sup> The year before the completion of the Home Rule policy list, in May 2008, a discussion in parliament resulted in an agreement on finalizing a *Self-Government Act* which was voted on in a referendum in November 2008. With more than 75 percent voting yes on the referendum, the draft for the *Self-Government Act* was recognized. This meant that the government would keep expanding and claiming new policies from Denmark. The democratic three-part separation of power was still a shared matter as it had been before, between the

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<sup>56</sup> (Granov 2013).

<sup>57</sup> (Veggeland 2006,1).

<sup>58</sup> (Granov 2013).

<sup>59</sup> (Brunbech 2012).

<sup>60</sup> (De Regil 2001,3).

<sup>61</sup> (Vahl & Kleemann 2020).

<sup>62</sup> (Grønlandsudvalget [2013])

Greenlandic and the Danish Government, but the rights to **police** and **courts** were gained to claim under the new terms. In the previous agreement of *the Home Rule act*, Greenland did not fully control the raw materials in its underground and had to inquire the Danish Government on any pursuit of exploitation under §8 nr. 2.<sup>63</sup> but with the Self-Government Act, the Greenlandic Government gained the full rights to exploration initiatives of the underground for the first time, including raw minerals on land and at sea.

### Representative Government Layout

The Inatsisartut still holds the parliamentary legislative power of Greenland and consists of 31 MPs that are chosen for 4 years within 45 days after each election.<sup>64</sup> The role of the Inatsisartut is multi-functional and as the backbone of the representative democratic system their job is to maintain the functions of a democratic structure and put democracy into practice through legislation. Being democratically elected representatives of the public, they must scrutinize the actions of the government and the ministries and urgent issues can be followed live on the national broadcasting TV network KNR, with public debates from the Chamber in Nuuk. Inatsisartut is similarly scrutinized by the Ombudsman institution to ensure democratic safety. The Ombudsman is elected by the Parliament to secure the democratic internal functions, and must secure that the administration acts legally and follows good management practice. The job of the Ombudsman is to protect the rights of citizens, and the quality of the public government administration and authorities, and is the most superior Danish representative within in Greenland.

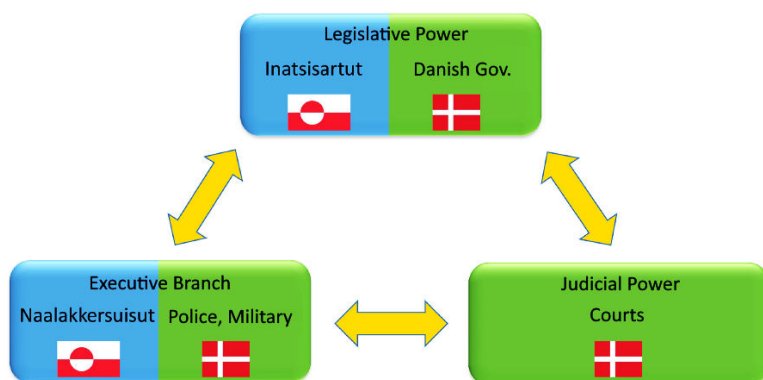


Fig. 6 The Three-Part Separation of Power in 2021<sup>65</sup>

### Democratic Representatives

Today there are seven political parties in Greenland, spanning relatively evenly from the right to the left on the political spectrum. Seemingly, there is a correlation with the political orientation and the wish for independence. History, identity, and financial policy may be some of the including ideological factors determining the stances on the independence-subject of each respective party. The five parties with

| Party                  | MPs | Position                   | Stance on independence |
|------------------------|-----|----------------------------|------------------------|
| Inuit Ataqatigiit (IA) | 12  | Left-wing                  | Independence           |
| Siumut (S)             | 10  | Centre-left                | Independence           |
| Naleraq (PN)           | 4   | Centre                     | Independence           |
| Demokraatit (D)        | 3   | Center to center-right     | Unionism               |
| Atassut (A)            | 2   | Centre-right to right-wing | Unionism               |

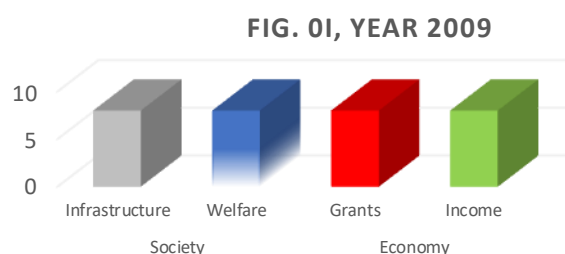
members of parliament (MPs) and their positions unionism with the Danish Realm is as follows:

Fig. 7 The political parties of Greenland with MPs, and their stance on independence matters.<sup>66</sup>

<sup>63</sup> (Dahl 1986,119).

<sup>64</sup> (Inatsisartut 2010).

<sup>65</sup> (Hansen 2017).



## A Welfare Government's Economy

Now focusing on the current socioeconomic situation, the Self-Government of Greenland employs more than 2,500 people including health care and social services<sup>67</sup> working under 10 ministers, called Naalakkersuisut, managing the 10 ministries. The Central administration has personnel of 650 employees.<sup>68</sup>

In 2020, the annual spending of the Self-Government was 1,066.8M USD, with a revenue of 1,075.6M USD.<sup>69</sup> The budget encompasses the whole welfare system has, excluding a few exceptions such as **law and order, national security**, and some **minor administrative services** that are still being administrated by the Danish government. The greatest part of the revenue in the 2020 government budget came from the annual block grant from the Danish Realm which has been the same, only compensating for yearly inflation, since the introduction of the self-government.

### The Premier of Greenland

The Premier is the chairman of Naalakkersuisut and the highest in command of the Greenlandic government. The Ministry of the Premier performs secretariat functions for all the Naalakkersuisut. The secretariat coordinates the Naalakkersuisut's policies and ensures the quality of the legal aspects of the ministries work. It is also the work of the Chairmans secretariat to coordinate that the political decision and resolution from the Inatsisartut are met with the ministries.

As the government owns corporations as either sole or majority stockowner, about 26M USD revenue was expected in the year of 2020. A Board Secretariat ensures that the functions of the government as owners and part owners of the companies, the policies of the Naalakkersuisut are met within the boards of the companies. The major businesses owned by the Government are the national tele, postal, and internet provider Tele-Post Greenland, and the largest Greenlandic fishery producer Royal Greenland, which had a net turnover of 799M in 2019<sup>70</sup>.

As the Premier of Greenland takes care of the domestic matters, the department function as Interior, and keeps oversight and advises the five regional governing municipalities in their work.

### The Department of Finances and Nordic Corporation

The Department of Finances expected a revenue of 726M USD in 2020. The major portion of the income from the block grant which in 2020 accounted for 586.5M USD, 54.5% of the total income of the Self-Government. Under the Partnership Agreement with the EU, Greenland achieved tariff exemption for Greenlandic products and an OCT scheme (Overseas Countries and Territories) and improved the country's economic competitiveness in international trade. At the same time, the agreement with the EU ensured continued access to limited licensed fishery in Greenland for which the EU pays an annual 35M compensation for accessing<sup>71</sup>. The treasury of the government contributed about a third of the total government revenue, a total of 356M from direct and indirect taxes and duties.

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<sup>66</sup> (Wikipedia 2020a) official attitude on independence.

<sup>67</sup> (Sullissivik.gl 2020).

<sup>68</sup> (Naalakkersuisut 2020a).

<sup>69</sup> (Inatsisartut 2019).

<sup>70</sup> (Royal Greenland 2020).

<sup>71</sup> (Frydendahl 2014,2).

If Greenland is to claim financial independence, the block grant must no longer be added to the annual income, however it is possible that the Partnership Agreement with the EU may still stand, as it involves fishing rights and international agreements between Greenland and Brussels. For the sake of a conservative illustration of economic sovereignty, I do also exclude the EU grant from the “sovereignty budget” later on.

### The Government Income

Currently there are many hopes for new income revenues from especially royalties from natural resources in the future. As of these days however, the royalties only play a miniscule role in the national budget. The government tries to estimate which investments will give the greatest economic boosts to the Greenlandic economy from time to time, and as there are many factors in play between the government, the municipalities, the government owned companies and the private sectors expansions, the budgeting is under constant assessment and readjustments every year. With the *Self-Government Act* all the next expansions of government policies claimed from Denmark (listed in appendix 1), must be paid for by the Greenlandic government. The estimated price for the complete expansion within the frameworks of the *Self-Government Act*, is 86.4M<sup>72</sup> as is later illustrated in fig. 16 p. 28. Before claiming complete sovereignty, the first step is to claim the remaining policies that are agreed upon in said Act.

The prerogative of a self-sustained independent Self-Government budget includes an income, (excluding grants) that must exceed government expenditures:  $I \geq E$

$I = 1,075.6B$  = The annual total income of the government. This number is derived from the income from taxes, profit from government businesses, grants, and other government revenues sources. (See figure 8)

$E = 1,066.8B$  = The annual operation and renovation and new installations costs. This number consists of all the financial spending within the government. (See figure 11, p. 24)

$$1075.6M - 1066.8M = +8.8$$

With the completion of the remaining policies into the Self-Government there will be a need for a minimum of an additional 77.6M revenue.

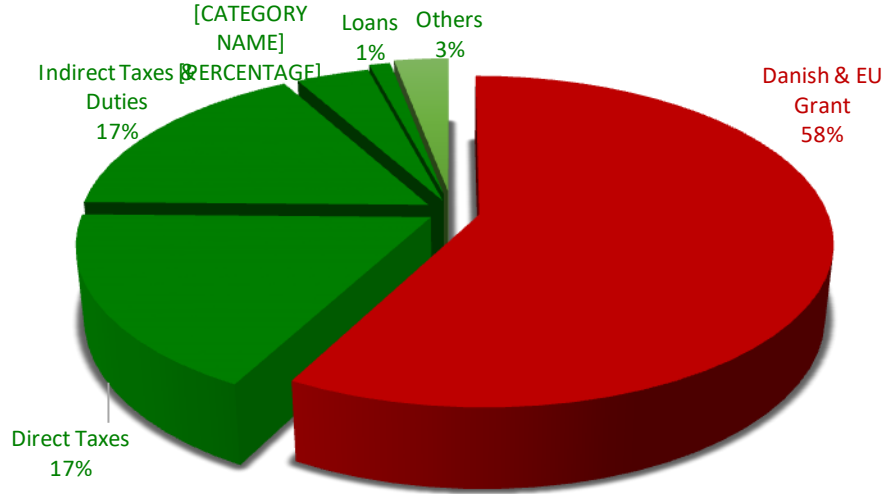
|                         |               |
|-------------------------|---------------|
| Danish & EU Grant       | 621.8         |
| Direct Taxes            | 187.8         |
| Indirect Taxes & Duties | 179.2         |
| From Investments        | 42.4          |
| Loans                   | 12.5          |
| Others                  | 32.0          |
| <b>Total</b>            | <b>1075.6</b> |

Fig. 8 Annual Government Income 2020

<sup>72</sup> (Naalakkersuisut 2018a).



**Fig. 9 Government Annual Income 2020**



### Self-Government Expenditures

As is pertaining to NM welfare nations, a big part of the government spending is used in health care and education. The public sector is the biggest employer in Greenland, and in 2018 out of the approximately 26,600 employed in Greenland, the Self-Government and the municipalities employed a total of 18,517 of which 10,699 were full time workers. Where the self-government had 4,018 full-time employees and the municipalities 6,681.<sup>73</sup>

The National Budget expenditures must be approved by the Inatsisartut every year, and the budget is continuously revised to fit new accommodations related to government exploits.

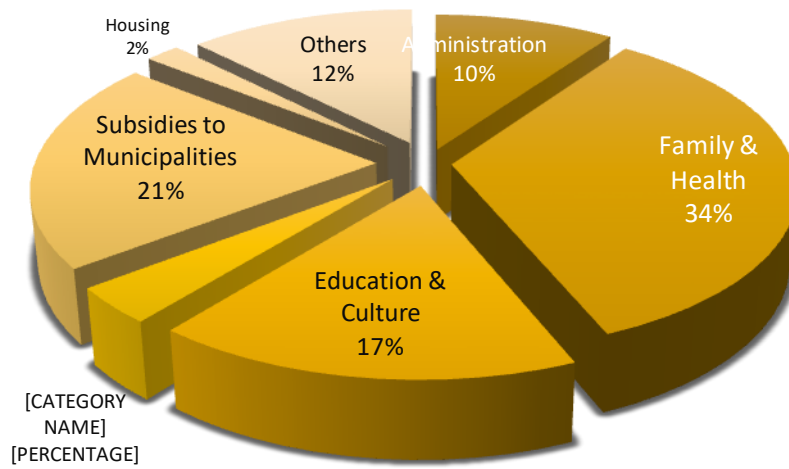
The national budget is budgeting and paying for the national welfare expenditures. This includes health care and administration, and education and culture. A big part of the national budget is also allocated to the municipalities that organize all the regional government and local welfare services.

| Policy Area                             | M USD         |
|---|---------------|
| Administration                          | 104.5         |
| Family & Health                         | 361.8         |
| Education & Culture                     | 183.4         |
| Business, Fisheries, Hunting, & Farming | 39.2          |
| Subsidies to Municipalities             | 224.9         |
| Housing                                 | 20.6          |
| Others                                  | 132.4         |
| <b>Total</b>                            | <b>1066.8</b> |

*Fig. 10 Annual Government Spending 2020*

<sup>73</sup> (Schultz-Nielsen 2019).

**Fig. 11 Government Total Expenditures 2020**



In a realistic case of a future independence, it is likely that priorities in the budgeting will shift in some areas. There may be representation and international agreements with neighbouring countries on such as health care and higher education which can change expenditures somewhat.

As above mentioned are speculations and normative economic areas thus unforeseeable, I am only going to be keeping to the positive economical assessments of the actual budgets and projected costs in case of expansion of government and in the goal of independence for this 3<sup>rd</sup> part of the writing.

## The Municipalities

The 5 municipalities comprise the second half of the public administrative infrastructure of Greenland. Collectively they spend about half of the total national government public spending. Where the Central Government caretakes the national policies, the municipalities are responsible for the local welfare initiatives. The tax percentage in Greenland is between 42% and 44 % depending on which municipality one works and lives in. 10 of the percentage point goes to the government, and the remaining 32-34 percentage point goes to cover the municipalities.<sup>74</sup> Even with the larger part of the taxed economy going to municipalities, the Self-Government grants 226M USD in 2020 to the municipalities for wider welfare projects as a steady part of the *Block Grant Agreement*. The Municipality Grant is supplementing to the overall budgets, while some of the grant is allocated specifically to pay for construction of new preschools and primary schools, as well as some major efforts within the disability areas.

The 5 municipalities had a total budget of 1,113M<sup>75</sup> USD in 2020. Of that budget, about 40%, 445M was spend in the municipality of Sermersooq which includes among others the capital and the east coast.

Fig. 12 Share of Municipalities Budgets in 2020

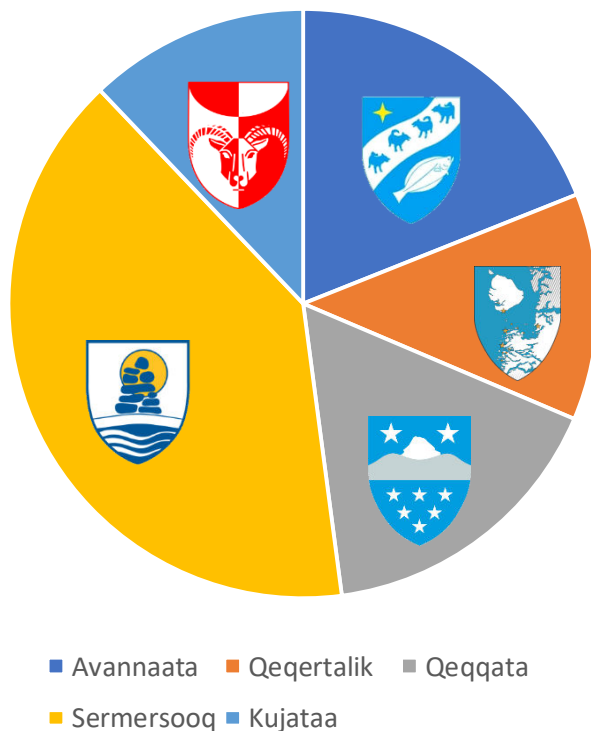


Fig. 13 Sermersooq Budget Distribution of 2018



<sup>74</sup> (Tax Agency 2020).

<sup>75</sup> Created from (Kommune Kujalleq 2019), (Kommuneqarfik Sermersooq 2019), (Avannaata Kommunian 2019), (Qeqqata Kommunian 2019) and (Kommune Qeqertalik 2019).

## Municipal Spending and Welfare

Much of the actual welfare system in Greenland is controlled from the municipality offices. As an example of a welfare budget of a municipality I use the budget of Sermersooq Municipality for the following illustration of the spending percentages of a Greenlandic municipality but varies slightly across regions.

| Accounting operations                       | In 1,000 USD | % of budget | Major areas                   |
|---|--------------|-------------|-------------------------------|
| Government & democracy                      | 2,478        | 1           | Democratic representatives    |
| Development & education                     | 68,852       | 27          | Public schools, preschools    |
| Business Development                        | 1,987        | 0.8         | Fisheries, Tourism            |
| Social purposes                             | 114,093      | 45          | Children with special needs   |
| Health                                      | 111          | 0.04        | Patient compensation          |
| Technology, envir. & planning               | 7,160        | 2.8         | City planning and expansion   |
| Leisure, culture and religion               | 8,717        | 3.4         | Sports, cultural events       |
| Infrastructure                              | 5,836        | 2.3         | Roads, bridges, snow clearing |
| Supply, energy & renovation                 | 1,812        | 0.7         | Incineration, renovation      |
| Preparedness & crime prevention             | 16,474       | 0.65        | Preparedness                  |
| Foreign services & international activities | 118          | 0.005       | Representations               |
| Administration                              | 43,266       | 17          | Secretariat, IT-service, HR   |
| Financial Posts                             | -1,476       | -0.6        | Expenditures, Depreciation    |

Fig. 14 The Annual Budget of Sermersooq Municipality 2018

The budget of the welfare system of Kommuneqarfik Sermersooq<sup>76</sup> gives a good insight into the areas that the Greenlandic municipal organizational structures provide today. As a great deal of the municipal annual spending is going to social purposes, maintaining the high level of social welfare is seen shown important.

### Welfare Price

From the annual report of 2018, 42%, or 114M of the 254.5M of the annual operation costs were spent on social purposes, 39% of which, the social purpose spending was spend on children with special needs, mainly those in foster care. 25% were spend on education and development and 16% on administration. The cost of children in care have risen much since child welfare was first integrated in 1953 and is now a major part of the overall municipal and national welfare spending.

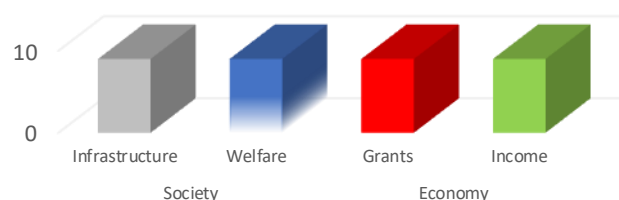
In Sermersooq Municipality, public spending on children with special needs exceeds operation costs of public schools in 2018. A few years ago, it was recognized that there were needed a great focus on helping children without proper parenting. This resulted in great investments in accommodation of this target group of the society which is sadly still growing.

Among other important areas of the municipal budget is the support for people with disabilities and elder care.

| Social Purpose                | In M USD | % of budget |
|-------------------------------|----------|-------------|
| Children with special needs   | 44.0     | 39          |
| Adults with disabilities      | 19.3     | 17          |
| Elder care                    | 15.5     | 14          |
| Labor market                  | 6.6      | 5.8         |
| Treatment in the social field | 5.7      | 5           |
| Others                        | 22.8     | 20          |

Fig. 15 Distribution of Sermersooq Municipality Spending on Social Purposes

FIG. 0J, YEAR 2020



<sup>76</sup> (Kommuneqarfik Sermersooq 2020).

## Three Steps Between Self-Governance and Sovereignty

In the report of the Self-Government Commission from March 2003, it is outlined that the UN's general assembly had identified three possible choices for decolonization, being 1) *Independence*, 2) *Free association*, 3) *Integration*. Inspired from these possible choices, the Commission presented six possibilities for further political pursuit.

- 1) *Independence*. Meaning to independently create a state with an independent government, which is completely responsible for all internal and external affairs.
- 2) *Union with another country*. Meaning sharing the head of government of another country. The union between Denmark and Iceland 1918 and 1944 is set as an example of this.
- 3) *Free association*. Meaning that the people and territory of Greenland would be bound to another country, with the right to later exercise external ruling. The relationship between Puerto Rico and USA is set as an example of this.
- 4) *Federation*. Meaning that Greenland would enter a federation gaining only some representation in a centralized government, maintaining some internal sovereignty but forgoing most of external roles.
- 5) *Expanded Self-Government for indigenous people*. Here the expanded Self-Government is proposed.
- 6) *Complete integration*. A complete integration would mean that the people permanently become a part of another state and people, foregoing all rights to self-determination in the present and for future generations.<sup>77</sup>

With the choice for an expanded Self-Government in 2009, the Greenlandic people initially wanted to choose a middle way between independence, free association, and integration.

When in 2009 Greenland declared Self-Government into effect, the rights and pace of the expansion of the government were put in the hands of Greenland, and a major step towards, but not complete independence was taken. In the agreement with the Danish Government Greenland was allowed to claim responsibility for a further 33 policy subjects to govern (see appendix 1).

Before the Self-Government act, policy responsibilities were transferred to the Greenlandic Home Rule with an attached monetary compensation calculated into the annual Block Grant. However, with the new agreement the Greenlandic Government had to fund any further expansion of the governing system through their own means.

As of 2009 the Block Grant was fixed to a set amount of 510M, which would only be regulated slightly each year in line with the Danish price and wage trends inflation, which is about a 2-3% increase yearly. As of the passing of the first year of Self-Government, 1 single policy was patriated, which concerned raw materials. Part of work environment policy was also claimed for offshore working conditions. These 2 policies were indicative of the visions of the political movement of the time. The **three groups of policies listed** in the *Self-Government Act* [on appendix 1] illustrates three steps towards sovereignty. The first list was those policy areas that were expected to be transferred to Greenlandic hands with the introduction of Self-Government. The second list where those policies that would be patriated continuously until full self-governance was achieved. The third list was those policy areas that are not to be governed outside of Danish Government, as per constitutional agreement, and sovereignty must be claimed to access those.

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<sup>77</sup> (Selvstyrekommision 2003).

Fig. 16 The Additional Income Needed For Expansion and Sovereignty, 2020

# The Greenlandic Self-Government

**621.6M**

## Inatsisartut

National Revision The Institution of the Ombudsman

## The Premier of Naalakkersuisut

Ownerships in Companies Greenlandic Repr. in Denmark  
Naalakkersuisut

## Ministry of Finances & Nordic Corporation

Grants & Block Grants

**586.6 M**

**35M**

**National Tax Agency**

Statistic Office of Greenland

**Office of Finance & Personnel**

## Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Repr. Washington

Repr. Reykjavik

Repr. Brussels

Inuit Circumpolar Council

## Ministry of Social Affairs & Justice

Children & Youth

Housing

Pensions

Disabled People

Prevention of Social Problems

Social Affairs- & Justice Council & Spokesman

## Ministry of Health

Health Care

Specialized Treatment

Health Regions & Joint Spending

National Health Office

Health Districts & Dental Services

Health Council

## Ministry of Education, Culture, and Church

Dormitory Administration

Public Schools

Art

High Schools

**Office of Education**

Culture

Vocational Schools

Academic & Higher Education

Church

**Office of Digitization**

## Ministry for Fisheries, Hunting & Farming

Fisheries & Hunting

Farming

Business Support

## Ministry of Business, Energy, & Research

Business

Energy

Hydrocarbons

Research

**Office of Business & Energy**

Consumer & Antitrust

## Ministry of Natural Resources & Labor

**Office of Natural Resources**

Labor Market

## Ministry of Nature & Environment

Institute of Nature

**Office of Environment & Natural Resources**

## Construction & Facilities

Infrastructure & Traffic

Construction Loans

Energy Housing

## SELF-GOVERNMENT REMAINING

**Justice 59.1 M**

**Est: 86.4 M**<sup>78</sup>

Police Prosecution Courts

Passport Border Control

Law & Others

**National Security 5.8 M**

Readiness Maritime Emergency

Ocean Environment

**Energy & Climate 11.4 M**

Radio Communication

Land Mapping

**Business 5.3 M**

Work Environment

Worker Safety

Maritime Work Safety

Financial Oversight & Revision

**Transport & Construction 3.9 M**

Ocean Mapping

Air Traffic

**Others 0.9 M**

## SOVEREIGNTY

**Constitution**

Foreign Policy

**High Court**

**National Security & Security Policy 45 M**<sup>79</sup>

Coast Guard

**Currency & Monetary Policy**

**Est: 60 M**<sup>80</sup>

<sup>78</sup> (Naalakkersuisut 2018a).

<sup>79</sup> (Selvstyrekommision 2003,246).

<sup>80</sup> (Rosing et al. 2014,10).

## One Step Forward

As of today, there has not been any further patriation of policies since 2010 when the first and only full policy area was claimed. The major issue with the Self-Government Act in comparison to the Home Rule Act is, that Greenland have to fund every expansion from new self-created revenue. Since 2009 every new coalitions came with each their goals and policy visions for the ongoing expansion<sup>81</sup>. Around the same time as when the Self-Government was voted upon a new government was also democratically elected.

This was also the first time that the sitting government formed with a leadership of Siumut had to step down, and IA took the rotter with Kuupik Kleist as Premier. In the Coalition Agreement of 2009-13 between IA, D, and the former Kattusseqatigiit Partiiat, the plan was to claim the following areas:

- 1) Raw Materials ✓
- 2) Immigration ÷
- 3) Food and Veterinary ÷

Followed by the next election the Coalition Agreement of 2013-17 between S, A, and the former *Partii Inuit*, the plans were followed but again not met:

- 1) Immigration ÷
- 2) Food and Veterinary ÷

With only one year of a staple government, reelection was needed, followed by a new Coalition Agreement of 2014-18 by S, D, and A. In the agreement new plans were drawn:

- 1) Food Control ÷
- 2) Immigration ÷
- 3) Air Traffic ÷

With the next general election for 2018-22 the government was formed by S, IA, PN, and NQ. The same plans of the previous government were kept, but again no policies were absorbed into the government.

In year 2020, the plans changed again, with D entering the coalition. The new Coalition Agreement of 2020-22 promised to focus on claiming meteorology and readiness for the first time.

- 1) Air Traffic ÷
- 2) Meteorology ÷
- 3) Readiness ÷

The policies that have been aimed at so far since the Self-Government Act of 2009, have all been low expenditure policies, but have yet not been deemed feasible to integrate. Although there is no race to expand the Government, there is an increasing pressure from a gap between income and expenditures that is steadily raising from a growing ration in the elder population, combined with a constant inflation that is greater than that in Denmark.<sup>82</sup> The visions of commercial raw material exploration adventure have not yet manifested into reality, even though possibilities are present. The choice to negotiate the rights to the underground, partly in exchange for the financial responsibility for any new expansion was a gamble, that has so far yet to show its gain in the government revenue. Thus, the Self-Governments initial growth towards independence has seemingly come to temporary standstill, that has lasted more than a decade.

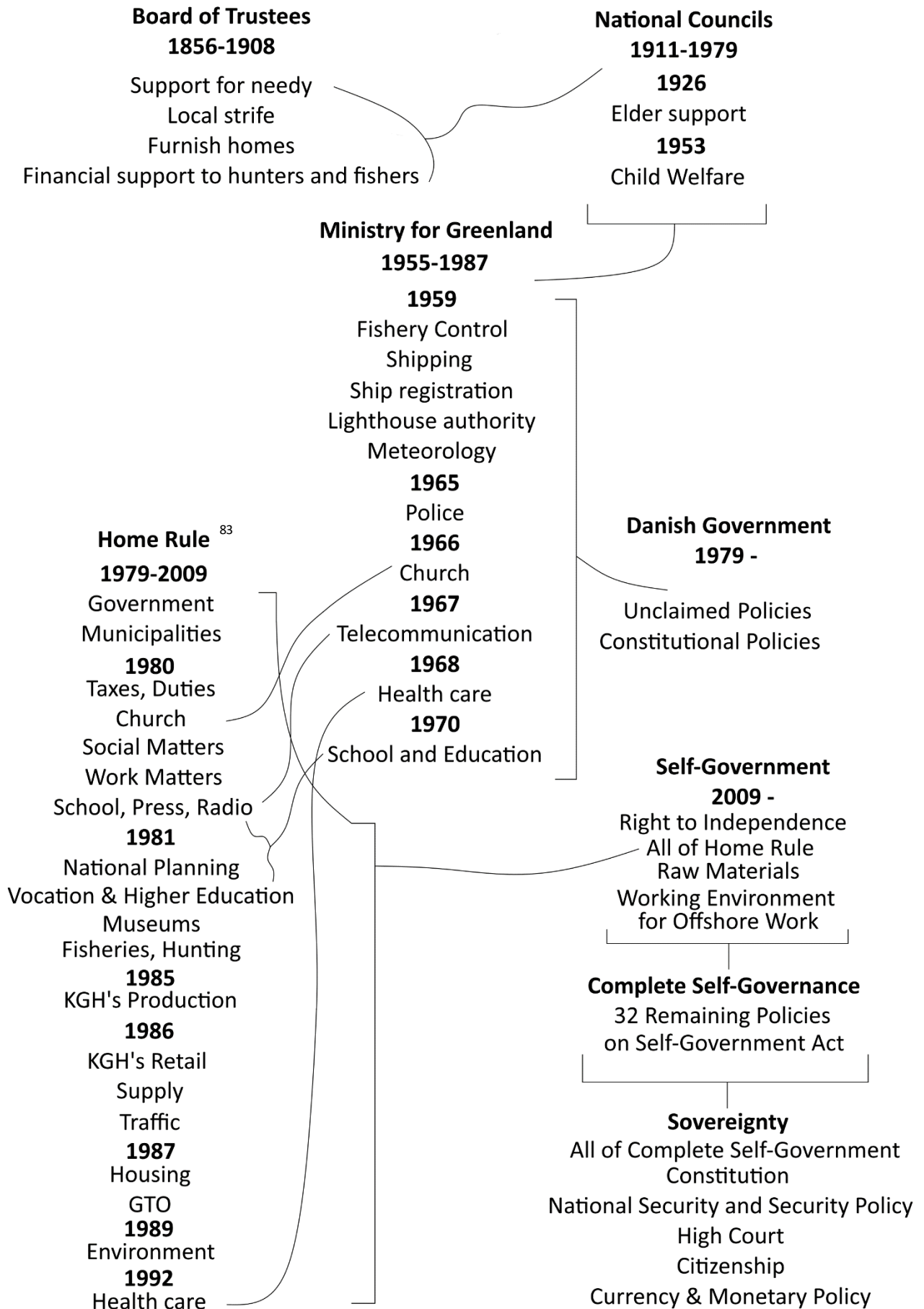
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<sup>81</sup> (Kristensen 2020).

<sup>82</sup> (Økonomisk Råd 2019).

Fig. 17 Development of Greenlandic Policies From Beginning to Sovereignty

**Greenlandic Policies and Welfare**



<sup>83</sup> (Grønlandsudvalget [2013])



## The Second Step to Sovereignty, Economic Expansion

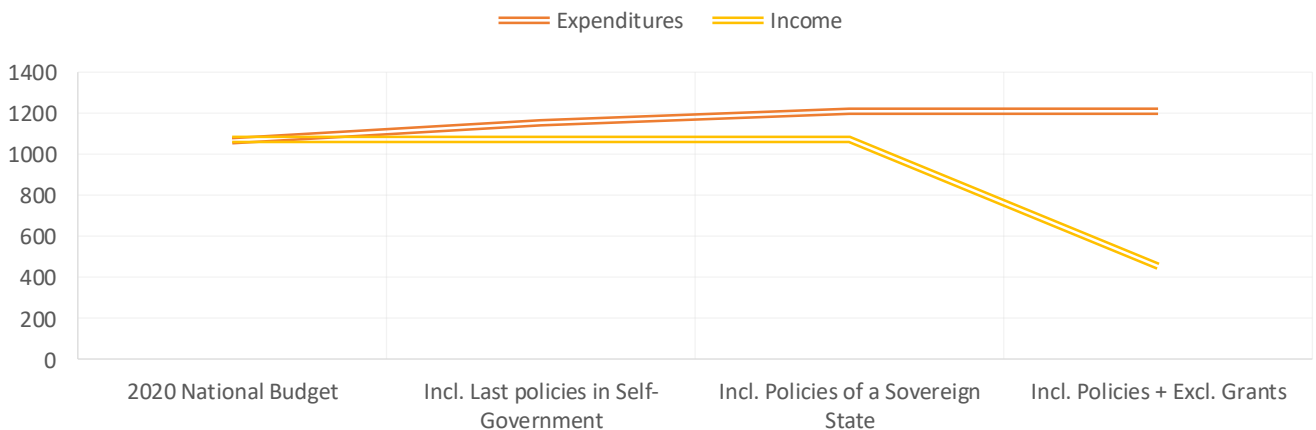
Although plans have changed regarding the order of the integration of new policy areas, the motivation and official goal of the government have stayed firm. With the Self-Government Act it is expected that Greenland in time will achieve full Self-Government with the full expansion of financial responsibility of all the internal workings. That of course includes the costs of the whole system.

If the Government does not cut spending or create new income the additional total of all the Self-Government policies would have given a deficit of 77.6M USD in 2020 (See figure 16, 18).

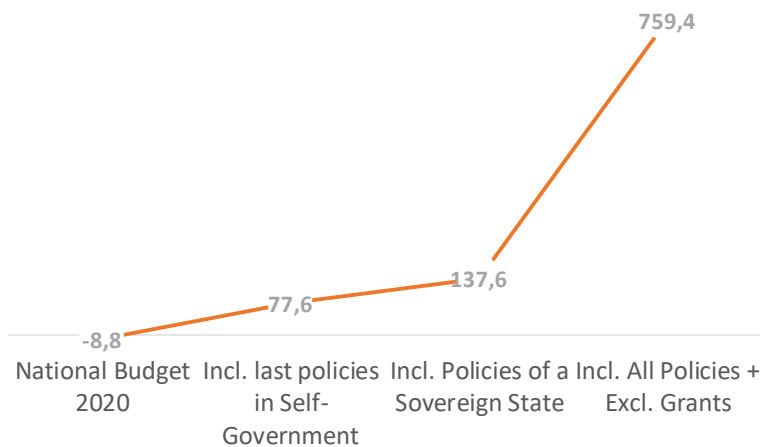
|   | Expenditures (M USD) | Income | Deficit |
|---|----------------------|--------|---------|
| <b>2020 National Budget Including:</b>                      | 1066,8               | 1075,6 | -8,8    |
| <b>1. Remaining policies in the Self-Government Act</b>     | 1153,2               | 1075,6 | 77,6    |
| <b>2. Policies of a Sovereign State</b>                     | 1213,2               | 1075,6 | 137,6   |
| <b>3. Political and Economic Sovereignty (Excl. Grants)</b> | 1213,2               | 453,8  | 759,4   |

Fig. 18 Additional Income Needed for Expansion of Self-Governance and Sovereignty, 2020

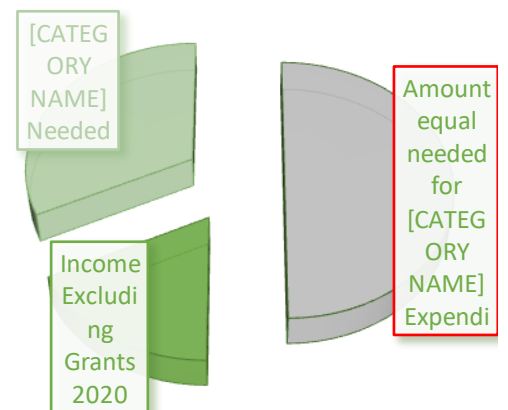
**FIG. 19 EXPANSION OF GOVERNMENT INCOME & EXPENDITURES, 2020**



**FIG. 20 ADDITIONAL INCOME NEEDED IN M USD**



**FIG. 21 NEW INCOME SOURCES NEEDED COMPARISON**



## The Third Step to Sovereignty

As the 32 remaining policies will have been sustainably integrated into the Self-Government, it will be possible to start looking towards further expansion into the role of a sovereign state. It is stated in the *Self-Government Act* Chapter 8, §21, that the claim to independence is fully up to the Greenlandic people and the government of Greenland, with the final consent of the Danish government. In case that the sovereign policies are claimed, it will be topical that the government will present a constitution. How that constitution will read is only up for speculations, but it will most certainly include defense and monetary policy.

In the same chapter of § 21, para. 4, independence for Greenland reads that Greenland takes over the sovereignty over Greenlandic territory and its resources. This gives sovereign rights throughout the territory of Greenland including land, sea and air territory<sup>84</sup>.

The third and last list [appendix 1] of the Self-Government Act includes areas that Greenland only can claim in case of full independence and sovereignty. In a report by the Committee for Greenlandic Mineral Resources "*For the Benefit of Greenland*", it is estimated that by the year 2040, the extra costs for the remaining policies of appendix 1 of a sovereign Greenland would amount to about 68.4 M<sup>85</sup>, which if they were to be claimed today in 2021 would amount to an estimate of 60M USD.

### *A Greenlandic Constitution*

The Greenland Self-Government is currently examining and discussing the possibilities for preparation and adoption of a constitution for Greenland. After getting approval that a Greenlandic constitution within the framework of the Danish constitution was allowed by a vote in the Danish Parliament in 2017,<sup>86</sup> Inatsisartut and Naalakkersuisut created on the same year a Greenlandic Constitutional Commission. The purpose of the commission is to draft a 2-fold constitution for Greenland. According to the terms of reference of the Constitutional Commission, the commission's task is to prepare a proposal for two-part Greenlandic constitution where the first constitution must be able to enter into force for the Government of Greenland, while it is still a part of the Kingdom of Denmark. This constitution will for Greenland then supplement the current Danish Constitution of the Kingdom of Denmark, and must be able to be applied within the framework of the Danish Realms constitutional laws. The second constitution must only enter into force when Greenland withdraws from the Kingdom and is thus no longer covered by the Danish constitution. The second constitution can be applied and enter into force if Greenland achieves full independence as an independent state.<sup>87</sup>

### *Defense & Peace Arrangements*

As it is today, Greenland is part of NATO through Denmark and the American defense agreement, and has geo-strategically played a very important role for NATO to counter the former Soviet Union. Today the United States are still present in the Thule airbase located at the northwesternmost part of Greenland. The base functions as an early detection radar defense system, as well as partly as a possible attack station. Luckily as it is today, Greenland has never been at war, and has only minorly experienced conflict on its ground, that being in the second world war between German and American troops in a remote weather station on the east coast. As peace has always been the case in Greenland, it is hard to imagine the nation going to war. However, the question of whether to have a national defensive military body will be

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<sup>84</sup> (Naalakkersuisut 2009b).

<sup>85</sup> (Rosing et al. 2014,10).

<sup>86</sup> (Espersen m.fl. 2017).

<sup>87</sup> (Naalakkersuisut 2019).

applicable in the case of the creation of a constitution. Greenland will have to take the role of overseeing the oceans surrounding the country and just like Iceland; it may need something like a paramilitary coast guard. In the report by the self-governing commission of 2003, it was estimated that the security in Greenland had an annual operation cost of 18M, which is estimable for the cost of running a coastal guard. Although the military services are different from a coastal guard, much of the equipment is similar to the Danish Navy that is patrolling and sovereignty enforcing the coast today.

### *New Currency*

It will be possible and most likely for Greenland to have to create its own currency in case of independence. In 2009 before the election, the Premier Hans Enoksen commissioned a draft for a new currency for Greenland. It was his wish to see Greenland having its own currency, but as Siumut lost the election the question of a Greenlandic currency faded. Although the Self-Government does not allow a Greenlandic currency, the question of a diversion from the Danish Kroner has been on the table more than ones. In case of a formal separation from the Danish Kingdom it is however still possible to use Danish Crowns. Although it may be preferable for some to have a Greenlandic currency, it is not easy to predict the outcome of a new currency. As is seen under the financial crash of 2009, Iceland took a major hit in its currency, which it has yet to recover from today. I project 3 possible scenarios in case of a new Greenlandic monetary policy:

- 1) *Danish Kroner*. Greenland will keep using Danish Crowns as a legal tender, as it has been used as the common medium of exchange for almost as long as there has been money in Greenland.
- 2) *New currency*. A new means for money will be created either in the likeness of the current currency, or in a new way. With the new systems, it is possible to create a nationally owned cryptocurrency. Just as it has been adopted in India with Ripple administered by the national bank of India as its crypto currency.<sup>88</sup>
- 3) *Adopting another major currency*. It is possible that Greenland will start exchanging in USD, or Euro or even both, as those currencies are somewhat table and reliable, and accommodates tourism well.

### *Foreign Affairs*

In the *Self-Government Act*, section 12, subsection 1, and para. 6, No. 1., the Greenland Government may negotiate and enter into international law agreements with foreign states and international organizations if the agreements only concern Greenland and fully concern acquired policy areas. However, the Government can only enter into the agreements on behalf of the kingdom and by using the term "Kingdom of Denmark as far as Greenland" is concerned.<sup>89</sup>

In the current constitution, it is not specified that Greenland cannot act on their own behalf in international affairs. However, in the constitution of 1953, § 19, para. 1 it is said that the Danish Government handles international affairs, negotiating and concluding international law agreements or having different foreign policies and legal positions with regard to Greenland. However, Greenland has been allowed at the negotiation table of international bodies such as the Nordic Council and Inuit Circumpolar Council, and in EU council in Brussel. The past 35 years since Greenland left the EU and gained a status as an OCT member, the international affairs have been partly handled by people from the Greenlandic Government. In case of a new constitution the foreign affairs must be handled completely by the Greenlandic government. As there are already representations in Denmark, Iceland, Belgium and the USA, and one being started up in China, these will possibly be upgraded to embassies and their work extended.

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<sup>88</sup> (Sarbhahi 2020).

<sup>89</sup> (Pedersen & Nielsen 2018,35).

## Sustainable Sovereignty

In case the Greenlandic Government is planning to expand its policies to include all the policies that are deemed as the requirements for sovereignty, it will need to financially pay for the expansions and new annual operation costs and upkeep, to measure the current cost following is calculated:  $(I - G) - (E - S) \geq X$

I = The annual total income of the government. This number is derived from the income from taxes, profit from government businesses. (See figure 18)

G = Grants, including the block grant and Eu grant.

E = The annual operation and renovation and new installations costs. This number consists of all the financial spending within the expanded government including policy areas listed in the *Self-Government Act* agreement. (See figure 18)

S = Expenses and upkeep expected from a sovereign state Greenland expansion.

X = Balance for a sovereign government annual budget. (See figure 20)

$453.8M - 1,213.2M = \underline{-759.4M}$

At the current moment if Greenland was to socioeconomically claim all policy areas included in the *Self-Government Act* and those that would follow with full sovereignty including the exclusion of the grants from Denmark and the EU Greenland would have to have an additional income of 759.4M USD by the end of the year to have a minimum sustainable budget for sovereignty.

## Expanding Income

There are among others; three major ideas of income that have been discussed as potential sources for income in Greenland, those are, **tourism**, **mining**, and **oil and gas**. Today the main source of export of about 86% of the total annual export income comes from fisheries at 0.3B<sup>90</sup> USD. Of that 47% is from shrimps, 26% from halibut, and 15% from other fish. Only 2% of the total export is coming from mining.<sup>91</sup> Tourism which has been rising almost every year since 1990s and is now considered a fourth pillar of the economy.

## Tourism

Ignoring the Covid-19 situation, if Greenland were to excel in the export of tourism and the country becomes comparable to the Icelandic tourism industry, the revenues would be very significant. In 2017, Iceland made an estimate of 3,7B USD from tourism. The tourism industry has been steadily growing each year from covering 26% in 2013 of the total export to 42% of their annual exported goods and services of 2017 a little more than 2.5 times as much as marine products at 16.4%.<sup>92</sup> In 2018, tourism became the top source of income in Iceland and represented 8.3% of the GDP.<sup>93</sup>

If Greenland would be able to gain a matching expansion in the tourism industry as that in Iceland in relative measurement to fisheries export, export would gain an addition of 0.75B in annual export. Of that with the current corporate tax of 31.8%.<sup>94</sup> we are looking at a potential of an additional gain in tax revenue at 238.5M USD from tourism.

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<sup>90</sup> (Climate Greenland 2020).

<sup>91</sup> (Naalakkersuisut 2020b).

<sup>92</sup> (Óladóttir 2018).

<sup>93</sup> (Sigurðardóttir 2018).

<sup>94</sup> (Naalakkersuisut 2018b).

## Mining

As per the agreement of the *Self-Government Act* half of the direct income from all mining activity will go to Denmark, to cover expenses of the block grant. At the moment there are no active, but two large scale mining projects in the works of being developed in Greenland, and in time there may be more. With the Large-Scale Act<sup>95</sup> a mining project can be considered large-scale when the construction costs exceed 0.75B.

With a large-scale project an estimate of 105M annual revenue in corporate taxes royalties and indirect taxes from income tax can be expected.<sup>96</sup> 45M from direct and indirect taxes, and 60M from royalties.

## Oil & Gas

It is estimated that about approximately 13% of all the oil, and 30% of the natural gas on the globe is located in the Arctic. Of that a good portion is potentially found off the coast of Greenland. This has led to an increase in the interest from foreign investors of oil and gas exploration. The income from oil and gas is here estimated from the strategy of the Greenlandic Government of 2014-2018<sup>97</sup> where licenses in Greenland are subject to a sales royalty based on turnover at 2.5%. A surplus in royalty of 7.5%, 10% and 12.5% when the accumulated income exceeds 35%, 45% and 55%, respectively, and additional participation by the Greenland state oil company (Nunaoil) of 6.25%, carried through exploration.<sup>98</sup>

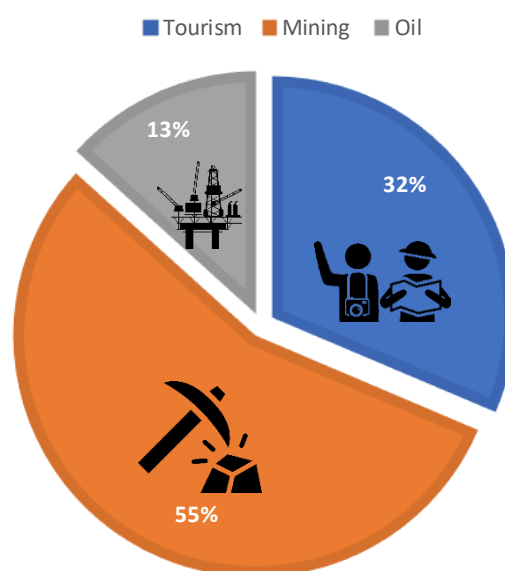
At a fully functioning oilrig, an approximate full workforce will consist of 200 people. With workers earning between 140,000 and 233,000 USD<sup>99</sup> and an offshore oil rig producing up to 50,000 barrels a day.<sup>100</sup> We are looking at about 14M in direct income taxes, and each barrel at a price of 64USD today, about between 80M and 148M in royalties, for one offshore oil rig. An oil rig can hence fetch an approx. of 100M yearly.

## Combined Normative Potential Expansion

With the **tourism** industry at its full potential running on a level like that in Iceland, providing **238.5M**, **4 large-scale mining** projects providing a total of **420M**, and **1 offshore oil** rig providing **100.9M** it will would theoretically be possible to pay financially for political sovereignty. Mines and oil and gas fields do however run for about 10-20 years before being depleted, after that each resource must be replaced by a new site to keep up with the upkeep. To have the total of new tax revenues fall into the treasury the tax percentages between the municipality and the government would have to be tweaked accordingly.

| Potential Means | Yield                |
|-----------------|----------------------|
| <b>Tourism</b>  | 238.5M               |
| <b>Mining</b>   | 420M                 |
| <b>Oil</b>      | 100.9M               |
| <b>Total</b>    | <b><u>759.4M</u></b> |

FIG. 22 COMBINED NORMATIVE ECONOMIC SOLUTION



<sup>95</sup> (Storskalaloven 2012).

<sup>96</sup> (Rosing et al. 2014,18).

<sup>97</sup> (Kay & Thorup 2015).

<sup>98</sup> (Naalakkersuisut 2014,55).

<sup>99</sup> (Jobsite.co.uk 2014).

<sup>100</sup> (Oilscams.org (2020)).

## Discussion

### *The Political and Economic Reality of Greenland Today*

It is safe to say that the latest election of 2021 for government in Greenland largely was determined and revolved around the topic of the large-scale mining project in South Greenland, with a potential of high yield of Uranium for export. The concerns of the population were that there could be radioactive and heavy metal waste building up in the nature surrounding the mining site. The IA party promised to halt the project if they were to be elected, which they were, and kept their promise. This raises the question on how the government wants to handle the goal of independence in relation to economic self-sufficiency.

### *How does Greenland benefit Denmark?*

Although Greenland is completely dependent on the Danish block grant to run the welfare government, Greenland is also of particular importance to Denmark's self-image and outward influence in the field of foreign policy. This applies, among other things, to Denmark's maintenance of a good relationship with and cooperation with the United States and other Arctic countries and NATO countries, including, for example, Canada and Norway. Greenland's importance is particular due to the fact that the United States has a military base in Greenland, the Thule base, and that Greenland has a strategic geographical location in relation to other Arctic countries and the overall Arctic. Based on Greenland's size and location, the Kingdom of Denmark is considered constituting an Arctic superpower.<sup>101</sup>

Denmark can also act as a transatlantic voice in NATO and the European Union (EU) and take advantage of the close relationship with the United States to build bridges and strengthen transatlantic ties. (Recent revelations of American-Danish spying ignored.) If Greenland were not part of the Kingdom of Denmark, Denmark would thus likely have a lot less foreign policy significance and influence than it has now.

### *Greenland in Economic Defense Controversy*

Although disputed, the *Defense of Greenland* agreement of 1941, ratified in 1945 is believed to have given Denmark lenience (a discount) in their NATO contribution. Denmark has been contributing about 1.17%<sup>102</sup> of GDP in 2017 corresponding to 3.75B<sup>103</sup>, underpaying 3.2B from the agreed upon 2% spending in the NATO guidelines. Some say that the agreement with the Americans to build NATO bases in Greenland have allowed this underpayment.<sup>104</sup> Some believe that the refusal of Donald Trump's offer to buy Greenland coincided with a demand of Denmark to contribute the full 2%.

### *Greenlandic Role in the development of the NM*

I wrote that the Greenlandic public sector is inspired from the Danish welfare development. At the same time, I like to believe that the Danish Welfare State is likewise inspired from Greenlandic initiatives. As the Board of Trustees first took the initiative in the mid of the 1800's to gather finances to support the struggling and in need, they took the first steps in what would later be the Greenlandic Welfare System, and at the same time they may perhaps have inspired their Danish counterparts to do the same. Some may argue that it was the Christian principles that was growing in them that inspired them to take the lead, but that we will never know for sure. Inarguably Greenland is an interesting case, and the NM is still under development in the adaptation of the reality of the Arctic vastness we find ourselves in.

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<sup>101</sup> (Taksøe-Jensen 2016).

<sup>102</sup> (Schaub & Jakobsson 2018).

<sup>103</sup> (NATO 2017).

<sup>104</sup> Personal opinion.

### *Challenges with Welfare*

One of the challenges with a welfare system is that there is a tendency with increased public spending as income grows as is described in the economic theory called Wagner's law.<sup>105</sup> Another challenge with the welfare system is the need for a rise in wages within the public sector, without a equal increase in productivity. It takes roughly the same time to educate a class 50 years ago as it does today, but the wages of the teachers have increased many folds. This is described in the 'Baumol's Cost Disease'<sup>106</sup> At the same time there is a decrease in productivity and an increase in the share of elderly in the population as the boomers of the 1950's and 60's is passing into the pensioner age, creating a greater pressure on public spending. I promised myself not to meddle with the normative economy of the welfare system when I started this writing, but as I dove deeper into our national and regional budgets, I saw some concerning trends in spending surrounding some welfare programs, namely the issue of children in care. It seems unsustainable for a nations economy to have such a high share of the finance go to this controversial topic.

### *The Blessing of a Representative Democracy*

Sometimes we take our democracy for granted, but to me the principles of freedom and equal rights and opportunity are some of the greatest gifts a nation can give its citizens. I myself have enjoyed every aspect of our welfare based democratic system. I am very happy to have been able to read and write the history and evolution of our democratic institution. Being that my education is aimed at preparing for work at the government administration I felt it especially important to know the history and trajectory of our political and socioeconomic reality and potential.

### *Independence vs Sovereignty*

I wrote in the beginning that I would use the concept of independence and sovereignty synonymously throughout my writing, and have done so. Debatably this has been true as so far as these words also are used by the politicians and officials when expressing the idea. However, I believe that these two words can be separated very notably, and for me it is important. I believe that although Greenland isn't sovereign in state policy sense, it is one of the most independent country in the world. I write this for three reasons: Greenland has a safe economy, territorial integrity, and complete control of internal affairs.

Greenland will be economically stable as long as Denmark, which has a solid economy, stands. With the *Self-Government Act* the expansion of government must be paid by Greenland, but at the same time Denmark agrees to pay the block grant indefinitely until Greenland is able to pay Denmark the same amount back or declares independence. Most countries are dependent on other nations in a codependency, as such is the consequences of globalization. As many nations specialize in production and have to buy and sell to and from each other, complete true economic independence is arguably not possible today, not for the US, not for North Korea, and not for Denmark either. In this case Greenland is free from worry of economic warfare. Greenland has also never been at war, and although having no military, is never being territorially threatened of warfare or invasion. With the presence of the strongest military power in the world, the US and NATO, Greenland is as safe as can be, without having to send anybody to war. Greenland has been granted complete sovereignty over its internal affairs, and although it is still economically dependent on the Danish grant, it is completely free from Danish intervention in its internal affairs. Denmark is completely unable to legislate in Greenland. This is not the case for most other countries. Denmark for example is dependent on EU policies and is arguably not a complete independent nation even in its own internal affairs, whereas Greenland isn't obligated to implement any EU legislation.

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<sup>105</sup> (Wikipedia 2020b).

<sup>106</sup> (Wikipedia 2020c).

## Conclusion

I set out in this project to encapsulate and illustrations in writing, the socioeconomic explorations that has been happening in Greenland from the first establishment of public authority to its current complexity and future visions for a fully independent government, but also especially to clearly get to know what it factually takes for Greenland in real measurable numbers and visible relative prospects to reach economic and political sovereignty.

With those goals as basis, I am very happy with the results of my writing. As a social science student, the independence question has in my own experience been the most important and talked about political subject in Greenland in all my time here. In light of that, I found it very satisfactory and interesting to create a good, easy to read, summery that illustrates the independence process of Greenland from start until this day, and further into the potentials of the future.

The calculations in this paper are meant to illustrate the needed net income for the expansion of policies in the government with full Self-Government and independence. These numbers have for me been very difficult to find. It seems that it is almost impossible to access any actual reports that clearly presents a plan or at least a possible road to an economic solution on the independence/sovereignty subject. At the same time, I wanted to illustrate how the means of the new income could be found interpreting the visions of the Government of Greenland. When I referred to a sustainable financial independence, I wrote it with the most basic sense of year-to-year budgeting in mind with conservative numbers, but no expected surplus.

As all commodities are under constant revaluation and non-renewable raw materials are subject to being exploited for its limited quantity, the idea of sustainability in economic terms comes under scrutiny. In reports such as *For the Benefit of Greenland* and the *Greenland's Mineral Resources Act* of 2008 it has been suggested that a wealth fund is to be created for the true sustainability of the economy.<sup>107</sup> In that case the claim to independence would require substantively more, but at the same time a stronger economic foundation would resolve.

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<sup>107</sup> (Rosing et al. 2014,20).



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Pictures:

Front Page: Merged from a private photo and a picture of Nuuk colonial harbor from 1900 found on WikiWand  
<https://www.wikiwand.com/de/Nuuk>

Danish National Archive

Funen Stamp Service

<https://www.stamps.dk/da-DK/lot/86116/groenland-godthaab-udsigt-over-kolonien-med-kirke-i-baggrunden-fotokort-u-no>

Front page private picture

Greenlandic National Museum & Archive

Greenland Photographic Institute, Arctic Institute

Illustration by Kerttu Majander, Design by Michelle O'Reilly



## Appendix 1 - The Three Lists in the proposal for the Self-Government Act<sup>108</sup>

These first priority policies on the first list were;

- 1) Occupational injury insurance
- 2) Remaining areas concerning health care
- 3) Traffics
- 4) Property rights
- 5) Diving

The second proposed list included the rest of the potential policy areas allowed with the Self-Government Act. These were:

- 6) Criminal Defense Service
- 7) Passports
- 8) Police & Prosecutor's Office (as well as those related parts of the criminal justice system)
- 9) Criminal Justice System, (including the establishment of courts)
- 10) Criminal justice System
- 11) Immigration and Border Control
- 12) Personal law
- 13) Family law
- 14) Succession law
- 15) Law firm
- 16) Weapon Control
- 17) Radio-Based Maritime Emergency & Security Services
- 18) Radio Communications Area
- 19) Corporate, Accounting & Auditing
- 20) Food & Veterinary
- 21) Air Traffic
- 22) Intellectual Property
- 23) Copyrighting
- 24) Shipwrecks, Cargo, and Ocean Depths
- 25) Safety at sea
- 26) Ship Registration and Maritime Conditions
- 27) Mapping
- 28) Water Marking, Lighthouses, & Pilotage
- 29) Marine Environment
- 30) Financial Regulation & Supervision
- 31) Raw Materials
- 32) Working Environment
- 33) Meteorology

The third list comprised of policy subjects that were not permitted with the Self-Government Act, those being:

- 1) Constitution
- 2) National Security and Security Policy
- 3) High Court
- 4) Citizenship
- 5) Currency & Monetary Policy

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<sup>108</sup> Proposal for Self-Government Act 2009