

Arctic Oil & Gas Development: The Case of Greenland

Despite the fact that not a single barrel of Greenlandic oil was ever extracted, refined and consumed in or exported from Greenland, hydrocarbon has nevertheless played a significant role in contemporary economical, environmental, and political discourses. Not least as a key political issue in Greenland as well as between Greenland and Denmark is the discourse about Greenland's development from a colony to Self-Governance (2009) via status as a Danish county (1953) and Home Rule (1979). One of the article's foci is how the discourse about and the gradual acknowledgement of the Greenlanders' rights to the Greenland subsurface has been an important part of Greenlandic nation building. Furthermore, visions for an independent Greenland have been fuelled by the hopes for 'a shortcut' via discoveries of oil and gas that eventually could compensate for the Danish block grant and pave the way for an independent Greenland. In 2012 Greenland Self-Governance took over the full authority of mineral resources including oil and gas. 2012 was also the year following explorative drillings of eight wells that were all dry. The following years were characterised by a rapidly declining interest from the oil industry in developing hydrocarbon activities in Greenland waters and demonstrated Greenland's dependency on the international market for oil. Greenland being part of a globalised world also became apparent when Greenland was confronted with, for instance, environmental concerns caused by Greenland's wish to be an oil-producing country. Conflicting interests internationally were also reflected in the results based on a national survey on attitudes to, perceptions of as well as hopes and concerns related to oil development. Some results are presented in the article.

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