

**THE FAROE ISLANDS, GREENLAND
AND THE ÅLAND ISLANDS IN NORDIC
COOPERATION**

Katja Creutz & Sia Spiliopoulou Åkermark

FIIA
REPORT

DECEMBER 2021

/ 69

THE FAROE ISLANDS, GREENLAND AND THE ÅLAND ISLANDS IN NORDIC COOPERATION

Katja Creutz & Sia Spiliopoulou Åkermark

FIIA
FINNISH
INSTITUTE
OF INTERNATIONAL
AFFAIRS

 Ålands fredsinstitut

FIIA REPORT

DECEMBER 2021

/ 69

This publication is the outcome of a research project between the Finnish Institute of International Affairs and the Åland Islands Peace Institute entitled 'Functioning Models of Cooperation Contributing to Nordic Integration: A Study of the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland'. The project is financed by the Nordic Council of Ministers.

Reports can be ordered from the Finnish Institute of International Affairs.
+358 9 432 7721 / asiakaspalvelu@fiia.fi

All FIIA reports and other publications are available on our website at
www.fiia.fi

Language editing: Anna Sinkkonen
Printed by Punamusta Oy, 2021
Graphic design: Mainostoimisto SST Oy
Layout: Lotta-Marie Lemiläinen
ISSN 1458-994X (print)
ISSN 2323-5454 (web)
ISBN 978-951-769-708-8 (print)
ISBN 978-951-769-709-5 (web)

The Finnish Institute of International Affairs is an independent research institute that produces high-level research to support political decisionmaking and public debate both nationally and internationally. All manuscripts are reviewed by at least two other experts in the field to ensure the high quality of the publications. In addition, publications undergo professional language checking and editing. The responsibility for the views expressed ultimately rests with the authors.

FIIA
FINNISH
INSTITUTE
OF INTERNATIONAL
AFFAIRS

Arkadiankatu 23 b
POB 425 / 00101 Helsinki
Telephone +358 (0)9 432 7000
Fax +358 (0)9 432 7799

www.fiia.fi

CONTENTS

List of abbreviations 7

Acknowledgements 9

Introduction 13

1 The Faroe Islands 19

2 Greenland (Kalaallit Nunaat) 45

3 Åland 63

Conclusions 81

Bibliography 85

Contributors 93

Previously published in the series 95

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BSPC	Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference
EEA	European Economic Area
EEC	European Economic Community
EK-R	Nordic Council of Ministers Committee of Senior Officials for Regional Policy
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FIIA	Finnish Institute of International Affairs
IA	Inuit Attaqatigiit
ICC	Inuit Circumpolar Council
IMO	International Maritime Organization
LGBTQIA	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, intersex, asexual
MEP	Member of European Parliament
MP	Member of Parliament
MR-FJLS	Nordic Council of Ministers for Fisheries, Aquaculture, Agriculture, Food and Forestry
MR-SAM	Nordic Council of Ministers for Nordic Co-operation
MR-U	Nordic Council of Ministers for Education and Research
N5	Nordic foreign and security policy cooperation
NAFO	Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization
NAMMC	North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission
NAPA	Nordic Institute in Greenland
NASCO	North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organisation
NAUST	North Atlantic Development Strategy
NC	Nordic Council
NCM	Nordic Council of Ministers
NEAFC	Northeast Atlantic Fisheries Commission
NIPÅ	Nordens Institut på Åland
NORA	Nordic Atlantic Cooperation
NORDEFKO	Nordic Defence Cooperation
NORDGEN	Nordic Genetic Resource Centre
NUS	Nordic University Cooperation
OCT	Overseas Country and Territory
SDG	United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

SPRFMO	South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
WHO	World Health Organization
WTO	World Trade Organization
ÅIPI	Åland Islands Peace Institute

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report is the outcome of a research project entitled ‘Functioning Models of Cooperation Contributing to Nordic Integration: A Study of the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland’. The one-year project is financed by the Nordic Council of Ministers, and it forms part of the broader 2021 Finnish Presidency project implemented in close cooperation with the Åland Islands and entitled ‘Functioning Models of Cooperation and Challenges Affecting Nordic Integration’.

The research was conducted by Katja Creutz of the Finnish Institute of International Affairs (FIIA) and Sia Spiliopoulou Åkermark of the Åland Islands Peace Institute (ÅIPI). Research assistance has been provided by Axa Lares (FIIA), Tommy Petrussen (Greenland) and Hasan Akintug (ÅIPI/Helsinki University). In addition to the researchers, the reference group was composed of Mika Aaltola (FIIA, Finland), Ville Andersson (Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Finland), Niklas Stenbäck (Government of Åland), Natuk Lund Olsen (Government of Greenland), Jens Christian Svabo Justinussen (University of the Faroe Islands) and Markku Suksi (Åbo Akademi University).

The researchers would like to thank the project funder and the reference group for their constructive engagement with the project. Warm thanks are also due to all the external experts who contributed with their expertise during different stages of the process, as well as to colleagues who provided their support to the project in various forms. Finally, the research group would also like to express its appreciation to all the interviewees in the Faroe Islands, Greenland and the Åland Islands, without whom this report would not have materialised.

INTRODUCTION

The Nordic countries are known for their institutional cooperation, which is said to be the ‘world’s oldest regional partnership’.¹ It has also been described as one of the most extensive regional cooperations.² The Nordic Council (NC), a body of interparliamentary cooperation, was established in 1952, and the Nordic Council of Ministers (NCM) in 1972 with the Helsinki Treaty.³ According to the original Helsinki Treaty, the parties aim to ‘promote and strengthen the close ties existing between the Nordic peoples in matters of culture, and of legal and social philosophy’.⁴ This is to be achieved through ‘uniformity of regulation throughout the Nordic countries in as many respects as possible’.⁵ This explains why new policy issues, such as environmental protection and transport and communications, have been included in the cooperation. According to the Nordic Council of Ministers and the Nordic prime ministers’ Vision 2030, the present aim of the official Nordic cooperation is to make the Nordic Region the most sustainable and integrated region in the world, where innovation and competitiveness are highly valued.

The Helsinki Treaty sets the foundation for Nordic cooperation. Within it, legal cooperation seeks to harmonise laws and other regulations;

1 Nordic Co-operation n.d.a.

2 Government of Greenland n.d.a.

3 Treaty of Cooperation between Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden (the Helsinki Treaty), adopted in Helsinki on 23 March 1962 and entered into force on 1 July 1962. The treaty has been amended in 1971, 1974, 1983, 1985, 1991 and 1995. The most recent amendments entered into force on 2 January 1996. Available at: <http://norden.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:702145/FULLTEXT01.pdf> (accessed 12 April 2021).

4 Preamble to the 1962 Treaty.

5 Ibid.

cultural cooperation addresses educational needs and cooperation in the field of research and cultural expression and development; and social cooperation pertains to labour issues, public health matters and social benefits. Economic cooperation has involved the joint coordination of, inter alia, economic policies, free movement of capital, elimination of trade barriers and creation of a business-friendly environment. Cooperation in transport and communication matters revolves around the passport union, and cooperation in environmental affairs focuses on protecting the environment and harmonising regulation. Overall, the Faroe Islands, Greenland and the Åland Islands (later referred to as Åland) have competences over the issues addressed by Nordic institutional cooperation. It should be noted that foreign and security policy is excluded from the institutional side of Nordic cooperation, and it is handled informally at the ministerial level through the so-called N5 cooperation, in which only the five Nordic states participate (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden). Yet, the presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers also entails the presidency of N5, as well as of NORDEFECO, a cooperation structure in defence matters.⁶

RIGHTS OF THE FAROE ISLANDS, GREENLAND AND ÅLAND IN NORDIC COOPERATION

The contracting parties to the Helsinki Treaty are Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. By way of amendments to the treaty, particularly in 1971 and 1983,⁷ the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland have, however, received rights of their own and now have representation both in the Nordic Council and in the Nordic Council of Ministers. Nevertheless, although it is asserted that they ‘now enjoy practically the same representation as the other members’,⁸ their status is not fully equal to that of the five contracting parties. The Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland are represented in the Nordic Council by two parliamentarians each, who participate in its work.⁹ As of 1983, these NC representatives form a delegation of their own together with the local government representatives,¹⁰ in addition to which they are part of the central state’s delegation. Thus, they also form part of the Danish and Finnish national

6 President of the Republic of Finland 2020. About the defence cooperation, see NORDEFECO, ‘Nordic Defence Cooperation’, <https://www.nordefco.org/>.

7 Stephan 2014, 16.

8 Nordic Co-operation n.d.b.

9 Art. 47 of the Helsinki Treaty.

10 Art. 48 of the Helsinki Treaty.

delegations respectively.¹¹ In the Nordic Council, the representatives of the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland are allowed to submit proposals,¹² and they have complete voting rights. The NC makes recommendations to the Council of Ministers and Nordic governments. It is noteworthy, however, that the Nordic Council cannot make any binding decisions,¹³ in contrast to the Nordic Council of Ministers. In the Presidium of the Nordic Council, which makes decisions on general political and administrative issues, including the budgets of both institutions, the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland do not have representation. They are nonetheless entitled to be present, speak and submit proposals when matters of their concern are discussed or decided upon.¹⁴ According to practice, the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland decide for themselves whether a specific issue concerns them.¹⁵

The Nordic Council of Ministers is a forum for intergovernmental cooperation, in which the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland participate. This cooperation is formally the prime ministers' turf, but everyday issues are handled by the respective ministers for Nordic cooperation, assisted by the Committee for Nordic Cooperation. The Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland do not participate in the Nordic Council of Ministers on par with the five states. While formal *cooperation* is reserved to the five states only, the three insular peers can *participate* in the work of the Nordic Council of Ministers.¹⁶ Their representatives are entitled to express themselves in the Council of Ministers. They do not have voting rights, but as decisions are made on a consensual basis, the practical effects seem insignificant. What is more, the decisions of the NCM become binding only after the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland separately accede to them.¹⁷

The representatives of the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland can also participate in the work of the Committee for Nordic Cooperation. In addition to the Nordic Council and Council of Ministers, the institutional cooperation includes 45 institutions and cooperative bodies, tens of working groups and hundreds of projects.¹⁸ When it comes to the governing boards of the institutions, the general rule leaves the Faroe Island, Greenland and Åland without full membership. They are entitled to speak and participate

11 Art. 48 of the Helsinki Treaty.

12 Art. 55 of the Helsinki Treaty.

13 Stephan 2014, 9.

14 *Ibid.*, 13.

15 Ministers for Co-operation 2007, 7.

16 *Ibid.*

17 Art. 63 of the Helsinki Treaty.

18 Ministers for Co-operation 2007, 6.

in their work, but they cannot participate in decision-making.¹⁹ Some exceptions do exist, however. As regards institutions situated in any of the three islands, their representatives have full rights. This concerns, for example, the Nordic House in the Faroe Islands, the Nordic Institute in Greenland and the Nordic Institute in Åland.²⁰

INCREMENTAL INCLUSION AND THE ÅLAND DOCUMENT

The standing of the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland has been subject to review during the decades after the establishment of Nordic cooperation, and it has been accommodated for foremost with revisions to the Treaty of Helsinki. The Kling Committee of 1968 held that the involvement of self-governing entities needed to go beyond observer status, which was a view shared by the Petri Committee in 1982.²¹ Following a study by the Secretary General of the Nordic Council of Ministers in 2006,²² the ministers for Nordic cooperation approved the so-called Åland Document in September 2007, whose aim was to increase the participatory opportunities of the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland.

The starting point for the Åland document was that no changes to the Helsinki Treaty were to be made, which ruled out the possibility of making the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland contracting parties to the treaty.²³ While the document largely mapped existing participatory structures and procedures, a series of initiatives to strengthen their participation were also proposed. These included the ability of representatives from the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland to chair civil servant committees or equivalent during presidency, responsibility for queries or recommendations directed at them in the NC sessions and the ability to seek full membership in the institutions of Nordic cooperation.²⁴

According to Sarah Stephan, three crucial aspects have affected the inclusion of the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland in Nordic cooperation. First, the ‘status of the “applicants” and the quality of the autonomy regimes’ (i.e. the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland) have played a decisive role throughout the years when their participation in Nordic institutional cooperation has been considered. The second matter of concern has been

19 Ibid., 9.

20 Ibid., 9.

21 Norden 2006, 9.

22 Ibid.

23 Ministers for Co-operation 2007, 4.

24 Ministers for Co-operation 2007, 12–15.

that of the implications of international law and the law of international organisations for Nordic cooperation, even though no thorough study on international law in the matter has been conducted. Finally, the third aspect concerns the modalities of accommodation for the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland.²⁵ Arguably, neither Denmark nor Finland has objected to the inclusion of the three islands in Nordic cooperation.²⁶ At the end of the day, the competences of the Faroe Islands, Åland and later Greenland have been central to the discussion on how to include these islands, in addition to which it has been thought best not to create separate solutions for them, but to accept them into the cooperation framework on the basis of the same principles.²⁷

RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

This research explores the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland in Nordic cooperation. Its aim is to chart and analyse how the three islands participate in and contribute to the institutional cooperation in the Nordic Council and the Nordic Council of Ministers, what their aims and priorities are therein, and how their work in these organisations is governed locally. On the other hand, the research also examines the role of ‘Nordicness’ and Nordic cooperation in the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland, both among decision-makers and at the societal level. In broader terms, the research highlights the ability of these islands as jurisdictions and entities that do not possess formal statehood to take part in the work of international institutions, and the way this affects regional stability, predictability and resilience.

The research project was initiated and financed by the 2021 Finnish Presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers conducted in close cooperation with the Åland Government, which has taken place in a milieu where Nordic cooperation faced many challenges due to the Covid-19 pandemic and its management. The aim of the project is, however, to discuss the better functioning aspects of Nordic cooperation, such as the fact that it brings together the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland with the five countries of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden within institutional settings.

The research brought together two research institutions as the implementing agencies, that is, the Finnish Institute of International Affairs

²⁵ Stephan 2014, 17.

²⁶ Ibid., 18.

²⁷ Ibid., 18.

and Åland Peace Institute. The latter was responsible for the chapter on the Faroe Islands, and the former for those on Greenland and Åland. This division of work enabled us to explore the respective case studies through a more objective lens. The overarching research questions of the study focused on four main issues: what the ideational aim of participating in Nordic cooperation is, how the local institutions are engaged in the cooperation and how they interact, what policy issues are priorities and what specific achievements have been made, and how Nordic cooperation benefits society and could be further developed. In addition to the analysis of official materials and academic research, the research methods included semi-structured interviews, which were conducted in the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland based on a jointly drafted interview guide. In total, thirteen persons were interviewed. While the identities of the interviewees are not disclosed in the report in order to allow for maximum openness in the interviews, we can in general say that the interviewees represent politicians and public officials. The researchers' work was assisted by a reference group, whose task was to constructively contribute to and comment on the research methodology and outcomes.

Although being one of few studies that focus on the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland in Nordic cooperation, and thus having potential to spur discussion on the topic, this research has several limitations. First, this small project of a few working months during the year 2021 has been able to scratch the surface rather than to provide an in-depth, exhaustive research on the many interactions between Nordic institutions and the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland. Second, the number of interviews conducted was limited, which makes it important to note that the selection and availability of interviewees have affected the research findings to a certain extent. Third, this research, which investigates three islands geographically situated far from each other, as well as from the researchers, was done in challenging circumstances. Due to the pandemic travel restrictions, the interviews were made online, and the general limitations that online intervieweeing holds have also affected this study. Furthermore, the inability to travel has affected the gathering of research materials in spite of some available local research assistance. However, despite these limitations, we believe that the three case studies offer a useful and nuanced overview and present ideas and directions for future consideration and action.

/ 1

1 THE FAROE ISLANDS

1.1. BASIC FACTS

The Faroe Islands (Føroyar) in the North Atlantic consist of 18 volcanic islands separated by narrow sounds and fjords. With a population of ca. 53,400 and some 70,000 sheep, the islands cover a land area of 1,399 km^2 and stretch over 247,000 km^2 of sea. This basic contextual data can be complemented by adding that nearly 97,4% of Faroese households have wireless internet.

The islands experienced a grave economic crisis in the early 1990s, which, among other things, resulted in very high unemployment and many Faroese leaving the islands, but also led to structural reforms in government and privatisations in, for example, the fisheries sector. After this, however, the economy of the islands has developed positively. Today, the Faroe Islands have a high standard of living and a high median income. According to Statistics Faroe Islands, unemployment has been at ca. 1,6% of labour force in 2021.

Fishing and aquaculture are the two largest sectors in the islands, and the export of goods has increased steadily since 1995. Today, more than 91% of exports come from the fishing and aquaculture industries. However, it is Europe and not Denmark and the other Nordic countries that makes the largest market for the Faroese export industry. Therefore, insofar as trade – and export in particular – is concerned, the Nordics are not a top priority for the Faroe Islands. However, there are several other important dimensions in the relationship between the Faroe Islands and the Nordic countries. One recurring aspect in the interviews we conducted

was the importance of the Nordic labour market both for those Faroese who want to work outside the islands and for recruiting labour to meet the needs in the islands.

Gross income

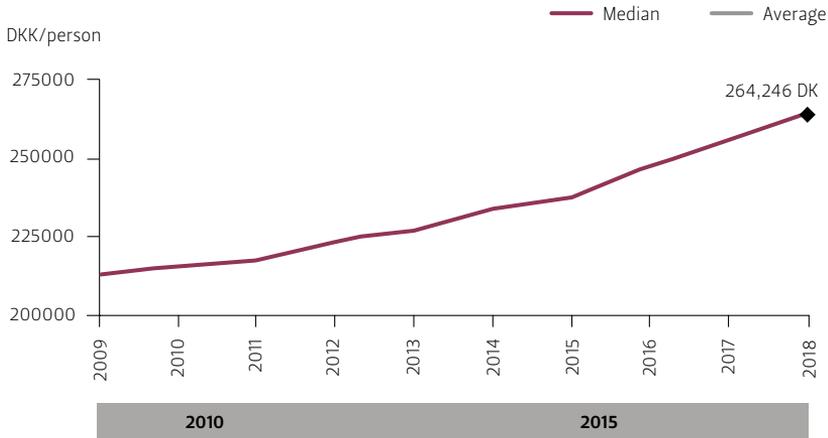


Table 1 – Development of median gross income in the Faroe Islands in 2009–2018.
Source: Statistics Faroe Islands 2021a.

Export of goods, final destination

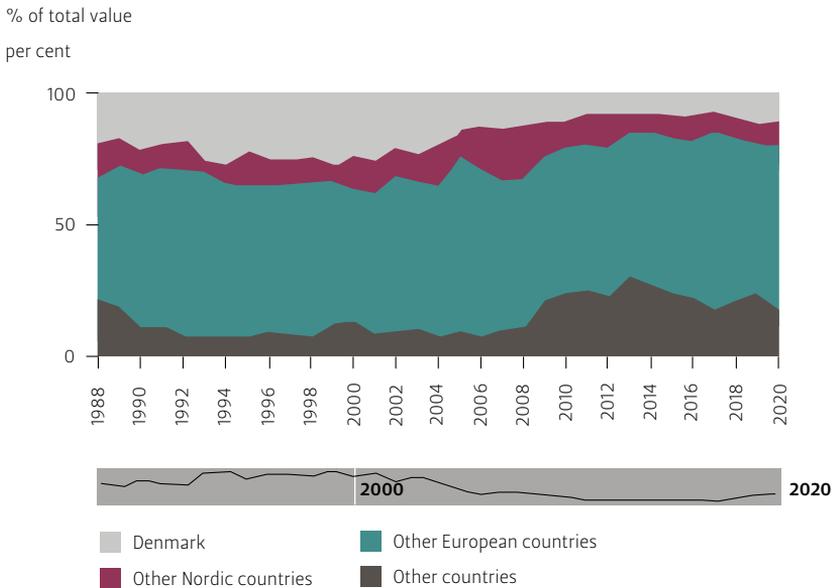


Table 2 – Final destination of exports from the Faroe Islands in 1988–2020
(Statistics Faroe Islands 2021a)

Table 2 tells us, among other things, that while export to the Nordic countries and Europe has remained fairly stable, export to Denmark has decreased and export to other countries increased.

As we shall see below, however, the wider picture of contacts and interdependencies is far more complicated than what the flows and directions of trade alone would suggest. Issues of identity, legal frameworks, demographics and labour market are all of crucial importance in understanding the relationship between the Faroe Islands and Norden.

1.2. THE CONSTITUTIONAL POSITION OF THE FAROE ISLANDS

The Faroe Islands are part of the Kingdom of Denmark with significant legislative and executive authority (self-government). The legal framework of the Faroe Islands within Denmark is governed by three main legal documents. These are the 1948 Home Rule Act, the so-called Takeover Act of 2005 (formally called the 2005 Assumption Act) and the 2005 Foreign Policy Act. The 1948 Home Rule Act operates according to an enumeration principle. This means that the fields of competence that the Faroese authorities may decide unilaterally to take over are enumerated in List A, while the competences that require negotiation with the Government of Denmark are included in List B. All the fields that are not subject to this act are to be treated as areas of joint concern with the Government of Denmark.

The fairly short 2005 Takeover Act goes a step further and states that all fields of authority except for affairs regarding the Constitution; the Supreme Court; foreign, security and defence policy; and foreign exchange and monetary policy can be taken over by the Faroese authorities upon their declaration of intent. The operation of the Vágur airport can also be taken over by the Faroese authorities (Section 6 of the Takeover Act).

The 2005 Foreign Policy Act also grants the Faroe Islands the right to conclude treaties insofar as they pertain to the Faroes' fields of competence. Section 1(1) of the Foreign Policy Act provides that the Government of the Faroes 'may negotiate and conclude agreements under international law with foreign states and international organisations, including administrative agreements, which relate entirely to subject matters under the jurisdiction of the Authorities of the Faroes.' However, the same Act provides that the exercise of these rights by the Faroes should not limit the constitutional responsibility and powers of the Danish authorities relating to the negotiation, conclusion and termination of agreements under international law, including agreements that are covered by earlier

sections of the act. In practice, this means that Denmark and the Faroe Islands must always cooperate in the exercise of such external powers, and Denmark acts ‘in respect of’ the Faroes.

Furthermore, the Foreign Policy Act allows for Faroese membership in international organisations, provided that this is compatible with the constitution of the Danish Kingdom. Section 4 of the Act stipulates: ‘Where international organisations allow entities other than states and associations of states to attain membership in their own name, the Government of Denmark may, at the request of the Government of the Faroes, decide to apply or support an application for this purpose for the Faroes, where this is consistent with the constitutional status of the Faroes.’

The Faroe Islands are a full member of the North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission (NAMMC), which was established by agreement in 1992 and whose members are Iceland, Norway, the Faroe Islands and Greenland (the last two signing under their own name). The Faroes are an associated member of three United Nations specialised agencies – the International Maritime Organization, IMO; the Food and Agriculture Organization, FAO; and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, UNESCO. The Faroes take an active part in the regional fisheries management organisations, namely the Northeast Atlantic Fisheries Commission, NEAFC; the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization, NAFO; and the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organisation, NASCO, in conjunction with Greenland, as well as separately in the South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation, SPRFMO. Below we will also mention the more recent case of the Faroes’ associated membership in the World Health Organization, WHO, as well as the Nordic Atlantic Cooperation, NORA.

Today, the Faroe Islands have an office in Copenhagen (where other Nordic institutions also have their main seat) as well as representation offices (named ‘missions’ on the Faroese Government website) in Brussels, Reykjavík, London, Moscow, Tel Aviv and Beijing. There are currently discussions about possibly establishing a representation office in Washington in the future. However, as one interviewee commented while talking about the small size of government administration, ‘it is tough to be sending all your talented colleagues out in the world without having new ones stepping in in the Faroe Islands and without having adequate support functions for these offices in Tórshavn.’ Even though this does not concern only or primarily Nordic cooperation, it is indeed an issue for a society with a labour force of barely 32,000. In 1974, a year after Denmark joined the EEC, the Faroese Parliament decided by a unanimous vote not to apply for EU membership. The Faroe Islands’ official relationship with

the EU is regulated by two main bilateral agreements: a bilateral fisheries agreement from 1977 and a free trade agreement from 1991, last revised in 1998. The Faroe Islands are not part of the European Economic Area (EEA), in contrast to Norway and Iceland.

1.3. THE FAROE ISLANDS IN NORDIC COOPERATION

During the period between 1952 and 1969, the Faroe Islands were represented in the Danish delegation to the Nordic Council through the ‘occasional’ appointment of one of the Faroese MPs in the Danish Parliament to the Nordic Council. It is noteworthy that the same system was proposed for Finland by an Ålandic MP in 1957. After an amendment to the Helsinki Treaty in 1969, both the Faroe Islands and Åland gained the opportunity to elect their own representatives (two each) while still being part of their respective state’s delegations. Since 1983, they have also been allowed limited participation in the Nordic Council of Ministers.

The Faroe Islands have on three occasions declared their direct interest in full membership in Nordic cooperation, at the same level and under the same conditions as member states. These applications took place in 1977, in 2003 and most recently in 2016.

In the early 1980s, Árni Olafsson, the then expert on Faroese matters in the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, explained that the Faroes were ‘very conscious of being a Nordic people’, and that they had on several occasions expressed their interest in full membership in the Nordic Council. He stated further that the Faroese participation in Nordic cooperation was ‘appreciated’, and that it served to strengthen the ties of the Faroes to the rest of the Nordic region. He also claimed that the then current arrangement was unsatisfactory, and that ‘direct and independent membership’ was taken up in the Council at its meeting in Reykjavik in the spring of 1980. It was the hope of the Faroes, he explained, that ‘the rigid demands of international law’ that were barring the Faroe Islands from full membership in Nordic cooperation could be overcome. Finally, Olafsson argued that such full membership would be a new manifestation of the oft-cited ‘Nordic pragmatism’.

Olafsson concluded in 1982 that while the legal requirements for the conclusion of international treaties by the Faroe Islands were somewhat unclear at that time (in the early 1980s), it was considered ‘general practice’ by the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs that during the process of concluding international agreements, endeavours would be made to identify whether they were relevant to the Faroe Islands. If this was the case,

the Prime Minister's Office and the Faroese Home Government would be contacted to ascertain the acceptability of the treaty to the Faroe Islands. If the treaty was not considered acceptable, Denmark would either make use of a territorial clause in the treaty or make a declaration, so that the treaty would not apply to the Faroe Islands.

Following the Faroe Islands' application for full membership in 2003, the Nordic Council of Ministers decided to review the possibilities for further inclusion of the autonomous polities in Norden and commissioned in 2005 a report, which was published a year later. This took place a decade after Sweden and Finland, including Åland, had joined the European Union, which made it necessary to adapt Nordic cooperation to these developments. According to the 2006 report's conclusions, significant changes to the status of the autonomous polities would require an amendment to the Helsinki Treaty approved by the signatories. Instead of amending the treaty, the outcome was the so-called Åland Document (2007), in which a narrowly functional approach was followed, making use of the ideas introduced by professor Ulf Bernitz in his report to the Secretary General in 2006. Rather than looking at Norden and Nordic cooperation as a whole, the core idea of the 2007 Åland Document was that the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland would be able to apply incrementally to the various Nordic organs. One of the main reasons for such an approach was said to be that the areas of legislative and administrative competence of the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland were not identical and were evolving. For the Faroes, changes took place especially as a result of the 2005 acts discussed above.

In the interviews conducted for the present report, Faroese respondents explained that this has been regarded as a fragmented and cumbersome procedure. The most inclusive thematic area vis-à-vis the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland has been that of culture. In 2005, the Nordic ministers of culture agreed on an inclusive system with regard to the participation of the autonomous polities in all fora, from working groups to conferences. Consequently, in the Nordic Culture Fund, for instance, the 13 board members are appointed by the Nordic Council and the Nordic Council of Ministers for a two-year period. Each Nordic state has two members; the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland have one each.

However, this inclusion does not extend to the field of research, for instance. NordForsk is an organisation responsible for research matters and research funding, situated under the Nordic Council of Ministers for Education and Research (MR-U). The NordForsk Board includes representatives of the largest national research funding agencies in Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, a representative from Nordic

University Cooperation (NUS), and observers from the Faroe Islands, Greenland, Åland and the Nordic Council of Ministers. Currently, the Faroese observer is the director of the Faroese Research Council (Granskingarrád Føroya).

After the adoption of the 2007 Åland Document, applications could be submitted to the twelve specialised Nordic institutions. Therefore, the Board of NordGen (the Nordic Genetic Resource Centre), for example, has a representative and an alternate from each Nordic country, as well as observers representing Greenland, the Faroe Islands, environmental affairs and NordGen's staff. NordGen is organised under the Nordic Council of Ministers for Fisheries and Aquaculture, Agriculture, Food and Forestry (MR-FJLS), and one would expect that issues relating to fisheries, aquaculture and farming would be of high relevance for the Faroe Islands. Similarly, the Board of Nordic Energy Research comprises members from Denmark, Norway, Finland and Sweden, while Greenland, the Faroe Islands, Åland, Iceland and the Nordic Council of Ministers participate as observers.

The approach adopted in 2007 did not satisfy the Faroes, which in 2016 applied once again for full membership, arguing that the Faroese are a Nordic 'nation' in their own right; that the policy areas of the Nordic Council and Nordic Council of Ministers overlap with Faroese competence, and therefore an equal footing with the other Nordic nations is needed; that Nordic cooperation is founded on the spirit of equality, solidarity and fraternity among the Nordic nations; and that it is 'only natural' that the Faroe Islands would be allowed to cooperate on an equal basis. The 2016 application was dealt with by the Presidium of the Nordic Council, which concluded, once more, that the Faroe Islands cannot become a full member without a revision of the Helsinki Treaty, and referred to the process of negotiations between Denmark and the Faroe Islands that had been initiated by the Nordic Council of Ministers. In fact, according to one interviewee, the Faroes followed a double track for this 2016 initiative. One was the membership application and the other a Faroese Government proposal to the Nordic Council. The Council was surprised to have such a proposal on its agenda since it had not happened before, but it was possible under the rules of the Helsinki Treaty, explained the interviewee.

The disappointment of the Faroes with the outcomes in the 2007 Åland Document, and more recently with the reactions to the 2016 application, is in fact a recurring theme in the interviews we conducted, even though it was also argued that 'personally, I do not consider being an observer to be a great problem'. Still, such a status, 'as a matter of principle, cannot be regarded as being on an equal level'. Another interviewee quoted

Olof Palme, who said that ‘all great achievements of Nordic cooperation have been reached after major failures’ and gave some examples. When Nordic security cooperation failed after World War II, the Nordic Council was established in the early 1950s; when Denmark was about to join the European Union in the early 1970s, the Nordic Council of Ministers was established and the Faroe Islands and Åland joined the Nordic Council, and so on, described this interviewee. According to another respondent interviewed for the present study, it is participation at the level of heads of governments, i.e. prime ministers, which seems to be the focal point of Faroese claims.

The Government Programme/Agreement of the current Faroese Government provides the following in the field of international affairs

The Government will enter negotiations with the Danish Government with a view to revising the act governing its foreign policy mandate.

The goal is to have full influence on foreign policy matters that only concern the Faroe Islands. The Faroese authorities will secure insight and influence/decision-making power in all areas of foreign policy and defence policy that are of importance to the Faroe Islands. Negotiations will be initiated with the Danish Government to enshrine these powers in law.

Faroese representation in multilateral and international organisations will be reinforced. The Government will work to achieve observer status at the UN and independent membership of the Nordic Council, WTO and other international organisations.

(Source: Government of the Faroe Islands 2019)

1.4. INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

The participation of the Faroe Islands in the Nordic Council is regulated in Article 47 of the Helsinki Treaty, which stipulates that two members (out of a total of 87) of the Nordic Council, i.e. the parliamentary assembly in Nordic cooperation, are to be appointed by the Faroese Parliament.²⁸ The same provision also states that the Faroese Government may appoint a

²⁸ Treaty of Cooperation between Finland, Denmark, Iceland, Norway and Sweden Concerning Co-operation, Helsinki, 23 March 1962, in force 1 July 1962, Available at: <http://norden.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:702145/FULLTEXT01.pdf> (accessed 12 April 2021).

number of representatives from amidst its members. Article 48 clarifies that the Faroese ‘delegation’, i.e. the two members elected from the Faroese Parliament alongside the representatives appointed from the Faroese Government, forms part of the Danish national delegation and that the term ‘delegation’ refers to the national delegation as a whole.²⁹ As mentioned in the introduction to this report, the Helsinki Treaty (Article 49) provides that the Nordic governments (including the representatives of the Greenland, Faroe Islands and Åland governments) are not allowed to vote in the Council. Additionally, the same provision states that concerning agreements between certain countries, only Council members from those countries are allowed to vote. Article 55 further stipulates that the Nordic governments (including the autonomous polities), the Council of Ministers, the Council Presidium, the Standing Committees and the Council Members have the right to propose initiatives to the Council.

The Faroese participation in the Nordic Council of Ministers is regulated mainly by Articles 60, 61 and 63 of the Helsinki Treaty. Article 60 provides that the Faroese Government (alongside the governments of Åland and Greenland) may participate (but not vote) in the work of the Council of Ministers. The distinction made in Article 60 is that the Nordic states cooperate in the Council of Ministers and their decisions are binding, while the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland ‘take part in the work of the Council of Ministers’. Article 61 states that authorised persons may represent ministers from the Nordic governments if necessary. Article 63 stipulates that decisions made by the Council of Ministers are binding on each country. However, for the autonomous polities they are binding insofar as they accede to the decisions in accordance with their statutes of self-government.

Of special interest for the Faroe Islands is NORA (Nordic Atlantic Cooperation), which is ‘an intergovernmental organisation under the regional cooperation programme of the Nordic Council of Ministers’ seated in Tórshavn. NORA brings together Greenland, Iceland, the Faroe Islands and coastal Norway. The organisation is built on the west Nordic cooperation body founded in 1981 and became NORA when coastal Norway joined it in 1996.³⁰ The by-laws of NORA were approved by the Nordic Council of Ministers’ Committee of Senior Officials for Regional Policy (EK-R) in March 2017. The Nordic Council of Ministers’ Secretariat has observer status in NORA, and the organisation is funded by annual grants from the Nordic Council of Ministers. At the same time, NORA also focuses on developing cooperation with neighbouring countries to the west. Accordingly, NORA

29 Ibid., Article 48.

30 NORA (as of 23.07.2021).

states in its funding guidelines that it ‘values projects that include partners from Canada and Scotland.’ Furthermore, NORA has also established the North Atlantic Think Tank with members from the Faroe Islands, Greenland, Norway and Iceland.³¹ According to one of our interviewees, west Nordic cooperation has for a long time been dealing with issues that are now at the forefront of global debates, such as environmental matters and cybersecurity. Therefore, according to this view, west Nordic cooperation can be seen as an ‘incubator’ for ideas and innovations that are also useful for Nordic cooperation, and, in turn, Nordic cooperation can be viewed as an incubator for European integration, and so on.

In the Faroe Islands themselves, the Government includes a minister with responsibility for Nordic affairs. In addition, the Faroese Parliament holds an annual discussion on the proposals coming from the Nordic Council on any of the substantive matters that the Council works with. However, according to one interviewee, these parliamentary debates are somewhat fruitless today since the Nordic Council deals with recommendations within twelve weeks, and unless they are followed up through political dialogue with the ministers, they will be closed. Therefore, explained the interviewee, ‘there is no point for the Faroese Parliament to return to discuss recommendations that they cannot influence any longer’. While the discussions increase insight and knowledge, the optimal timing to enable the Parliament to influence the Nordic Council’s work has not yet been considered thoroughly. It may be somewhat demoralising for politicians if they feel they have no influence, concluded this interviewee.

Faroese government officials responsible for Nordic matters meet four times a year to exchange information and ideas about their respective areas of activity and responsibility. There is usually one keynote speaker on one particular issue, and then all the others discuss their current concerns and efforts. One interviewee reported that this is a useful tool for the public officials engaged in Nordic affairs, and it enhances coordination within the Faroese administration. It also creates team spirit among ‘us who work with Nordic issues’, and it even creates positive pressure and expectations through the knowledge that ‘when I come back from a Nordic meeting, my colleagues will want to hear more about my work’, said the same interviewee. Participation can vary; ‘sometimes ten persons, sometimes twenty’ are present, observed this interviewee. While these are perhaps small numbers in absolute figures, it is still a considerable number in view of the small government administration.

How engaged then are Faroese politicians in Nordic matters? ‘It varies over time’, is the simplest way to summarise the answers given by the

31 This happened after a 2011 OECD review of the North Atlantic region commissioned by NORA. See NORA (as of 30.08.2021).

interviewees. According to one interviewee, a few years ago, when it was felt that there was not so much interest in Nordic matters, the minister responsible for Nordic cooperation would talk to their colleagues, explaining the work done in the Nordic Council and Council of Ministers and emphasising how important it was that Faroese ministers, politicians and public servants actively take part in this work. The interviewee added: 'So, now there is a stronger interest again. If we want to have full membership, then we have to show that we contribute and participate already now.'

1.5. PRIORITIES AND RESULTS

As shown above, the main and persistent goal of the Faroe Islands has been to achieve full membership in the Nordic institutions. For decades, the various Faroese governments have been insistent on full and independent representation, an aspiration which has been turned down even though participatory channels have been expanding incrementally.

While Denmark has brought the issue of expanded participation of the Faroes to the Nordic Council several times, for example, in 1969, 1980 and 2005, Denmark is not seen as active in supporting independent participation for the Faroe Islands. A major achievement and step forward, however, according to the Faroese respondents interviewed for this project, has been that Denmark included the Faroe Islands and Greenland as partners in a 'joint presidency' of the Nordic Council of Ministers in 2020.³² This was a political victory for the Faroe Islands and Greenland, but also a huge step for Denmark. Some observers in the Faroe Islands were surprised over how smooth it all was to gain acceptance for this innovation in Denmark, commented one respondent. However, the amount of work involved was 'crazy' even though the pandemic created obstacles for the materialisation of some initiatives and ideas, said another interviewee. When assigned with such additional responsibilities and initiatives, there should also be additional human resources and support, this interviewee further explained. More concretely, the joint presidency meant that the Faroe Islands had full responsibility and chaired all the work in the fisheries sector. The budget for the joint presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers was shared equally between Denmark, the Faroe Islands and Greenland, remarked one of those interviewed.³³ The presidency task was a tough experience since it was implemented not only at the public

³² Nordic Council of Ministers 2019.

³³ In total DKK 45 million over three years, divided equally between Denmark, Greenland and the Faroe Islands.

officials' level but also at the political ministerial level, said an interviewee, but 'we managed it and now we can say we have done it'.

One key document, already mentioned above, for understanding the Faroese approach is the Åland Document of 2007 and its aftermath. This document can be viewed as a result of the rejected Faroese application for full membership in 2003, which was followed by a 2006 study by the Secretary General of the Nordic Council of Ministers also mentioned earlier. The Åland Document analyses the conditions and modes of participation of the autonomous polities and makes the following proposals to the Nordic Council of Ministers:

- Finland and Denmark allow representatives from the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland to lead the work of certain committees and ministerial meetings.
- It is possible to state that the Helsinki Treaty has, in practice, developed to allow for the representatives of the Faroes, Greenland and Åland to be addressed and be able to be addressed and to respond to inquiries and recommendations from the Nordic Council when these concern their field of competence.
- The Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland should be allowed to participate in the work of the Nordic institutions on the same conditions as the member states, and this includes applying for full membership within the framework of the Helsinki Treaty.
- The demands (attached to this document) of the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland should be taken into consideration by the Nordic institutions.
- The Nordic institutions should voluntarily make contact with the authorities of the autonomous polities in relation to questions of special interest for the autonomies.
- The Nordic Council of Ministers should take into consideration the interests of the self-governing polities when arranging the yearly meetings of the organs of the Council of Ministers.³⁴

Furthermore, this document includes in an attachment the specific demands made by the Faroese side, which amount to full membership in all possible Nordic cooperation organs. The Faroese MPs in the Danish Parliament have taken up the issue of full membership as recently as in February 2021. However, the responsible Danish minister answered that while Denmark supports the increased involvement of the Faroe Islands in Nordic cooperation, full membership is impossible within the

34 Nordic Council of Ministers 2007, 12–15.

framework of the Helsinki Treaty.³⁵ Nevertheless, it was the Åland Document that opened up the avenue for the ‘joint presidency’ mentioned above since it allows ministers from the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland to replace and co-work with their counterparts in Denmark and Finland respectively.

Two of our interviewees compared the Nordic approach to other solutions, such as that of associate membership in UN organs (see above for the Faroe Islands’ general participation in international organisations). In May 2021, the Faroe Islands were granted associate membership in the World Health Organisation.³⁶ Associate membership means direct contact and the possibility to participate and send proposals, but no voting rights. On this occasion, Faroese Minister of Health Kaj Leo Holm Johannesen said that the new membership gives the Faroes access to a great deal of valuable health-related knowledge and research. He added that the Faroes will also contribute to the international health research community: ‘The Faroe Islands are at the forefront regarding testing, contact tracing, quarantine policies, vaccinations and in the general fight against Covid-19.’

Issues of research in a number of fields, including marine resources, energy and health, have been repeatedly mentioned as areas of high priority for the Faroe Islands. One interlocutor explained that the Faroe Islands were in a deep economic crisis in the early 1990s. One of the results of this crisis was the establishment of a research council for the islands, together with increased attention to issues of education and research: ‘Today many more Faroese go to Denmark, the other Nordic countries and other countries to study.’ Similarly, the Faroe Islands want to be at the forefront in matters such as aquaculture and fisheries, but they see themselves equally as an excellent object of medical research. ‘We do not want “helicopter research” where experts and institutions come in and do research or other activities and then leave. We want this knowledge and expertise to stay in the Faroe Islands’, explained one interviewee. The Faroe Islands are also planning participation in an EU research programme.³⁷ In the field of health, the Faroe Islands were ‘highly involved’ in the process of discussing and implementing the so-called Könberg Report (2014) on Nordic health sector cooperation since this is a particularly important field for the Faroe Islands.³⁸

35 Møller Mortensen 2021.

36 KVF 2021.

37 Sølvará 2020. For the research cooperation agreement between the EU and the Faroe Islands (2014–2020), see Government of the Faroe Islands n.d.b. There are now plans to extend this cooperation beyond 2021.

38 Könberg 2014.

1.6. IS THERE CONSENSUS CONCERNING THE AIMS TO BE ACHIEVED IN NORDEN?

In 2021, seven political parties have representation in the Faroese Parliament. The Government includes the Unionist Party, *Sambandsflokkurin* (has 7 seats in the Faroese Parliament, *Løgtingið*, and belongs to the Centre Group in the Nordic Council); the Faroese People's Party, *Fólkaflokkurin* (with 8 seats in the Parliament and affiliated to the Conservative Group in the Nordic Council); and the Centre Party, *Miðflokkurin* (has 2 seats and belongs to the Centre Group in the Nordic Council).

The parties in opposition are the Social Democratic Party, *Javnaðarflokkurin* (7 seats and affiliated to the Nordic Social Democratic Group); Republic, *Tjóðveldi* (6 seats and affiliated to the Nordic Green Left Alliance); Progress, *Framsókn* (2 seats and affiliated to the Centre Group in the Nordic Council); and, finally, the Self-Government Party, *Sjálvstýri* (previously *Sjálvstýrisflokkurin*), which holds one seat and also belongs to the Centre Group in the Nordic Council.

Very often the political spectrum of the Faroese parties is presented and explained along two axes: the left-right axis and, secondly, the unionist-separatist axis.³⁹ While the parties have different visions as regards the relationship to Denmark, some being unionist and others overtly separatist, and while there are unionists and separatists along the political spectrum between left and right, several of our Faroese interviewees emphasised that there is basic unity about the strong wish for the Faroe Islands' full membership in Norden. The government and opposition think alike in this matter, and it has been so for the past 40 years, said one interlocutor. In fact, according to the same interviewee, Faroese politicians seem to have tacitly agreed not to use the Nordic issue as a tool in domestic political confrontations.

In another interview, the outlook was somewhat different. The interviewee explained: 'I do not agree with some voices that try to argue that the obstacles for full membership in Nordic cooperation are unacceptable pressure by Denmark, that we are not allowed to act freely. This is not understood as a valid or sufficient argument in the eyes of many people in the Faroe Islands.' In any case, Nordic cooperation is not that crucial, but rather 'peripheral' according to this view. Not all political parties in the Faroe Islands prioritise Nordic cooperation equally. For some, North-west Atlantic cooperation, for instance, is far more important, claimed one respondent.

39 See e.g. West 2021.

However, according to all the interviewees, Faroese politicians' actual interest and participation in Nordic matters has varied over time. Consequently, in some cases, there have been discussions about how to revitalise this interest and active participation. One explanation to this phenomenon, according to one interviewee, has been that the Faroe Islands aim to be active in many regional and international organisations, and that it is therefore difficult to prioritise, both among politicians and government officials, the many facets of Nordic cooperation. Another explanation given by another interviewee was that Nordic cooperation does not deal with 'the big issues', such as security issues or the role of Norden in Arctic matters, even though those are seen as important by many Faroese. This is also why the Faroe Islands have supported the ideas behind the so-called Stoltenberg Report (2009), argued the same respondent.

1.7. WHY IS NORDIC COOPERATION IMPORTANT FOR THE FAROE ISLANDS?

All the interviewees agreed that Nordic cooperation is, in one way or another, relevant and even important for Faroese, the Faroese Government and politicians. The first explanation given to this in the interviews is related to the common Nordic identity and values, including democracy, rule of law and the Nordic model of welfare for all citizens. 'We feel Nordic, and we understand well and can use the Nordic languages', said one interviewee. Faroese youngsters study Danish at school, so they manage well most of the other Nordic languages, explained this interviewee. It is 'natural' to be part of Nordic cooperation and 'this is what the population of the Faroe Islands feels too.' The increased learning of English does not seem to have a negative impact on the study of Danish, the same interviewee argued.

There were also other, more practical explanations. Since many Faroese study and work in Denmark, as well as in the other Nordic countries, it is important to facilitate such mobility in education and the labour market. One area of particular interest in this regard is that of the medical professions and health system. In order to ensure a high level of health services, the Faroe Islands support the mobility of students and employees in the health sector.

Sometimes the Nordic states forget the smaller jurisdictions in Nordic cooperation. One such example was when the so-called Arjeplog Agreement concerning the recognition and mobility of health professionals was going to be repealed within Nordic cooperation as it was thought that it is fully covered by Directive 2005/36/EC. However, the repeal would

have left out Greenland and the Faroe Islands since there is no agreement between the Faroe Islands, Greenland and the EU in this matter. It would have had very negative consequences for the Faroe Islands, and it was fortunate that this mistake was corrected at the last minute, reported one interviewee.⁴⁰ ‘Sometimes the larger countries forget all about us’, added the same respondent.

Yet another explanation offered by several Faroese interviewees is that Nordic cooperation is understood as a ‘platform’, ‘stepping stone’, ‘incubator’ or ‘springboard’ for inclusion, legitimacy and weight in other international organisations and fora. Since the rest of the world views the Faroe Islands as part of Norden too, and since Nordic cooperation is perceived positively globally, it is an asset for the Faroe Islands to be part of this well reputed network. As one interviewed official suggested, politicians also realise that gaining insight and knowledge from one forum can be of use in another forum, not least as regards the importance of Arctic affairs. Networking, exchange of information and knowledge, as well as strong contacts among Nordic politicians are aspects that were highlighted repeatedly in several interviews.

According to one interviewee, this idea of a Nordic platform is first and foremost about raising awareness since so many people around the world know so little about the Faroe Islands. In this understanding, the Nordic platform contributes to the incremental internationalisation of the Faroe Islands. An even more maximalist view, represented by another interviewee, looks at Nordic cooperation as the ‘first gate to the globalised world’ in all matters. According to this approach, the Faroe Islands ‘should coordinate all internationally relevant matters first within Norden, then in Europe and thereafter with the rest of the world’. This should include foreign policy, international security, trade, etc. According to this maximalist view on Nordic cooperation, it is a pity that this cooperation does not ‘yet’ actively pursue a Nordic view on Arctic matters, i.e. navigation routes in the North Atlantic and the activities of all the superpowers in these waters, and other such ‘hard matters’. This should be done before discussing and coordinating these matters in the European Union or the United Nations, argued this interviewee.

As regards substantive policy areas where Nordic cooperation is highly relevant and important for the Faroe Islands, one interviewee mentioned ‘green transition’. Examples of this include two large projects developed as part of the Danish chairmanship in 2020. One of these projects concerns electrically driven salmon farming vessels. There is a smaller such vessel in Norway, but the Faroese experiment is the largest of its sort and will

⁴⁰ For more information on the Arjeplog Agreement, see Nordic Co-operation 2018a. For Nordic coordination with regard to the implementation and consequences of EU legislation, see Backe 2018.

be in operation in late 2021, it is hoped. ‘We need ideas and inspiration from the other Nordic countries’, stated the same interviewee. The second Nordic cooperation project that contributes to the green transition concerns the development of geothermal heating.

Other areas where international and Nordic cooperation is extremely important for the Faroe Islands include environmental protection more generally, research in general, societal transitions and their impact, regional development, as well as the health sector, explained one interviewee. In relation to this last area, an example was given about how Nordic cooperation and associate membership in the WHO complement each other. Nordic cooperation plays a very important role for those who want to study to become a doctor, for instance, in other parts of the Nordic region. The mobility of health professionals is also facilitated by Nordic cooperation. Specialised doctors from other parts of Norden live and work in the Faroe Islands. When it comes to the pandemic, however, and other broad global issues, the WHO is needed too, one of the interviewees pointed out. The Faroe Islands would like to develop their own full-fledged health system and hospital. Nordic cooperation must be developed ‘because it is our neighbourhood’, said another interviewee.

The Faroe Islands do not only benefit from, but also contribute to Nordic cooperation, one interviewee explained. One important aspect is their ‘sensitivity towards small nations’. Another is the insight and example that ‘even though you are small, you can get quite far and should be taken seriously’. One way that the Faroe Islands have achieved this is through specialisation. As one interviewee claimed, it is necessary to choose one’s field of expertise, such as salmon farming, and then pursue it and excel in it. Another example is digitalisation, where the Faroe Islands have achieved one of the fastest internet networks in the world, and this can serve as an example even for larger countries, explained one interviewee.

However, the experience and role of Nordic cooperation for the Faroe Islands have never been really evaluated in a structured manner in the islands, reflected an interviewee. According to the same interviewee, this may be explained by the fact that there is such strong consensus that the Faroes want to have full membership in Norden that all other considerations become secondary.

1.8. PERCEPTIONS ABOUT NORDEN AMONG THE FAROESE

According to one of the interviews, Nordic matters are more a question of ‘political focus’ than of awareness among the wider population. ‘Working and study mobility are very much taken for granted.’ In addition to

such mobility, Nordic matters are experienced through the well-known activities of the Nordic House in Tórshavn, which hosts literature, music, performing arts and other cultural events, as well as conferences and more scientific events, which was something emphasised by nearly all the interviewees in the present study.⁴¹

However, in the view of one interviewee, Norden and Nordic issues and cooperation remain rather marginal in the minds of people working at a fish factory, for instance. According to the same respondent, the practical relevance of Nordic cooperation for the average person in the Faroe Islands lies mainly in the promotion of mobility and elimination of various kinds of border barriers ‘so that Nordic people can travel freely and work in the other Nordic countries.’

In addition, there are regular reports on Nordic matters in Faroese media. Among the themes that attract a lot of media attention are the Nordic Council prize nominations and awards (for literature, music, film, environment, youth and children’s literature), explained one interviewee. In fact, as another interviewee pointed out, the prize for youth and children’s literature was a Faroese initiative.

According to one interviewee, it is primarily through culture that the average Faroese comes into contact with Nordic cooperation. Many Faroese sing in choirs and may have benefitted from Nordic funding for organising cultural events such as visits and exchanges between choirs. ‘People-to-people’ contacts through culture, Nordjobb, studies, etc. are very important, the interviewee stated. In more recent years, contacts have also emerged in environmental and sustainability matters, said the same interviewee, and emphasised: ‘Some politicians have, over time, been so focused on the membership issue or the functions and rules of the Nordic institutions that they do not really see all these cultural and human contacts. But they are important!’ The interviewee further concluded that ‘there is a lot of public support for Nordic cooperation and events.’

According to another interviewee, however, the budgetary allocations on sustainability and the green economy are still far too ‘abstract’. The various governments have their own plans and priorities, and there is exchange of information and cooperation, but sustainability efforts are not moving forward thanks to Nordic initiatives, claimed this interviewee. The Nordic Council of Ministers should operate at a far more concrete level if it wants to be leading sustainability efforts, argued the same interviewee.

Another example of Faroese interest in Nordic matters, raised by one interviewee, is the recent appointment of Kristina Háfoss from the *Tjóðveldi* (Republic) party – the Faroese independence party – as Secretary

41 The Nordic House in the Faroe Islands n.d.

General of the Nordic Council in February 2021. The appointment of Háfoss illustrates, in this view, that it is possible to have a strong feeling for Nordic cooperation and at the same time work for Faroese independence. ‘Most countries have realised that in the future, good cross-border cooperation will be necessary if they are to have any impact internationally’, wrote student Háfoss in a newspaper in 1998, quoted in a recent interview given by herself. In the same interview, she praises the Nordic ‘brand’: ‘The Nordic region is unique in so many areas. It is a role model for many countries around the world. And I believe the Nordics can become an even more important role model and trailblazer in education, innovation, digitalisation, environment and with our welfare model.’⁴²

According to another interviewee, interest in Nordic matters has been growing over the past ten years or so. At the same time, the intention and commitment to achieve full membership has been ‘overshadowing the substantive aspects of Faroese participation in Nordic cooperation’. Now, during these past few years, there has emerged ‘a better understanding that it is not enough to demand full participation. We have realised that we need to do our share in this cooperation’, explained the same interviewee.

From the perspective of the rest of the world, Nordic cooperation is very interesting, relevant and important because of the space it creates for smaller jurisdictions such as the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland, argued one interviewee, and continued: ‘It could be a role model for other regions of the world that are trying to find similar solutions, in spite of its insufficiencies or problems.’ Furthermore, this idea that the position of the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland in Nordic cooperation serves as a source of inspiration worldwide is also experienced in practice in the Faroe Islands. One interviewee remarked: ‘Here in the Faroe Islands, we notice foremost the questions and comments by people from Scotland. They are very impressed by the things we can do within the Nordic framework. While we complain, they see our situation as a great achievement.’

1.9. COOPERATION BETWEEN THE FAROE ISLANDS, GREENLAND AND ÅLAND

The Faroe Islands see themselves as a frequent forerunner. As one interviewee explained, ‘if we want to go ahead with new ideas, then we need the support of Greenland and Åland. Often, the Faroe Islands go first, and then Greenland and Åland follow.’ The interviewee continued: ‘but we also work very closely together with Iceland. They have a good

42 Nordic Labour Journal 2021.

understanding of independence through their history. So, they often support us. The challenge is to convince the other member states of our needs.’ According to another interviewee, the Faroe Islands have tried to discuss the issue of full membership with the other member states, and ‘they are all very polite’, but in the end they see the Faroe Islands’ quest for full membership as an internal matter for Denmark. ‘They simply want Denmark to deal with it’, the interviewee added.

The Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland always organise an annual meeting between them in conjunction with the Nordic Council’s autumn session. The Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland cooperate at the level of civil servants, as well as through ensuring contacts between politicians responsible for Nordic cooperation or for other substantive subject matters. The representatives of the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland meet before MR-SAM meetings (the Council of Ministers for Nordic Cooperation) and go through the agenda, coordinate their positions and discuss any issues they want to raise in these meetings. The Faroese participation in MR-SAM has not always been so strong, assessed one self-critical interviewee, but added that it is now somewhat more active.

Ministers from Åland often visit the Faroe Islands and vice versa – or at least they did before the pandemic. One example is the visit of Åland’s and Greenland’s Nordic cooperation ministers to the Faroe Islands in May 2017 to discuss, inter alia, the Faroe Islands’ rejected application for full membership.⁴³ According to one interviewee, Greenland and Åland sometimes look at the Faroe Islands as ‘the rebel’ who goes ‘fast forward’. Indeed, ‘fast forward’ is the way to describe the development of the Faroese society and economy after the Second World War, underlined this respondent. ‘We are keen to develop, and we are proud that the gross domestic product per capita is higher in the Faroe Islands than in Denmark’, explained the same interviewee.⁴⁴

In the words of one interviewee: ‘There is great friendship between the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland.’ The person explained their comment further: ‘This friendship and sense of commitment towards each other comes through even when some participants are sceptical about Nordic cooperation. Mutual visits are also very important and almost always create a stronger understanding and attachment.’

A concrete achievement of this commitment was the cooperation between the Faroe Islands and Åland during Ålandic politician Britt

43 Åland Government 2017.

44 According to World Bank data, the GDP per capita in the Faroe Islands was USD 64,225 (2019), while in Denmark it was USD 60,908 (2020). For Greenland, the latest figure is from 2018, when its GDP per capita was USD 54,470. Åland’s GDP per capita was EUR 36,200 (ca. USD 42,700). See Nordic Co-operation n.d.c. The World Bank does not provide figures for Åland.

Lundberg's Presidency of the Nordic Council. According to one of our interviewees, the small step forward was that when proposals are now put forward to the Nordic Council by any party entitled to put forward proposals, there should be a discussion on the proposal in the Nordic Council.

1.10. FUTURE SCENARIOS

On the basis of the interviews conducted and the empirical evidence at hand, it may seem unlikely that the Faroe Islands will change its political course in relation to the goal of achieving full membership in Nordic cooperation. This brings to the forefront the core issues of the possible modes of accommodation of autonomous jurisdictions in regional cooperation organisations.

According to one of the interviewees, there is a lot of potential in substantive Nordic cooperation in the field of maritime pollution, aquaculture and the impacts of climate change on this sector. These areas could be given higher priority in Nordic cooperation, argued one interviewee. The Faroe Islands would like to be able to use fully all elements, every gram, of the fish and other species caught at sea or farmed, said the same person. The Norwegians and Icelanders understand it, but not necessarily the Finns, Swedes or even the Danes, added the interviewee. Green transition and electrification by 2030 are current goals for the Faroe Islands in line with Nordic priorities, together with enhancing a healthy lifestyle for the entire population.

Based on the latest developments of the Faroese application for full membership in 2016, as well as on the interviews conducted, it appears that the question of Nordic cooperation is also understood as linked to the broader question of the Faroe Islands' independence. This movement towards 'full' statehood has its roots in the 19th century and has manifested itself in an independence referendum in 1946 and a pro-independence coalition government in the late 1990s. While Denmark has made notable concessions to the Faroes, in particular with the 2005 Foreign Policy Act and Assumption Act, and by bringing the question of full membership to the Nordic Council, it remains to be seen whether further Nordic integration is possible and whether the efforts of some Faroese political parties for statehood will receive increased impetus. According to one interviewee, Faroese people are very cautious about independence if they fear that their standard of living will be endangered. As one interviewee explained the general thought in the Faroe Islands in this matter: 'If the economy is going well, the will for independence is stronger.' Another interviewee pointed out, however, that this should not be understood as diminishing

the discussions on independence or interpreting them only in the light of economics. It was emphasised several times during the interviews that Faroese people understand themselves as part of the Nordic ‘tradition’, including mutual language intelligibility, culture and ideas, such as the Nordic welfare state. In this sense, the Faroese confirm that Norden is a strong point of reference and a measure of comparison. They want to have a standard of living at least as high as in the other Nordic countries.

The interviews also brought up concrete Faroese institutional proposals and initiatives. One interviewee highlighted the need for all the parliamentary assemblies in Norden to discuss and actively deal with recommendations coming from the Nordic Council. This is currently not the case, this interviewee claimed. As we saw above, the issue of the timing of such a procedure is crucial to make it meaningful.

1.11. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The Faroe Islands have been part of Nordic cooperation since 1970, when it joined it together with Åland. Today, the Faroe Islands have a comparatively high GDP per capita, exceptionally low unemployment and an increasing population. Since early on, the Faroe Islands have aimed for full membership in Nordic cooperation equal to the five member states, and some have described the matter as an ongoing conflict between Denmark and the Faroe Islands.⁴⁵ Applications to this effect, i.e. for full membership, have been made three times since the 1970s, and they have failed and been resisted especially by Denmark, which supports this aspiration in principle, but only within the limits of the Danish constitutional framework. Some of the interviews conducted suggested that it is the participation and standing at the prime ministerial level which is the focal point for the Faroes in the contestations concerning ‘full’ membership. The Faroese aspirations have received little support from the other member states, with the exception of Iceland, noted one interviewee. While these efforts have not resulted in membership at the same level as the member states, the Faroe Islands have achieved many partial goals towards an enhanced position and participation in Norden. As several Faroese interviewees emphasised: ‘We see Nordic cooperation as an avenue and an antechamber to the globalised world.’ However, the present study suggests that the relation between the Faroe Islands and Norden consists of several interrelated layers related to identity and culture, including language, population mobility, labour market, demographics, trade and export,

⁴⁵ á Rógvi 2015, 144.

networks of government officials and politicians, information flows and knowledge development, as well as political culture and ideas such as the Nordic welfare state.

The Faroe Islands' original disappointment over the 2007 Åland Document has been replaced by a commitment to use all the possibilities allowed for in the document and 'then see where the matter stands'. Meanwhile, the Faroe Islands continue to explore the wide range of possibilities within international organisations as to observer status, associate membership and networks of ad hoc cooperation on a functional basis. Views on these matters are not monolithic in the Faroe Islands; rather, there is a keen and general interest in better navigating through the murky waters of globalisation and internationalisation.

While officials' and politicians' interest in and commitment to Nordic matters has fluctuated over time, most Faroese people know best Nordic cultural cooperation and person-to-person contacts between Nordic countries and regions, as well as the Nordic prizes. Knowledge exchange and research are among the areas most widely emphasised by our interviewees, alongside health sector cooperation, sustainability, energy and, as always in the case of the Faroe Islands, fisheries and aquaculture.

1/2

2 GREENLAND (KALAALLIT NUNAAT)

2.1. INTRODUCTION

2.1.1. Basic Facts

Greenland, *Kalaallit Nuunat*, is one of the three self-governing nations participating in Nordic cooperation. This archipelago state, which includes the world's largest island, is home for approximately 56,000 people of mostly Inuit origin. Geographically, Greenland is situated in the Arctic Ocean far away from most Nordic countries at the intersection of Europe, North America and Russia. Its history of Danish subjugation has developed from colonisation in 1721 to formal status as a county in 1953, wide home rule in 1979 and the current position of extensive self-government as of 2009.⁴⁶ Together with Denmark and the Faroe Islands, Greenland forms the Danish Realm (*det danske rigsfællesskab*). Greenland also elects two representatives to the Danish Parliament (*Folketinget*). In 2021, 300 years had passed since Hans Egede, the first Dano-Norwegian missionary, arrived in Greenland and subjugated the territory to foreign rule. The festivities have nonetheless been replaced with reflection, and the vandalism of the Hans Egede statue erected in 1921 in the capital Nuuk.⁴⁷

Before the Inuit arrived in Greenland originally from Canada during the thirteenth century,⁴⁸ other kind of cultures, such as the Dorset culture, had inhabited Greenland. The Inuit are an indigenous people recognised under international law. They constitute almost 90% of the population in

⁴⁶ Act on Greenland Self-Government (Unofficial translation), Act No. 473, 12 June 2009.

⁴⁷ Pram Gad & Jacobsen 2021.

⁴⁸ Gram Mortensen & Barten 2016, 112.

Greenland, and most of them refer to themselves as *Kalaallit*. There are three major Inuit groups residing in the West, East and North Greenland.⁴⁹ *Kalaallisut*, the language of the Inuit in West Greenland, is the first official language of Greenland, whereas Danish is the second. Danish is, however, often used as the working language in Greenland's administration.⁵⁰

The self-governing authorities of Greenland, that is, the Parliament (*Inatsisartut*) and the Government (*Naalakkersuisut*), 'exercise legislative and executive power in the fields of responsibility taken over.'⁵¹ These responsibilities include, for example, postal service, traffic, electricity, water, health services, environmental matters, housing, land use, education, church, radio and television. The latest additions relate to mineral resource areas and the working environment in the offshore area.⁵² No transfers of competences have taken place, however, since 2010. The present governmental coalition, led by the *Inuit Ataqatigiit* (IA) party, was formed after the parliamentary elections on 6 April 2021, and has plans to start negotiations aiming to transfer more competences to Greenland.⁵³ One of the government parties, *Naleraq*, may even push the government to pursue steps towards independence.⁵⁴

When it comes to the economy, '[f]ishing is the lifeline and primary industry of the Greenlandic economy'.⁵⁵ It is the biggest source of income and significant for the Greenlandic national economy.⁵⁶ Next to shrimp and cod, energy and minerals are important for the economy. Greenland's mineral resources have made it an attractive site for mining, featuring, inter alia, gold, copper and uranium.⁵⁷ The extractive industry has grown, but simultaneously it has been politically contentious in Greenland. The previous zero policy on mining has been replaced with one of opening up to multinational enterprises from China, Russia and elsewhere. Especially the mining of uranium has divided Greenlanders into those who stress the ensuing financial benefits and those who fear the environmental risks.⁵⁸ Developing the extractive industry would, however, require extensive

49 IWGIA n.d.

50 Gram Mortensen & Barten 2016, 113.

51 Act on Greenland Self-Government (Unofficial translation), Act No. 473, 12 June 2009, Chapter 1.

52 Fields of Responsibility Assumed by the Greenland Home Rule Government (I and II) and Greenland Self-Government (III) Respectively.

53 Sermitsiaq 2021; Ackrén 2011.

54 Breum 2021.

55 Government of Greenland n.d.b.

56 IWGIA n.d.

57 Government of Greenland n.d.b.

58 IWGIA n.d.

infrastructure investments.⁵⁹ Greenland's nature also contributes to the economy indirectly via tourism, hunting and agriculture.⁶⁰ Greenland is in constant need of labour, and migration mainly takes place between Greenland and Denmark.⁶¹ The Greenlandic economy also benefits from an annual lump sum paid by Denmark, which forms almost half of Greenland's annual budget⁶² and makes it financially dependent on Denmark.

2.1.2. Greenland and International Relations

In the field of international relations and foreign policy matters, Greenland exercises some authority of its own, whereas foreign and security policy generally remains the prerogative of Denmark. For the vast part of the twentieth century, Greenlandic foreign policy has been in the hands of Copenhagen.⁶³ In 1972, Greenlanders were allowed to vote in a referendum on the Realm joining the European Economic Community (EEC), which materialised against the wishes of the population of Greenland. The introduction of home rule in 1979 paved the way for a new referendum, however, resulting in Greenland's withdrawal from the EEC in 1985.⁶⁴ Today, Greenland is an Overseas Country and Territory (OCT) of the European Union, which gives it access to EU programmes as well as the capacity to conclude partnership agreements with the Union.⁶⁵

Before the adoption of the 2009 act that provided Greenland with extensive self-government, there were some developments that increased Greenland's powers in the field of foreign and security policy. The 2003 *Itilleq* agreement,⁶⁶ which was made in response to the need to update defence treaties concerning the Danish Realm, laid down principles for involving Greenland in foreign and security issues more than before. It was agreed that whenever foreign and security policy matters affected Greenland, its involvement was justified. This meant that the Greenlandic Government could participate in negotiations on international agreements concerning Greenland, and even sign such treaties jointly with Denmark. One result of this increased Greenlandic involvement in international affairs was the joint signing of the so-called *Igaliku* agreements in 2004

59 Lykketoft 2021.

60 Government of Greenland n.d.b.

61 Statistics Greenland 2020.

62 IWGIA 2021.

63 Ackrén & Leander Nielsen 2021, 2.

64 *Ibid.*, 2.

65 *Ibid.*, 2.

66 Falles principerklæring mellem Regeringen og Grønlands Landsstyre om Grønlands inddragelse i udenrigs- og sikkerhedspolitikken, 14 May 2003.

pertaining to the military presence of the United States in Greenland.⁶⁷ In 2005, a further agreement on full powers was concluded, giving Greenland the right to conclude treaties on behalf of Denmark.⁶⁸

The 2009 Act on Greenland Self-Government leaves foreign policy issues to Denmark, with the exception of issues that are of Greenlandic concern. It allows Greenland to have diplomatic representation in countries where it has great commercial interests, and ‘Greenland has a firm tradition of participating in international affairs’.⁶⁹ Next to Nordic cooperation and its OCT status with the EU, Greenland participates in the UN and WTO, and in Arctic cooperation. A particularly important form of international cooperation is the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC),⁷⁰ which also allows Greenland indirect access to the UN system and the Arctic Council.⁷¹ In fact, one interviewee stated that the President of the ICC is also the President of Greenland.⁷²

2.1.3. The Independence Option

Greenland is allowed to pursue independence according to the self-government act of 2009, where it is noted that the entity has ‘access to independence’.⁷³ This decision is to be taken by Greenlanders themselves, after which negotiations between the governments of Greenland and Denmark will follow. A potential agreement on independence must be approved first by the Greenlandic Parliament and in a concomitant referendum. In addition, the Danish Parliament, *Folketinget*, must give the agreement its approval.

This explicit option of independence separates Greenland from the Faroe Islands and Åland. It is nevertheless seen to be dependent on economic and governmental viability, which means it has not been pursued in concrete terms. Thus, there are no schedules for any declaration of independence. In the last referendum on self-government in 2008, 75% of the voters gave their support for increased self-government.⁷⁴ However, the issue of independence divides the population: surveys made in 2018 showed that 38% support independence, and a slightly larger percentage

67 Bagger 2020.

68 Government of Greenland n.d.c.

69 Ibid.

70 Ackrén 2018, 241.

71 Government of Greenland n.d.d.

72 Interview, 29 April 2021, online, Denmark.

73 Act on Greenland Self-Government (Unofficial translation), Act No. 473, 12 June 2009, Chapter 8.

74 Ackrén 2011.

of people support independence if it is to be gained in ten years.⁷⁵ Recent studies show that the number of people supporting independence is on the rise as there is a growing perception that Greenlanders fear losing their characteristics and identity.⁷⁶ The bigger conventional political parties also support a move towards independence.⁷⁷ For example, the parties Siumut and Inuit Ataqatigiit support independence, as do the present government party Naleraq. Yet, the project appears to be a gradual and long-term one,⁷⁸ regarded as realistic to implement only when Greenland can govern its matters without the Danish annual lump sum.⁷⁹ This has triggered claims that emphasise that the union between Greenland and Denmark is far from over.⁸⁰ Many Greenlandic politicians feel that some sort of relationship with Denmark would be worthwhile to maintain.⁸¹ According to one argument, Denmark has a moral obligation to support Greenland's path towards independence⁸² – which Denmark has arguably engaged in by supporting education, combatting social ills and enhancing the Greenlandic economy.⁸³

2.1.4. Greenland as a Site of Geopolitical Competition

Foreign and security policy has been gaining a higher status in Greenland in recent years when great powers have shown an increasing interest in the Arctic.⁸⁴ Greenland has become geopolitically and –strategically important due to its location between Russia and North America, and ‘close to the straits that connect the Arctic Ocean and the North Atlantic’.⁸⁵ Climate change and melting ice are affecting Greenland's position not only through opening up new maritime routes, but also through opening up new mining possibilities. The renewed interest in Greenland was made visible by former US President Trump's sudden offer to buy Greenland in 2019. The United States has also opened a diplomatic mission in Nuuk and offered economic packages to Greenland. It also maintains the Thule Air Base in Greenland. Chinese companies have been involved in the

75 See Lindstrøm 2018.

76 Markussen 2019, 88.

77 Breum 2020a.

78 Gram Mortensen & Barten 2016, 127.

79 Snaevarr 2017, 14; Background discussion, 18 January 2021, online, Denmark.

80 Paul 2021, 8.

81 Ackrén 2021.

82 Bech Hansen 2018.

83 Breum 2020a.

84 Ackrén & Leander Nielsen 2021, 1.

85 Rahbek-Clemmensen 2019.

extraction of minerals and offered to build airports in Greenland, whereas Russia sees the Arctic not only as militarily important, but as part of its history.⁸⁶ Greenlanders themselves do not reportedly fear great power rivalry in their own region.⁸⁷ In a foreign policy survey conducted in 2019, Greenlanders felt that they would like increased cooperation with, among others, the United States, Denmark, Iceland and Canada. More cooperation with Russia and China was not considered to be necessary.⁸⁸

2.2. GREENLAND IN NORDIC COOPERATION

Greenland was the last among its peers Åland and the Faroe Islands to join the Nordic Council and the Nordic Council of Ministers in 1984 even though there had been proposals for joining the Nordic Council already in the 1970s.⁸⁹ Greenland's membership in the European Community at the time was, however, curbing the enthusiasm to pursue formal Nordic cooperation. When it finally joined the institutions of Nordic cooperation, it accepted the pragmatic solution to join Nordic cooperation without full membership.⁹⁰

Today, Greenland's Department of Foreign Affairs lists Nordic Cooperation as one of its main areas of work.⁹¹ Within this cooperation, three forums are crucial: the Nordic Council, the Nordic Council of Ministers and the West Nordic Council⁹² – the last being popularly less known elsewhere in the Nordic countries. The Government of Greenland presents an annual overview of Nordic cooperation and Greenland's work and initiatives therein in a report entitled *Nordisk redegørelse*. It also issues annual Foreign Policy Reports in which Nordic cooperation is described sectorally. In addition, these reports include a special section dedicated to the West Nordic Cooperation. Greenland's Parliament provides an overview of Nordic activities in a report called *Årsberetning for Inatsisartut*.

2.2.1. The Aims and Arrangements of Cooperation

There are no general governmental strategy papers that guide Greenland's participation in the Nordic institutions. However, the general foreign

86 Matthews 2020.

87 Ackrén & Leander Nielsen 2021, 1.

88 Ibid., 3.

89 Søndergaard 2006, 166.

90 Ibid., 165.

91 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Greenland n.d.

92 Government of Greenland n.d.a.

policy strategy of 2011 does also list goals for Nordic cooperation⁹³. The goals for Nordic cooperation mentioned in the 2011 strategy are: 1) to strengthen the cooperation between the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland; 2) to establish Nordic projects pertaining to the Arctic in which Greenland has a decisive and participatory role; and 3) to raise awareness about Nordic opportunities for Greenland. The new Government elected in the spring of 2021 has also intended to consider Nordic cooperation and the 2030 Vision, and how they relate to Greenlandic priorities.⁹⁴

Nordic cooperation provides Greenland with several clear benefits. When Greenland joined Nordic cooperation in 1984, it allowed it to have discussions with its Nordic peers outside the European framework.⁹⁵ Indeed, one interviewee felt that it is important to have colleagues from the other Nordic countries to talk to: informal contacts and networks help to solve issues or problems.⁹⁶ Greenland's participation in Nordic cooperation is considered to support its overall foreign policy goals, as well as to form an important international arena⁹⁷ or foreign policy platform.⁹⁸ More specifically, Nordic cooperation is important because many Greenlanders live in the other Nordic countries.⁹⁹ The Greenlandic Minister for Nordic Cooperation has also stated that Nordic cooperation gives positive added value to Greenland as it shares values and historical, political and economic ties with the Nordic countries.¹⁰⁰ The two Greenlandic parliamentarians in the Nordic Council are considered the territory's voice outwards, who seek to ensure that Greenlandic interests and goals are understood broadly in the Nordic Council.¹⁰¹

There is, however, room to further increase knowledge about and awareness of opportunities related to Nordic cooperation as Greenlanders do not generally know so much about Nordic cooperation.¹⁰² One crucial initiative in this respect was the establishment of the Katuaq cultural centre and the Nordic Institute in Greenland (NAPA) in 1987. NAPA is a cultural institute under the Nordic Council of Ministers located in Nuuk. The only Nordic institution in Greenland, Info Norden Greenland, is located

93 Government of Greenland 2011.

94 Interview, 6 May 2021, online, Greenland.

95 Søndergaard 2006, 167.

96 Interview, 29 April 2021, online, Denmark.

97 Interview, 6 May 2021, online, Greenland.

98 Government of Greenland 2020, 2.

99 Interview, 6 May 2021, online, Greenland.

100 Government of Greenland 2019, 3.

101 Grønlands Hjemmestyre 2004, 15.

102 Interview, 29 March 2021, online, Greenland.

in NAPA. Culture is also an important aspect of how ‘Norden’ presents itself in Greenland.¹⁰³ It represents a way to enhance knowledge about the Nordic countries and Nordic funding opportunities – one of the aims that NAPA strives for with its strategy of spreading information in Nuuk and beyond. Among other ways, this has been done via ambassadors in other towns and by celebrating Nordic Day.¹⁰⁴ Another way suggested by one interviewee would be for Greenland to join *Nordisk Film & TV Fond*.¹⁰⁵ Besides increasing knowledge about Nordic cooperation, the aim is also to incite confidence in Nordic cooperation and display the benefits of being part of the Nordic community.¹⁰⁶

It is also noteworthy that the level of popular support for Nordic cooperation is lower in Greenland compared to the other Nordic countries.¹⁰⁷ Yet, there is still widespread support for Nordic cooperation and the view that there could be even more cooperation. Greenlanders list similarities in societal construction as one common thing between the Nordics, along with the linguistic similarities.¹⁰⁸ The Greenlandic population would prefer to have Nordic cooperation especially in issues concerning education and culture.¹⁰⁹

Over the years, the Greenlandic delegates of the Nordic Council have participated in delegate meetings, committee meetings and Council sessions even though one interviewee reported that it has been difficult for the Greenlandic parliamentarians to be active in the Council,¹¹⁰ as their work is not centrally coordinated. The delegates have focused on the language debate, in other words, what languages can be used in the Nordic institutions.¹¹¹ For example, in 2016, head of the Greenlandic delegation Iddimangiiu Bianco submitted to the Nordic Council a proposal for accepting Greenlandic as an official language that can be used in the meetings of and negotiations with the Nordic Council and the Nordic Council of Ministers.¹¹² At the sessions of the Nordic Council, Greenland also meets with its important peer groups, both when it comes to the West Nordic cooperation and the Faroe Islands and Åland. Closer cooperation

103 Interview, 29 March 2021, online, Greenland.

104 Interview, 29 March 2021, online, Greenland.

105 Interview, 6 May 2021, online, Greenland.

106 The Nordic Institute in Greenland n.d.

107 Nordiskt samarbete 2017, 12.

108 Ibid., 14.

109 Ibid., 30.

110 Interview, 29 April 2021, online, Denmark.

111 Inatsisartut 2018, 175.

112 Inatsisartut 2017, 83.

between the latter group was formalised in 2012 with a memorandum of understanding laying down that the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland should intensify their cooperation. Reportedly, one driver for this development was the differential treatment of the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland in the Nordic institutions.¹¹³ The aim of these joint meetings has been to inform the other parties about ongoing policy developments and to discuss how cooperation could be improved. In 2020, the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland also discussed decisions made by the five Nordic countries without the involvement of the three islands.¹¹⁴ It was nevertheless noted by one interviewee that the agenda for the cooperation between the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland should be settled well in advance before the meetings.¹¹⁵

Greenlandic representatives have not only participated in the work of the Nordic institutions, but Greenland has also constituted a site for Nordic cooperation. In 2018, Nuuk, for the first time, hosted all the delegates of the Nordic Council, who convened to discuss Arctic issues and climate change as the main topics.¹¹⁶ Greenland has also arranged other meetings and Nordic conferences. Another concrete way in which the other Nordic countries have become more aware of Greenlandic objectives and circumstances is through the 2020 presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers, which was held jointly by Denmark, Greenland and the Faroe Islands.

Admittedly, Nordic cooperation has not been equally prioritised by each Greenlandic government. The level of engagement with Nordic cooperation is dependent on the people who occupy the posts, and the distance and language issues constitute problems for active participation.¹¹⁷ When considering ways to improve Nordic cooperation, interviewees mentioned that the cooperation between the Greenlandic Government and Parliament on Nordic issues could be improved.¹¹⁸ Understanding the language used in the Nordic institutions may at times be difficult, but knowing the Nordic colleagues makes it easier.¹¹⁹ Indeed, Nordic cooperation is much about personal relations. The creation of a strategy on Nordic cooperation could enable Greenland to get more out of Nordic cooperation as it is held that there is room for being more active in Nordic cooperation.¹²⁰

113 Jacobsen & Pram Gad 2018.

114 Government of Greenland 2020, 11.

115 Interview, 6 May 2021, online, Greenland.

116 Inatsisartut 2019, 173.

117 Interview, 29 April 2021, online, Denmark.

118 Interview, 6 May 2021, online, Greenland.

119 Interview, 6 May 2021, online, Greenland.

120 Interview, 6 May 2021, online, Greenland.

2.2.2. West Nordic Cooperation and Nordic Atlantic Cooperation (NORA)

The cooperation arrangements that are more regional and closer to home seem significant for Greenlanders. First, an important form of cooperation in addition to, and at times in conjunction with, Nordic cooperation is the West Nordic Council founded in 1985.¹²¹ This interparliamentary cooperation takes place between Greenland, the Faroe Islands and Iceland, and seeks to promote West Nordic interests within the Nordic Council. Each parliament is represented by six members of parliament.¹²² There is also a collaboration agreement in place between the West Nordic Council and the three governments, which creates ‘an overall cooperation structure’.¹²³ The Greenlandic Government describes the West Nordic Council as an ‘intermediary around West Nordic interests within Nordic cooperation’.¹²⁴ The Nordic Council sees the West Nordic Council as an internal part of the organisation, but a sense of competitiveness has been identified between the two bodies.¹²⁵

This cooperation form, which focuses on natural resources and their management and cultural cooperation, has become increasingly significant in recent years.¹²⁶ However, the West Nordic cooperation has been criticised at times for being too broad and discussion oriented.¹²⁷ Proposedly, it could engage in more concrete goals within the ambit of the broader objectives, such as working for the removal of plastics from the oceans within the next 25 years, or reactivating tourism in the post-pandemic world.¹²⁸ In 2021, its recommendations concerned, among other things, the creation of an interrail system for youth in the region and the establishment of a West Nordic ocean prize.¹²⁹

The second arrangement, the Nordic Atlantic Cooperation (NORA), is an international organisation that functions under the Nordic Council of Ministers and also plays an increasingly important role for Greenland. Besides Greenland, it encompasses Iceland, the Faroe Islands and coastal areas in West Norway. Within NORA, the participants can, for example,

121 European Parliament n.d.

122 Vestnordisk Råd n.d.

123 Government of Greenland n.d.e.

124 Ibid.

125 Interview, 29 March 2021, online, Greenland.

126 Nielsson 2013.

127 Interview, 6 May 2021, online, Greenland.

128 Ibid.

129 Vestnordisk Råd 2019.

address common concerns ranging from acute hospital care in the region to organising conferences on strategic initiatives.¹³⁰

2.3. POLICY PRIORITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Over the years, Greenlandic policy priorities in the Nordic Council have been the status of indigenous peoples, West Nordic issues, security policy and the environment and its protection.¹³¹ Recent policy issues that are prioritised in Greenland's cooperation with the Nordics include foremost the Arctic, the environment, green energy and sustainable development more broadly. There is consensus on these priorities in Greenland, and they largely coincide with the Vision 2030.¹³² As a demonstration of Greenland's contribution to these issues, the Nordic Council Environment Prize of 2018 can be mentioned. The prize was awarded to the Natural Resource Council of Attu in West Greenland for documenting the marine environment and proposing new approaches for managing it.¹³³ It has also been held that focus should not be diverted away from the day-to-day policy issues affecting the life of Greenlanders, namely climate change and environmental concerns.¹³⁴

One fundamental priority for Greenland, and simultaneously its recognised achievement,¹³⁵ has been the keeping of West Nordic issues on the Nordic Council's agenda after the end of the Cold War. When the Berlin Wall fell, and the Baltic states regained their independence, there were concerns in Greenland that the focus would shift too much to the eastern parts of the Nordic Region.¹³⁶ With respect to traffic-related and educational issues, it has been important for Greenland to also maintain attention on West Nordic cooperation.¹³⁷ As a result of the efforts by the West Nordic countries, a report on West Nordic cooperation was published in 2004, which stressed the importance of looking to the West.¹³⁸ In 2014, Iceland proposed the creation of a strategy for Nordic Atlantic relations (NAUST), which materialised in 2019. One of the particular priorities of the

¹³⁰ Gunnarsson et al. 2015.

¹³¹ Ackrén 2014, 54; Søndergaard 2006.

¹³² Interview, 6 May 2021, online, Greenland.

¹³³ Nordic Co-operation 2018b.

¹³⁴ Nordic Co-operation 2019.

¹³⁵ Interview, 29 April 2021, online, Denmark.

¹³⁶ Søndergaard 2006, 168.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 169.

¹³⁸ Norden 2004.

Greenlandic Minister for Nordic Cooperation has been to advance NAUST because it is recognised that it will have positive effects on Greenland.¹³⁹

One issue that has helped to bring focus to the West in Nordic cooperation is the Arctic. The development of the Arctic towards being at the centre of geopolitics was a key theme in the speeches by Greenland's representatives in the Nordic Council during 2012–2019. Indeed, one interviewee felt that Greenland has also managed to put the Arctic on the Nordic agenda in the Nordic Council of Ministers.¹⁴⁰ Greenlandic representatives discussed the need for a common Nordic strategy regarding Arctic issues. They explained that by increasing Nordic coordination, Nordic impact in the Arctic Council, for example, could be maximised. Due to the increasing activity both at sea and on land in the Arctic area, the safety and surveillance of the Arctic were central questions in the speeches during these years. The representatives called for more concrete cooperation in securing peace and preventing military rearmament in the Arctic. At the 2013 session of the Nordic Council, the idea of deploying a North Atlantic drone squadron was introduced by Prime Minister of Greenland Aleqa Hammond. Greenland's representatives also emphasised the need for Nordic cooperation in handling the challenges regarding maritime safety and the protection of the marine environment associated with the increased shipping traffic in the Arctic area. A recent concrete issue pertaining to the Arctic is Greenland's proposal to move the management of the Nordic Arctic Cooperation Programme, currently overseen by Nordregio, to an Arctic country.¹⁴¹

Connected to the Arctic are climate issues. Greenlandic representatives in the Nordic Council have held climate issues high up on the agenda – a natural consequence of what they are witnessing in their own natural environment. Sofia Geisler has suggested the creation of common Nordic legislation on climate¹⁴² as she feels that the Nordic countries are best partners with respect to climate. They understand the Nordic conditions and have come far in relation to the sustainable development goals.

Greenlandic representatives' speeches in 2012–2019 conveyed an increasing concern about the effects of climate change, which are already very visible in Greenland. They asked the Nordic community to involve Greenland and to share with it the research that is being done on climate issues. On the other hand, while climate change has brought negative attention to the traditional Arctic ways of whaling and seal hunting,

139 Government of Greenland 2020, 10.

140 Interview, 29 April 2021, online, Denmark.

141 Government of Greenland 2019, 5.

142 Nordic Co-operation 2019.

Greenlandic representatives did not think Arctic people should be prohibited from exploiting their resources. They stated that the problem of pollution should instead be solved in the industrialised countries responsible for the pollution.

2.4. THE QUEST FOR RECOGNITION AND EQUALITY

Greenland's participation in Nordic cooperation has been characterised by a quest to be treated on par with the five countries. While in many respects, pragmatism has prevailed in Greenland's policies within Nordic cooperation, it has raised the issue of equality in Nordic cooperation already many years ago. In 1997, Jonathan Motzfeldt, Greenland's representative from the Siumut party, stated: '*Det er efter Grønlands opfattelse ikke længere grund til at opretholde den formelle sondring mellem staternes og de selvstyrende områders deltagelse i Nordisk minister-råd.*'¹⁴³ The claim is still relevant, and in 2020, the Greenlandic Minister for Nordic Cooperation stated that the problems with full representation are still the same as in 1997.¹⁴⁴ Arguably, full representation would also be supported by the fact that all the countries – including Greenland – now have jurisdiction over the matters falling within Nordic cooperation.¹⁴⁵ The issue of Greenland's full representation is not unique for Nordic cooperation, however. Its ability to have representation in the Arctic Council has occasionally been disputed and even sidestepped.¹⁴⁶ Greenlandic representatives have not been too focused on the formal status, however. One interviewee held that by being proactive and making initiatives one can achieve more or less the same as with full membership.¹⁴⁷

Another issue that causes concern is language. Over the years, Greenlandic members of the Nordic Council have emphasised the need to treat all languages, including Greenlandic, on an equal basis. To be able to speak Greenlandic in the Nordic Council, for instance, is not only a matter of principle, but also a precondition for Greenlandic people to be able to follow Nordic issues.¹⁴⁸ It has also been pointed out, for example, that the book nominees for Nordic literature prizes should be translated into Greenlandic. This also applies the other way around: in November 2021,

¹⁴³ Government of Greenland 2020, 3.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Aekrén 2014, 52.

¹⁴⁷ Interview, 29 April 2021, online, Denmark.

¹⁴⁸ Kielsen 2017.

Niviaq Korneliussen was the first Greenlander to win the Nordic Council Literature Prize with her book *Naasuliardarpi*. There are, however, voices noting that focusing on more principled issues, such as language, absolves the Greenlanders from taking a position on substantive issues.¹⁴⁹

The relations with Denmark have also been characterised by a quest for parity. In 2015, the Danish presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers included projects focusing on making Nordic food culture more known, and in particular food from the northernmost parts, such as Greenland. The Arctic was also in focus, with Greenland's Ministry for Fisheries, Hunting and Agriculture (*Departement for Fiskeri, Fangst og Landbrug*) managing a project on the Blue Arctic together with the Danes.¹⁵⁰ In 2020, a new level was reached in the relations when the presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers belonged jointly to Denmark, the Faroe Islands and Greenland.¹⁵¹ The Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs expressly stated: '*I 2020 har Danmark, Færøerne og Grønland formandskabet for Nordisk Ministerråd*'.¹⁵² It also held that Greenland and the Faroe Islands have much to give to Nordic cooperation.¹⁵³ Together with Denmark and the Faroe Islands, Greenland presented their presidency projects before the Nordic Council.¹⁵⁴ Greenland's presidency project concerned the sustainable development of coastal communities in the Nordic Region through three specific projects to be realised: NorSustain, NorValue and NorSafe.¹⁵⁵

2.5. THE PLACE OF NORDIC COOPERATION AMONG MULTIPLE DEPENDENCIES

Due to Greenland's location on the North American continent and on the outskirts of the Nordic Region, one may ponder its belongingness to the Nordics and Nordic cooperation. Some interviewees pointed to the fact that Greenland and Greenlanders do not form a natural part of the Nordic Region or Nordicness.¹⁵⁶ Nevertheless, there were also opposite voices stressing the linguistic and cultural affinity, in addition to which shared

149 Background discussion, 18 January 2021, online, Denmark.

150 Government of Greenland 2015, 20.

151 Nordic Co-operation n.d.d.

152 Jensen 2020a.

153 *Ibid.*, 1.

154 Government of Greenland 2020, 10.

155 Jensen 2020a, 4; Nordic Co-operation n.d.d.

156 Interview, 29 April 2021, online, Denmark.

values were mentioned.¹⁵⁷ Indeed, ‘Norden’ is often described with ‘the family metaphor’.¹⁵⁸ It forms a positive identity for Greenlanders, and one that is perceived as ‘homogenous, peaceful, successful and benevolent’ in contrast to other political affinities.¹⁵⁹ However, Greenland’s perspective to Nordic cooperation lies to a great extent in West Nordic cooperation, and its geographical perception of ‘Norden’ is different from that of Åland, for example.

In comparison to the Faroe Islands and Åland, Greenland’s interests and dependencies are different. The growing geopolitical interest in the Arctic has allowed Greenland to enhance its relations with a number of actors ranging from the ‘Nordic siblings’ to the United States.¹⁶⁰ While the United States has for long been ‘the fundamental military power in Greenland’,¹⁶¹ there is no consensus on what role the United States should overall play in Greenland.¹⁶² A long dispute regarding the servicing of the Thule Air Base was recently solved with a deal between the United States, Greenland and Denmark, which brought Greenland economically closer to the United States.¹⁶³ What is more, the new Thule deal was preceded by an announcement by the United States in April 2020 that it will assist Greenland financially with over USD 12 million.¹⁶⁴ But relations to Asian countries have also advanced. Greenland’s vast rare mineral resources, such as uranium, gold and cobalt, have attracted the interest of China, which seeks to invest in mining. Indeed, Greenland has increased its economic cooperation with Beijing similarly to the other West Nordic countries.¹⁶⁵

Besides the multiple directions in which Greenland invests in politically, its politics are also complicated by its ambiguous political ambition of independence and its relation to Denmark. The general elections of spring 2021 changed power in the territory, with Siumut being replaced by Inuit Ataqatigiit. Its coalition government with the new pro-independence party Naleraq may pave the way for a transfer of more competences to Greenland and a focus on independence. All these factors mean that Greenland’s political status may fluctuate in the

157 Government of Greenland 2019, 3.

158 Jacobsen & Pram Gad 2018.

159 Ibid.

160 Ibid., 11.

161 Lykketoft 2021.

162 Jacobsen & Pram Gad 2018.

163 Breum 2020b.

164 BBC News 2020.

165 Government of Iceland, Ministry for Foreign Affairs 2020, 26.

years to come. From this it follows that Nordic cooperation – both its countries and institutions – should have a strategic interest in investing in developing the cooperation¹⁶⁶ and maintaining good relations with Greenland. According to one interviewee, there is a geostrategic interest in strengthening Nordicness in Greenland and ensuring that Greenland does not shift its foreign policy focus elsewhere¹⁶⁷. Indeed, Greenland’s policy of ‘diversifying its dependencies’¹⁶⁸ must be accounted for at the Nordic level. However, another interviewee felt that even if Greenland became independent, it would always be part of Nordic cooperation and have good relations with Denmark since everything today is based on interdependence.¹⁶⁹

2.6. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Outside the cultural sphere, neither ‘Norden’ nor Nordic cooperation appear very visible in Greenland. For Greenlanders, the Nordic identity is one among many others, and its focus lies in the West Nordic Region, where Arctic issues, climate and the environment play prominent roles. It is in these policy issues that Greenland has contributed the most to Nordic cooperation, in addition to which paying attention to the West Nordics has been high on the Greenlandic agenda.

While the institutions of Nordic cooperation offer an international arena for Greenland, Greenlandic governments’ investment in the Nordic Council of Ministers has varied, and a comprehensive strategy on Nordic cooperation is lacking. Through cooperating with its peers the Faroe Islands and Åland, Greenland seeks to promote equal treatment within the Nordic institutions. Greenlandic representatives have fought for the right to use one’s own language and supported the Faroe Islands’ pursuit of full membership, while not actively seeking full membership for Greenland. The shared presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers with Denmark and the Faroe Islands in 2020 gave the Greenlandic Government a partial insight into the demands of assuming the responsibilities of full membership. It remains to be seen how the growing international interest in Greenland, along with Greenlandic politics and the long-term goal of independence, will affect the role played by Nordic cooperation.

¹⁶⁶ Etzold 2020.

¹⁶⁷ Interview, 29 March 2021, online, Greenland.

¹⁶⁸ Jacobsen & Pram Gad 2018.

¹⁶⁹ Interview, 6 May 2021, online, Greenland.

/ 3

3 ÅLAND

3.1. INTRODUCTION

3.1.1. Facts about Åland and Its Governance

Åland, geographically situated halfway between Finland and Sweden, consist of 6,757 islands inhabited by a population of circa 30,000, and with Mariehamn as the capital (and the only city). In terms of population, it is smaller than both the Faroe Islands and Greenland. Åland enjoys territorial autonomy with strong cultural and linguistic safeguards. For example, Swedish is the only official language in Åland while it is formally part of the bilingual Republic of Finland, where both Finnish and Swedish are national languages. The vast majority of Ålanders speak Swedish as their mother tongue, and 10% of the residents were born in Sweden, in comparison to 18,5% born in Finland.¹⁷⁰ Indeed, Åland is highly connected to Sweden since, for example, 15% of all cross-border commuters in Finland are Ålanders,¹⁷¹ and 62% of Ålandic college students study in Sweden.¹⁷² Åland enjoys many ‘visual symbols of autonomy’,¹⁷³ such as its own flag with the Nordic cross adopted in 1954, registration plates for cars, stamps and the internet domain ‘ax’. Åland’s currency is the euro.

Åland’s insular position has not left the islands separated from the globalised world. Immigration from the Baltics and Eastern European states has contributed to the population increase and the availability of

¹⁷⁰ Ålands statistik- och utredningsbyrå 2020.

¹⁷¹ Häggblom 2021.

¹⁷² Ålands statistik- och utredningsbyrå 2021a.

¹⁷³ Gardiner 2021.

labour in recent years.¹⁷⁴ Recent Ålandic statistics show that the number of people speaking Romanian, Latvian or Estonian is on the rise in the islands.¹⁷⁵ This can be in part explained by the needs of agriculture and fisheries, but also that the tourism sector needs extra labour during the summer time as recent years have witnessed a shortage of employees.¹⁷⁶ In addition to tourism, Åland's main industries are shipping, farming and the production of food items, banking and trading.¹⁷⁷ Much due to its ferry traffic, Åland has, in comparison to Finland, been economically better off in terms of low unemployment rates and the economic welfare of households.¹⁷⁸

Åland is the 'oldest and smallest' autonomy in the Nordic region.¹⁷⁹ The Act on the Autonomy of Åland,¹⁸⁰ which was enacted first in 1920 and thereafter revised in 1951 and 1993, regulates nationally what was agreed internationally in the League of Nations decisions and agreements of 1921, namely how competences are divided between Åland and Finland. Åland's self-government is extensive and gives its 30-member Parliament, *lagtinget*, the right to enact regional laws (*landskapslagar*) in the field of education, the environment, social and health affairs, local government, radio and television, policing and postal affairs.¹⁸¹ In matters that concern state taxation, the court system and customs, Finnish legislation prevails.¹⁸² In addition, foreign and security policy remains the competence of Finland.¹⁸³ Åland's *lagtinget* also appoints the Government of Åland, *landskapsregeringen*, whose task is to govern and administer the region. The present government includes six sectoral ministers, a Premier, *lant-råd*, and a Deputy Premier, *vice-lantråd*. Currently, there is an ongoing process to comprehensively reform the Act on the Autonomy of Åland with the aim of making the new law more flexible in the ever-changing world.¹⁸⁴ It is noticeable that any changes to the Autonomy Act require the consent of both Åland and Finland.¹⁸⁵

174 Palmer 2021, 58.

175 Ålands statistik- och utredningsbyrå 2020.

176 Evers 2019.

177 Ålandhotels n.d.

178 Palmer 2021, 71.

179 Markku Suksi 2009, 505.

180 Act on the Autonomy of Åland (Självstyrelselag för Åland), 16 August 1991/1144.

181 Ålands landskapsregering 2019; Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland n.d.

182 Ålands landskapsregering 2019.

183 Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland n.d.

184 Sasi 2021.

185 Act on the Autonomy of Åland (Självstyrelselag för Åland), 16 August 1991/1144, Section 69.

3.1.2. The International Legal Status of Åland

Three basic constitutive elements define Åland's international legal position: 1) its formal belonging to Finland; 2) the population's linguistic and cultural special status; and 3) Åland's security and military policy status.¹⁸⁶ Its special status is internationally recognised on the basis of the decision by the League of Nations in 1921 that settled the conflict regarding the island's status.¹⁸⁷

Under international law, Åland is also demilitarised and neutralised, meaning, among other things, that the islands are to be kept free of any military installations or action, whether against Åland or within its territory.¹⁸⁸ Åland's demilitarisation has been affirmed on several occasions throughout history. Its demilitarisation was first confirmed already in 1856 with the Treaty of Paris that ended the Crimean War, reinforced with the 1921 League of Nations solution and explicitly recognised with the 1921 Åland Convention on the demilitarisation and neutralisation of Åland.¹⁸⁹ In 1941, Finland concluded a separate agreement with the Soviet Union on the demilitarisation of the islands, which was followed by the 1947 Paris Peace Treaty. In addition to the conventional basis of demilitarisation and neutralisation, the issue is also considered to be regulated by customary international law.¹⁹⁰ This explains in part why Åland has been called 'the Islands of Peace'. Åland is also well known as a source of worldwide inspiration for conflict resolution, with the so-called Åland Example being presented, discussed and applied by other regions struggling with issues of minority rights, border disputes, multilevel governance or secessionist ambitions.¹⁹¹

3.1.3. Åland's Main Regional Cooperation Forms

Åland has a long history of participating in Nordic cooperation as it joined the Nordic Council already in 1970 and thereafter the Nordic Council of Ministers. In the Nordic Council, it has two representatives appointed by the Parliament. Together with their alternates, as well as the representatives appointed by the Åland Government, they form the Åland delegation to the Nordic Council. In 2020, this delegation had 12 members in total and convened seven times during the year.¹⁹² It should be noted that the task

¹⁸⁶ Björkholm & Rosas 1990, 15.

¹⁸⁷ Modeen 1973; Hannikainen 1993.

¹⁸⁸ Björkholm & Rosas 1990, 17.

¹⁸⁹ See Spiliopoulou Åkermark, Heinikoski & Kleemola-Juntunen 2018.

¹⁹⁰ Finnish Government 2021.

¹⁹¹ Spiliopoulou Åkermark 2011; Wigell 2013, 67–84; Suksi 2013, 51–66.

¹⁹² Ålands landskapsregering 2020, 13–14.

of the delegation is mainly administrative although it strives to present ‘a unified Ålandic voice’ in Nordic settings.¹⁹³ Åland’s participation in the Nordic Council is nevertheless also connected to Finland as Åland’s representatives are also part of Finland’s delegation to the Nordic Council.¹⁹⁴ When it comes to the Nordic Council of Ministers, Finland–Åland relations are described as highly legalised. In comparison to the Nordic cooperation arrangements between Denmark and the Faroe Islands on the one hand, and Denmark and Greenland on the other, Finland’s strong emphasis on the rule of law has rendered the relationship, as described by interviewees, ‘stepmotherish’¹⁹⁵ and ‘reserved’.¹⁹⁶ However, all interviewed politicians and civil servants emphasised the good and easy interpersonal relations that currently prevail between the representatives of Åland and Finland in the Nordic Council of Ministers.

Åland has also been part of the European Union (EU) since the 1995 Finnish accession to the Union. Its position is regulated by a special protocol, stating that for purposes of indirect taxation, Åland is considered a third country¹⁹⁷ – the purpose of which is to enable duty-free sales on international ferries. The protocol also confirms more broadly the islands’ special status under international law as it contains special provisions on the conduct of business in Åland, as well as the purchase of real property.¹⁹⁸ Åland pursues an active EU policy¹⁹⁹ and seeks to influence the Union policies through, inter alia, its Special Representative in the Finnish Permanent Representation in Brussels, direct dialogue with Finland and the EU institutions, and close cooperation with Finnish MEPs.²⁰⁰ Today, Åland has no member of its own in the European Parliament.

3.2. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF NORDIC COOPERATION

Åland and its inhabitants have a strong Nordic orientation.²⁰¹ The politicians and civil servants we interviewed highlighted the importance of

193 Ålands lagting 2020, 9.

194 Lag om Finlands delegation i Nordiska Rådet, 1 April 1960/170, paragraph 2.

195 Interview, 14 June 2021, online, Åland.

196 Interview, 7 June 2021, online, Åland.

197 Åland.ax 2021.

198 Ibid.

199 Ålands landskapsregering 2021a, 20.

200 Ibid., 19–20. See also Simolin 2021 for a more general discussion.

201 Palmer 2021, 54.

being a member of Norden and the Nordic family.²⁰² It was stated by one interviewee that ‘Ålanders are primarily Nordic, not European’.²⁰³ Formal steering documents also attest to a ‘common Nordic culture, joint cultural heritage and a linguistic community’.²⁰⁴ One reason for the sense of Nordic belongingness lies in the Nordic welfare model.²⁰⁵ However, the enthusiasm for Norden seems to go beyond that in Åland. The Åland delegation to the Nordic Council has stated that it supports deeper cooperation – even the idea of a Nordic federal state.²⁰⁶

Nordic cooperation is also highly visible for Ålanders.²⁰⁷ One interviewee even claimed that Åland is the place where Nordic cooperation is perhaps the most visible of all.²⁰⁸ One prominent reason for this is the Nordic Institute on Åland, *Nordens institut på Åland* (NIPÅ). The purpose of this cultural institution, which opened its doors in 1985, is to make Nordic culture visible in Åland, but also to promote Ålandic culture in the region and help Åland participate in cultural cooperation.²⁰⁹ Securing the funding of NIPÅ was mentioned by several interviewees as a specific goal in Nordic cooperation,²¹⁰ which reveals the importance of this institution. It is also considered very important that Åland has its own nominees for cultural awards.²¹¹ The local association *Föreningen Norden på Åland rf* was singled out by most interviewees as a highly ‘active’ association, which arguably has proportionally the largest number of members in the Nordics.²¹² Nordjobb and InfoNorden, HallåNorden’s successor, were also mentioned as institutions that augment the visibility of the Nordics in Åland.

3.2.1. ‘Norden’ as a Platform for External Politics

During the first years of its membership in the Nordic Council, Åland’s participation in Nordic cooperation was symbolic and served as a means through which to exercise self-governance.²¹³ Later on, the substance of

202 Interview, 14 June 2021, online, Åland; Interview 1, 8 June 2021, online, Åland.

203 Interview, 7 June 2021, online, Åland.

204 Ålands lagting 2020, 4.

205 Interview 2, 8 June 2021, online Åland.

206 Ålands lagting 2020, 12.

207 Interview, 3 June 2021, online, Åland.

208 Ibid.

209 Nordens institut på Åland n.d.

210 Interview 2, 8 June 2021, online, Åland.

211 Interview, 7 June 2021, online, Åland.

212 Interview, 14 June 2021, online, Åland.

213 Interview, 3 June 2021, online, Åland.

cooperation has gained importance, and its emphasis has shifted to the pursuit of particular policy issues. Today, Nordic cooperation forms an important international arena for Åland – a foreign policy platform²¹⁴ – where Åland can raise interest in Ålandic affairs and equally call attention to issues it considers important.²¹⁵ One interviewee even regarded Nordic cooperation as the most significant foreign policy forum for Åland,²¹⁶ which is confirmed by the Government of Åland’s annual notification of its external policy.²¹⁷ Another interviewee stressed the ‘legal’ character of this platform on the grounds that foreign policy does not formally belong to Nordic cooperation.²¹⁸

The limits of Nordic cooperation have not yet been reached, however. One interviewee felt that Åland could make more of Nordic cooperation if it invested more in it and was ‘more active’.²¹⁹ Nordic cooperation is simply not ‘highest on the agenda’.²²⁰ Another interviewee argued that the discursive focus of Nordic cooperation leaves the ambition level low, and the epicentre of Nordic cooperation has moved to Brussels.²²¹ It was also felt that the rising interest among the Nordics in foreign and security policy means that Åland may be left aside as this remains the competence of Finland.²²² Among the interviewees, there were, however, also some slightly critical voices about Nordic cooperation. Admittedly, while no one objects to or resists Nordic cooperation, it is not considered equally relevant by all.²²³ One stated reason for this is the lack of legislative powers.²²⁴

Besides Nordic cooperation, Åland also participates in other cooperation forms internationally, some of which complement or may even conflict with Nordic cooperation. The European Union (EU) membership has clearly affected the role played by Nordic cooperation. From the Ålandic perspective, much attention must be paid to the EU’s legislative powers, which takes away time that previously could be invested in Nordic cooperation. However, the interviewed Ålandic politicians and civil servants were mostly careful not to juxtapose the EU and Nordic cooperation; both

214 Ibid.

215 Interview, 14 June 2021, online, Åland; Interview 1, 8 June 2021, online, Åland.

216 Interview, 3 June 2021, online, Åland.

217 Ålands landskapsregering 2021a, 4.

218 Interview, 6 June 2021, online, Åland.

219 Interview, 7 June 2021, online, Åland.

220 Ibid.

221 Interview 2, 8 June 2021, online, Åland.

222 Interview 2, 8 June 2021, online, Åland.

223 Interview, 7 June 2021, online, Åland.

224 Interview, 7 June 2021, online, Åland.

remain important for Åland, and mutual synergies are found. The Nordic countries share the idea of the welfare state, which makes it important to work together in the EU for common positions.

Ålandic parliamentarians also participate in the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference (BSPC), where they can meet and connect with their counterparts in, for example, Poland and Russia. In 2018, Mariehamn hosted the BSCP annual conference, where the parliamentarians discussed, inter alia, international cooperation and democratic values, maritime policies and renewable energy.²²⁵ One interviewee noted that BSCP enables cooperation around Baltic Sea issues, which has arguably been sidetracked in Nordic cooperation due to the focus on Brussels.²²⁶

3.2.2. Benefits of Nordic Cooperation

The interviewees mostly singled out three different issues behind the significance of Nordic cooperation. One of the most important benefits of participation – if not the most important – mentioned by all interviewees is networking and creating contacts. This was stressed by several interviewees as it helps to establish contacts that are also helpful in a broad range of subject matters in Åland's bilateral relations with, for example, Sweden. In fact, the coffee breaks between Nordic meetings were considered extremely valuable, as were the dinners or comparable social events. Participation in Nordic cooperation also helps the Ålandic Government to maintain and develop contacts with Finland and Finnish civil servants.²²⁷ Interpersonal relations are considered useful for bilateral dealings in other policy issues. The policy document that guides the Åland delegation to the Nordic Council similarly mentions that contacts established at both formal and informal meetings may later prove highly useful.²²⁸

The second benefit of Nordic cooperation is the protection of Ålandic interests and its status as a self-governing region. Participation contributes to awareness raising in that it puts Åland 'on the map' and thereby strengthens its unique status under international law.²²⁹ Along similar lines, one interviewee stated that participation in Nordic institutional cooperation contributes to a sense of being a respectable '[political] entity'.²³⁰ It was also considered important to follow developments that may affect Åland and its nearby region. As part of this, linguistic decisions

225 Nordiska rådet Finlands delegation 2019.

226 Interview 2, 8 June 2021, online, Åland.

227 Interview, 7 June 2021, online, Åland.

228 Ålands lagting 2020, 11.

229 Ibid.

230 Interview, 6 September 2021, online, Åland. The term used in Swedish was 'subjekt'.

taken in the Nordic institutions are closely monitored as it lies in Åland's interest to maintain Swedish as the language of communication in the Nordics.²³¹

Third, Åland's participation in Nordic cooperation is considered valuable because of the educational, inspirational and problem-solving aspects that it involves – not least during the Covid-19 pandemic. Several interviewees stressed knowledge transfer; through participating in the sessions and meetings of the Nordic institutions, it is possible to learn how the other countries have solved problems. The others also serve as an inspiration for developing Ålandic policies. One interviewee mentioned the Ålandic LGBTQIA policy document, the creation of which was inspired by Denmark's model.²³² Being active in the Nordic Council in particular is also seen as a means to learn about other parliaments.²³³

While Ålanders generally value Nordic cooperation, the handling of the Covid-19 pandemic in recent years has spurred concrete criticism. All interviewees felt that Nordic political cooperation has failed in dealing with the ongoing pandemic, which has left Åland's population widely affected. Especially the Nordic Council of Ministers was criticised for its inaction in guaranteeing free movement across borders.²³⁴ In 2020, for example, travel into Åland decreased by two thirds compared to 2019; the revenues of the private sector diminished by 22%; and transport and hotel and restaurants have been especially vulnerable, with tourism going down 40% from 2019 revenues.²³⁵ Unemployment rates in 2020 were at 9,5%, which is higher than ever registered.²³⁶

Without exception, the interviewees also paid attention to the lack of a Nordic approach to the pandemic. One interviewee even questioned the value of Nordic cooperation in the wake of the pandemic.²³⁷ Indeed, the Government of Åland has called for the Nordic countries to jointly address the pandemic instead of adopting national measures.²³⁸

231 Interview, 7 June 2021, online, Åland; Interview 2, 8 June 2021, online, Åland.

232 Interview, 7 June 2021, online, Åland

233 Ålands lagting 2020, 11.

234 Interview 1, 8 June 2021, online, Åland.

235 Ålands statistik- och utredningsbyrå 2021b, 10.

236 Ibid., 6.

237 Interview 2, 8 June 2021, online, Åland.

238 Ålands landskapsregering 2021b.

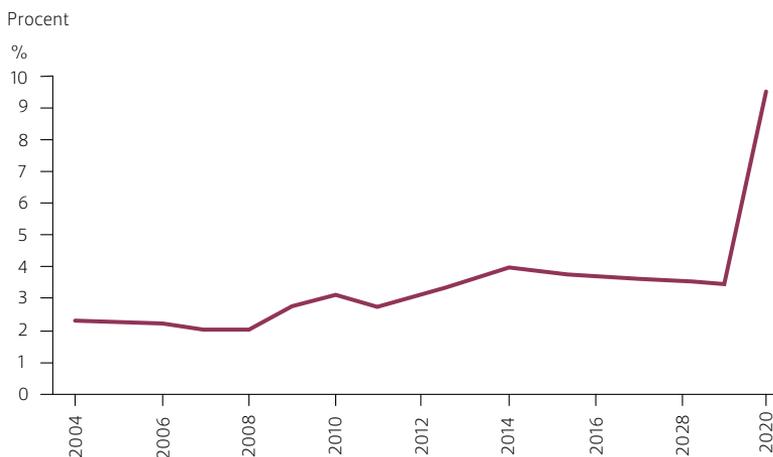


Figure 1: Relative unemployment in 2004–2020 (Ålands statistik- och utredningsbyrå 2021b)

3.3. POLICY PRIORITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

The actions of the Åland delegation to the Nordic Council are permeated by the overarching goal of advancing and securing Ålandic interests, as well as of increasing knowledge of Åland’s self-government and demilitarisation.²³⁹ Implicitly, there also seems to be a desire to raise understanding for self-governing territories more broadly, and to emphasise minorities.²⁴⁰

Substance-wise, the policy priorities of the Åland delegation seek to realise the Nordic Council of Ministers’ Vision 2030, the UN’s Agenda 2030 and Åland’s own sustainability agenda. This means that sustainability forms one core of the Ålandic policy priorities. Indeed, as a forerunner in these matters, Åland has been able to push for sustainability and climate action. In 2014, the Government and Parliament of Åland developed their own sustainability strategy, *Utvecklings- och hållbarhetsagenda för Åland*, seeking to make Åland fully sustainable by 2051. Seven local sustainability goals to be reached by 2030 were developed, in addition to which Åland keeps track of its fulfilment of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted in 2015. To illustrate, in the last thirty years, Åland has managed to almost triple the number of women elected

²³⁹ Ålands lagting 2020, 2.

²⁴⁰ Interview, 6 September 2021, online, Åland.

to *lagtinget*, but struggles to lower the number of young people outside work or education.²⁴¹

Åland's efforts in the field of sustainability are recognised both domestically and abroad. In 2019, Åland was awarded the EU's European Sustainability Award,²⁴² which was handed out for the first time. Ålandic politicians and civil servants also take pride in the fact that they have effectively contributed to the development of the Vision 2030 by calling for making the Nordic region the most sustainable in the world.²⁴³ In fact, several interviewees pointed out that the Nordic countries took their cue from Åland when constructing the long-term vision of the prime ministers.²⁴⁴ A recent proposal (*medlemsförslag*) by the Ålandic members of the Nordic Council and their alternates to set an end date for the use of fossil fuels in the Nordics was also internationally noted.²⁴⁵ Thus, the environmental side plays an important role in Åland's work for sustainability, with climate change action and biodiversity being prominent focus areas in this work. These policy issues are natural as Åland's position in the Baltic Sea makes it dependent upon the wellbeing of the sea.²⁴⁶ Ålandic efforts for a healthier Baltic Sea and increased know-how are also seen as a major contribution in the Nordic setting.²⁴⁷

Another dimension related to sustainability, which is mentioned as a priority for the years 2020–2023, is working for a socially sustainable Nordic region.²⁴⁸ The Nordic welfare model forms the basis of this work, promoting values such as rule of law, democracy, human rights and equality. Indeed, several interviewees stressed the importance of protecting the welfare state. As part of this agenda, education and culture are prioritised by Åland in Norden.²⁴⁹ The ability to study and work in the other Nordic countries is seen as a vital part of Nordic integration, as well as the possibility to nominate Ålandic candidates and works for Nordic awards. Åland is also represented in the Nordic Culture Fund.²⁵⁰ Matters

241 Ålands statistik- och utredningsbyrå n.d.

242 Lindholm 2019.

243 Interview, 7 June 2021, online, Åland.

244 Interview, 3 June 2021, online, Åland; Interview, 7 June 2021, online, Åland; Interview, 14 June 2021, online, Åland.

245 Ålands lagting 2021.

246 Ålands lagting 2020, 3.

247 Ibid.

248 Ibid., 4.

249 Interview, 7 June 2021, online, Åland.

250 Ålands lagting 2021.

pertaining to everyday life, such as having access to Swedish radio and television, are also important.²⁵¹

Freedom of movement and the removal of mobility barriers – much due to the insular location of Åland between Finland and Sweden – are also high up on the Ålandic agenda. This has become painstakingly clear with the travel restrictions that have been adopted since 2020 in order to contain the Covid-19 pandemic. Another high, and connected, priority is Åland's pursuit to create a joint Nordic strategy on pandemic management.²⁵² According to the policy of the Åland delegation to the Nordic Council, this would entail coordinated pandemic responses while maintaining the opportunities for free movement and trade.²⁵³ The removal of barriers to free movement is also explicitly stated as an important aspect of a competitive Nordic region.²⁵⁴

A summary of the speeches and comments by Ålandic representatives in the Nordic Council in 2010–2019²⁵⁵

Åland was an active participant in the annual sessions of the Nordic Council throughout the 2010s. Sustainable development was one of the central themes in the speeches by Ålandic representatives, who emphasised the potential of Åland and the Nordic countries to act as pioneers in solving environmental issues. The idea of stronger cooperation between the Nordic countries in climate questions came up several times over the years. The representatives recognised that pursuing green growth could also benefit regional areas, and that it is important that politicians promote investments in green growth. The need for ensuring that the growth in the Arctic is sustainable was also highlighted. In 2010, the representatives of Åland participated in the discussion about a proposal for a common Nordic deposit return system for beverage containers, offering the possibility to implement a pilot project in Åland. In 2019, Åland recommended that the Nordic countries establish a scientifically based definition for the concept of sustainable development. The social aspect of sustainable development – including questions of employment, equality, migration and regional politics – was also frequently discussed by the

251 Interview, 14 June 2021, online, Åland.

252 Ålands lagting 2020, 2.

253 Ibid.

254 Ibid.

255 Based on speeches at the Nordic Council annual sessions. See Nordiskt samarbete n.d.; Ålands lagting n.d.

representatives, and the need for Nordic cooperation to preserve and further develop the Nordic model was acknowledged.

During the years 2010–2019, Ålandic representatives also actively participated in the discussion on minimising border barriers, which they considered to be the core of Nordic cooperation. This is closely tied to the discussion of the future of the Nordic labour markets. Over the years, the representatives of Åland expressed concern about the functioning of the Nordic labour markets, emphasising the importance of labour market flexibility in reducing youth unemployment, for example. This subject is of specific interest to Åland because of its location between two Nordic countries, Finland and Sweden. In 2014, on behalf of the Centre Group, Vice President of the Åland delegation to the Nordic Council Anders Eriksson presented a proposal to reduce border barriers: governments should more actively instruct their central authorities to identify and report regulatory conflicts between the different Nordic countries, and to amend and simplify the application of existing national or European rules.

The need for stronger cooperation between the Nordic countries was a key theme discussed by the representatives of Åland throughout the years examined here. The Åland delegation often hoped for more coordination of the Nordic positions on EU issues and spoke in favour of an increased Nordic presence in Brussels. In his speech at the general debate in 2013, Anders Eriksson mentioned that he sees the formation of a Nordic union as the optimal solution to the problem of border barriers. In 2014, President of the Åland delegation Christian Beijar expressed a wish for a concrete proposal of how a Nordic federal state could function in practice. He explained that this could lay the groundwork for a political debate even in the national parliaments. The entire Åland delegation to the Nordic Council supported the proposal of further investigation and more studies on the idea of a Nordic federal state. The discussion continued in 2015.

Other themes that came up in the speeches and comments by Ålandic representatives included the possibility of increased cooperation in the integration of migrants, the role of the Nordic countries in international conflict resolution and peace mediation, and legislative cooperation in the area of civil law. Cybersecurity and the need for a common electronic identification system that works in all Nordic countries were also discussed.

3.4. PERSPECTIVES ON INSTITUTIONAL COOPERATION

There are no long-term steering documents or ‘grand strategy’ papers that guide Åland’s participation in Nordic cooperation. Instead, a number of policy instruments and annual reports jointly determine and govern Åland’s involvement in the Nordic institutions. These documents are revised on a regular basis.²⁵⁶ One major instrument for Åland’s participation is a policy document regularly issued by the Åland delegation to the Nordic Council.²⁵⁷ This document not only determines the policy to be pursued in the following years, but also guides those working on these issues on more procedural matters. Hence, the current document states, for example, that the Åland delegation wishes that questions of significant importance dealt with in the Nordic Council of Ministers would be submitted to discussion in the delegation.²⁵⁸ The Åland delegation to the Nordic Council also publishes an annual report. The Åland Government, on its part, notifies *lagtinget* of its policy priorities and activities through various means, one of which is the Government’s annual notification of its external policy (*meddelande om landskapsregeringens externpolitik*). This notification describes the overall policy priorities, but also reports on the specific work of the separate Ministerial Councils.²⁵⁹

The opportunities to participate effectively in Nordic cooperation vary. The positions in the Nordic Council are considered attractive and valuable as they provide Ålandic parliamentarians ‘a window to the outside world’.²⁶⁰ The ministers of Åland’s Government participate actively in meetings of the Nordic Council of Ministers, but not all the Ministerial Councils are considered equally relevant. This concerns, for example, the Council of Ministers for Finance (MR-FINANS), which may partly relate to the fact that budget issues are the competence of Finland, and not of Åland. The greatest burden falls, however, on the Minister for Nordic Cooperation.²⁶¹ In the interviews, it was emphasised that those working with Nordic issues in Åland are overall very knowledgeable as there is limited administrative personnel available in comparison to the bigger countries.

A central and visible part of Åland’s participation in Nordic cooperation is also the presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers, which is currently during the 2021 presidency realised ‘in close cooperation

²⁵⁶ Interview, 6 September 2021, online, Åland.

²⁵⁷ Ålands landskapsregering 2020, 13.

²⁵⁸ Ålands lagting 2020, 9.

²⁵⁹ See e.g. Ålands landskapsregering 2021a.

²⁶⁰ Interview, 7 June 2021, online, Åland.

²⁶¹ Interview, 6 September 2021, online, Åland.

with Finland'. This arrangement is considered to be more pragmatic than principled.²⁶² Overall, the approach is considered good:²⁶³ it has allowed Åland to participate in the formulation of the presidency programme and projects, as well as improved Ålanders' insight into the presidency more generally. Under the presidency, Åland will also chair the Council of Ministers for Fisheries, Aquaculture, Agriculture, Food and Forestry (MR-FJLS).²⁶⁴ According to some interviewees, Åland's role in the presidency could arguably be further developed. Several interviewees addressed the issue that Denmark has been more 'generous' with the Faroe Islands and Greenland,²⁶⁵ in particular concerning the presidency. The Danish presidency preceding Finland's in 2021 was realised together with the Faroe Islands and Greenland, with them having their own shares of the budget.

For Åland, a concrete part of Nordic cooperation and its efforts to pursue Ålandic interests at the Nordic institutions, is collaboration with peers. Its cooperation with the Faroe Islands and Greenland seems to have varied over time, however. One benchmark was achieved in 2012, when a legally non-binding memorandum was concluded between the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland, establishing a Nordic forum for cooperation, *Nordisk Samarbejdsforum*, between the three parties. Its aim is to increase the exchange of information on topical and important issues before and between the Nordic Council sessions and the Nordic Council of Ministers meetings.²⁶⁶ The chairmanship rotates between the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland. It was noted by one interviewee that the three parties are equal contributors when it comes to mundane affairs, but the Faroe Islands have been a frontrunner with respect to developing membership issues.²⁶⁷

It is noteworthy, however, that the Ålandic interviewees had diverging views as to the potential of this cooperation. Some interviewees stressed that there may not always be joint positions to pursue with the Faroe Island and Greenland as they deal with different problems, and their backgrounds, such as the economy, are diverse.²⁶⁸ As one interviewee claimed, 'the similarity is a political mantra'.²⁶⁹ On the other hand, several interviewees held a contrasting view and emphasised the fact that the

262 Interview, 3 June 2021, online, Åland.

263 Interview, 14 June 2021, online, Åland.

264 Ålands landskapsregering 2021a, 6.

265 Interview, 7 June 2021, online, Åland; Interview, 3 June 2021, online, Åland.

266 Nordisk Samarbejdsforum 2012.

267 Interview, 6 September 2021, online, Åland.

268 Interview, 7 June 2021, online, Åland.

269 Interview, 3 June 2021, online, Åland.

Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland are all islands – a unifying factor.²⁷⁰ Whether the characteristic of ‘islandness’ is a sufficiently strong basis for cooperation between the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland remains unclear. One interviewee noted that cooperation between the three islands has worked better at the Nordic Council of Ministers than at the Nordic Council.²⁷¹ One reason for this has been the ‘full membership’ agenda of the Faroe Islands.²⁷²

3.5. PROSPECTS FOR DEVELOPING COOPERATION

Åland has not conducted any broader, systematic analysis of its participation in Nordic cooperation over the years. It was commonly held among the interviewees that the benefits of participation are visible enough in themselves.²⁷³ However, the Åland Government’s annual notification to the Parliament of Åland’s external relations contains a regular evaluation of how Åland has fared in the Nordic arena, and how it gets its voice heard. The documents that establish the policy of the Åland delegation to the Nordic Council also include some elements of assessment, as do the delegation’s annual reports on the Nordic Council’s activities.

While some interviewees noted that Åland’s participation could be strengthened internally and the institutional lessons be shared more widely,²⁷⁴ the main question vis-à-vis Norden remains the long-standing issue of full membership. The sentiments among Ålandic politicians and civil servants vary regarding full membership in the Nordic institutions. While Åland currently has no ambition to seek full membership in Nordic institutional cooperation,²⁷⁵ the discussion seems to intrigue Åland’s politicians to such an extent that an evaluation of full membership was conducted in 2016. The evaluation was carried out formally on the basis of a request by Åland’s Parliament in March 2016, in response to which the Government delivered its notification on the issue in September of the same year.²⁷⁶ According to the evaluation, full membership was not considered a topical issue for Åland to pursue.

270 Interview, 6 September 2021, online, Åland; Interview, 14 June 2021, online, Åland.

271 Interview, 3 June 2021, online, Åland.

272 Ibid.

273 Interview, 7 June 2021, online, Åland.

274 Interview, 6 September 2021, online, Åland.

275 Ibid.

276 Ålands landskapsregering 2016.

The evaluation held that full membership in the Nordic Council and the Nordic Council of Ministers would require financial and human resources to such a degree that the benefits of full membership would be outweighed. The main economic burden would come from the presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers and the organisation of the Nordic Council sessions.²⁷⁷ It was also noted that if there were more resources available, Åland would already have good opportunities to get its voice heard within the Nordic institutions and even to increase its leverage. Apart from the practical issue of funds and personnel, it was assessed that Åland's full membership would require changes in the Finnish constitution.²⁷⁸ What is more, the Treaty of Helsinki would also need to be revised, which would require the consent of all the countries within Nordic cooperation.²⁷⁹ In the view of several interviewees, the necessary consensual base does not exist among the bigger Nordic countries.²⁸⁰

Even though Åland has not pursued full institutional membership, it remains dedicated to such an endeavour much due to the symbolic value it entails. The 2016 evaluation explicitly noted that Åland supports any potential developments by the Faroe Islands and Greenland with regard to their membership, and in particular the Faroese effort to gain full membership²⁸¹ – facts that most interviewees confirmed. There was also a discernible concern that different membership levels might emerge, and Åland might be left with fewer rights than the Faroe Islands and Greenland, if these two islands succeeded in pursuing a fuller membership.²⁸² Indeed, it seems that the statement by the Åland Government back in 1970 when Åland joined the Nordic Council still holds relevance:

Visserligen har såväl landstingets som landskapsstyrelsens åsikt varit, att landskapet Åland borde vinna fullständigt medlemskap i Nordiska rådet, men landskapsstyrelsen har det oaktat ansett, att man i detta skede skulle acceptera en lösning i enlighet med ovan berörda förslag.²⁸³

Certainly, the Åland delegation to the Nordic Council has stated that it would welcome a debate on the benefits and downsides of full

277 Ibid.; Interview, 14 June 2021, online, Åland.

278 Ålands landskapsregering 2016, 16.

279 Ibid., 9.

280 Interview, 7 June 2021, online, Åland.

281 Ålands landskapsregering 2016, 9.

282 Interview, 3 June 2021, online, Åland.

283 As cited in Ålands lagting 2020, 5–6.

membership. One interviewee also felt that the debate on full membership would have already started in Åland had the pandemic not shifted focus to more urgent issues.²⁸⁴

Awaiting possible initiatives to discuss full membership, the Åland delegation to the Nordic Council works on a more tangible aspect of enhancing its participation, namely a permanent seat in the Presidium of the Nordic Council. This is considered important since the Presidium may act as a decision-maker instead of the plenary in urgent matters, in addition to which the Presidium decides on organisational matters and relations to the outside world.²⁸⁵

3.6. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Nordicness is well embedded in Åland, its government and its people. ‘Norden’ is highly visible in Åland, and it seems to have a natural bond to the other Nordic countries and Nordic languages. Åland has also participated in the Nordic Council and the Nordic Council of Ministers for decades. Over the years, Åland has deepened its contribution to substantive issues dealt with within Nordic cooperation, and it has particularly contributed to environmental and social sustainability – efforts appreciated and recognised regionally, for example, by the granting of the European Sustainability Award. The removal of border barriers is another topic high on the Ålandic agenda, which has received even more attention during the pandemic and the adoption of travel restrictions, which have disturbed both everyday life and the economy in Åland.

Participation in Nordic cooperation is considered important because it empowers Åland while simultaneously increasing knowledge and understanding about minorities and special governance arrangements besides formal statehood. Nordic cooperation is seen as a window to the world, and its institutions constitute international fora where Ålandic concerns can be ventilated. Within the institutions, cooperation with its insular peers the Faroe Islands and Greenland is valued. Åland follows a pragmatic approach where its contribution to Nordic cooperation can be developed within the Nordic Council and the Nordic Council of Ministers, as well as internally in its own governance structures. The principled issue of full membership is closely followed, and it is seen to be connected to the Faroe Islands and Greenland more generally.

²⁸⁴ Interview, 6 September 2021, online, Åland.

²⁸⁵ Ålands lagting 2020, 11.

CONCLUSIONS

The Faroe Islands and Åland joined Nordic cooperation in the 1970s and Greenland in 1984. They have several decades' experience of Nordic cooperation, which has developed over time largely in tandem with their own respective competences. The Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland all value Nordic cooperation and feel that it is important, both through the Nordic Council and the Nordic Council of Ministers. This cooperation is understood to be based on a common Nordic 'identity' even though the sense of belonging to the Nordic family among the three insular peers may vary slightly due to historical and geographical conditions. Another building block for the cooperation is the welfare state on which the Nordic model is built on. Values such as rule of law, democracy, and education, health care and social security for all are shared by the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland.

The Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland joined Nordic cooperation primarily as a means to expand and deepen their scope of jurisdiction and self-governance and the ability to feel like a 'subject' to be reckoned with. There were no grand political strategies behind their decisions to join, but over the years, they have gained deeper substantive knowledge and manifested their desire to develop collaboration with the other countries. The governments of all three self-governing countries report regularly and extensively to their respective parliaments and constituencies on the conditions of Nordic cooperation, as well as the aims and means thereof. Yet, the 'strategicness', reflexivity and regional rootedness of their participation in Nordic cooperation are still under development. Occasionally, their engagement also remains dependent on the personal interests and worldview of the politicians or civil servants involved.

The Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland see Nordic cooperation as a ‘springboard’ to the outside world and an international arena where they can increase understanding for and accommodation of their conditions and concerns. They bring plurality to the Nordic table by enhancing awareness of different governance arrangements, peoples and their rights. Thanks to them, the Nordic networks permeate different governance levels ranging from international organisations to entities that do not enjoy full statal competences. Through their participation, the Nordic countries have become used to experiencing sovereignty, international legal personality and governance as nuances rather than as either-or phenomena. This experience can furthermore be understood to reconceptualise sovereignty so that it is based on a plus-sum game concept instead of a zero-sum game concept.

The Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland regard the Nordic institutions not only as a good platform for coordination, but also as a site for acquiring new knowledge and inspiration favourable to specific problem-solving or broader societal development. The important networks that Nordic cooperation generates between politicians and government officials are considered one of the greatest benefits of the cooperation, and they are also useful for other, bilateral purposes. It is thus noteworthy that Nordic cooperation also constitutes a scene in which the relations between these islands and their central states can be put to the test, developed and made to thrive.

As insular territories, the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland all share a concern for the environment, the seas and sustainable living conditions, which coincides with the Vision 2030 that permeates all Nordic cooperation. Their industries and economies are highly dependent on managing climate change, protecting biodiversity, developing green energy and transport, and protecting the seas. Their first-hand or indigenous knowledge in these matters benefits the whole Nordic Region, and they may offer testing environments for creating new policies or strategies in the field of sustainable development, as well as in other areas such as the health sector. Their know-how and capabilities in sustainability issues have been recognised, inter alia, with environmental and sustainability prizes at the Nordic and European levels. Still, the practical role and impact of the Vision 2030 and Nordic cooperation in and on these islands are not easy to pinpoint if compared to EU norms, other regional platforms of cooperation or global standards, for instance. It is rather the broader policies that are set in Nordic cooperation.

The visibility of ‘Norden’ and Nordic cooperation varies in the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland, but what is common to all of them is that cultural institutions make Nordic cooperation visible to the ordinary people. The Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland view the ability to have

nominees for different Nordic cultural awards as important, and these awards are highly publicised and appreciated. The level of knowledge regarding Nordic opportunities varies between the three peers, but people-to-people contacts are important, as is the ability to work, study and live in other Nordic countries. The Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland all share a sentiment that there could be more Nordic cooperation, even though views as to what and how vary between and within these islands similarly to the ongoing debates in the five member states.

At the local level, the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland have not conducted any structured evaluations of Nordic cooperation. The added value of Nordic cooperation is mostly taken for granted. Their practices as to the assessment and democratic anchoring of Nordic cooperation in parliamentary debates in Mariehamn, Nuuk and Tórshavn vary, and there is room for further development in this regard. Such enhancement of the democratic sustainability of Nordic cooperation in the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland would of course need to be done in conjunction with similar efforts in the five member states. It could also be combined with a thorough examination of Nordic cooperation in the light of the levels of membership and aspects of international personality in the law and practice of international organisations. As some examples in the present study have suggested, various international organisations allow for differentiated membership. In addition to associate membership and observer status, another option is membership for (non-state or state-like) entities found in narrower functional cooperative settings.

The increased participation of the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland in Nordic institutions results from their enhanced standing in the national and international legal framework pertaining to each of them. In the case of these regions, there is a constant interplay between the domestic and international dimension of law and politics. One concrete issue where this is manifested is the presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers, which used to be the prerogative of the member states only. However, the presidencies of the Nordic Council of Ministers are considered important by the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland, and they have sought to be more involved. While they admit that the amount of work and the costs are huge in realising these presidencies, the 2020 shared experience between Denmark, the Faroe Islands and Greenland was symbolically important and practically innovative. It has been succeeded by similar pragmatic solutions for the 2021 presidency of Finland, which is being realised in close cooperation with Åland.

The full membership agenda has mostly preoccupied the Faroe Islands, but also Greenland and Åland to some extent. The Faroe Islands have submitted an application for membership ‘at the same level as the member states’ on three occasions without success. One such application

is still pending. For the Faroe Islands, full membership seems to entail at least two things: the non-fragmentation of the processes of applying to the various sub-organs of Nordic cooperation on an ad hoc basis (which resulted from the 2007 Åland Document), and, secondly, equal participation at the level of prime ministers. While Greenland and Åland have opted for a pragmatic rather than a principled approach to the matter, all three support each other's endeavours and feel that developing their status within Nordic cooperation is desirable. None of them has excluded the goal of full membership, and the situation evolves constantly even though so far, the benefits are not considered to outweigh the costs related to full membership. The experience of differential treatment has generated closer cooperation among the three peers, formalised in 2012 into *Nordisk samarbejdsforum*, a Nordic forum for cooperation. With respect to their status in Nordic cooperation, it is generally thought that their destinies are linked, and none of them wish to see the creation of several layers of membership.

While many of the Faroese interviewees were disappointed with the poor outcome of the Faroes' full membership efforts, it was also generally emphasised that the evolving accommodation of the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland within the core Nordic institutions, namely the Nordic Council and the Nordic Council of Ministers, is an important pioneering example globally. The opening up of Nordic cooperation to the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland has given them an incentive to participate in the creation of common standards and strengthen their respective democratic institutions, also in relation to the states concerned. All of this contributes to democratic sustainability and democratic resilience in international affairs. The importance of cultural cooperation, people-to-people cultural exchange and Nordic cultural institutions in the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland should not be forgotten either, as they are viewed as bedrocks of Nordic cooperation. Their value was highlighted throughout the interviews conducted for the present report.

Democratic sustainability and resilience contribute to the whole region's capacity and ability to absorb, adapt to and recover from adversities, and thus they also contribute to the overall regional and societal cohesion. While the process is slow and incremental, it nonetheless enables greater integration that works to the advantage of all and creates stability, predictability and improved connections within and between the states and the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland – not to mention presenting a unique participatory model for other countries and regions. Such strength is also valuable when global crises seem to come thick and fast and test the ability of regions to bounce back.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Act on Greenland Self-government (Unofficial translation), Act No. 473, June 12, 2009. <https://naalakkersuisut.gl/-/media/Nanoq/Files/Attached%20Files/Engelske-tekster/Act%20on%20Greenland.pdf>. Accessed: 9 November 2021.
- Ackrén, Maria (2021). "Kvaliteten i Grönlands utvidgade självstyre och relationen till Danmark." [Seminar presentation] Nordiska perspektiv på självstyre: Åland, Grönland och Färöarna, 25 August 2021, Helsinki.
- Ackrén, Maria (2018). "Diplomacy and Paradiplomacy in the North Atlantic and the Arctic – A Comparative Approach." In Matthias Finger & Lassi Heininen (eds.), *The Global Arctic Handbook*. Cham: Springer. 235–250.
- Ackrén, Maria (2014). "Greenlandic Paradipomatic Relations." In Lassi Heininen (ed.), *Security and Sovereignty in the North Atlantic*. London: Palgrave Macmillan. 42–61.
- Ackrén, Maria (2011). "Referendums in Greenland – From Home Rule to Self-government." *Fédéralism – Régionalism*, Liège Université. <https://popups.uliege.be/1374-3864/index.php?id=1892>. Accessed: 9 November 2021.
- Ackrén Maria & Leander Nielsen, Rasmus (2021). "The First Foreign – and Security Policy Opinion Poll in Greenland." *University of Greenland & Konrad Adenauer Stiftung*.
- Backe, Inge Lorange (2018). *Styrket Nordisk lovsamarbeid – Muligheter og utfordringer*. <http://norden.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1183811/FULLTEXT01.pdf>. Accessed: 27 October 2021.
- Bagger, Ane Lone (2020). "The Long Road of Diplomacy: The Cooperation between Greenland & the United States." *Government of Greenland*, 22 May 2020. https://naalakkersuisut.gl/en/Naalakkersuisut/News/2020/05/220520-Samarbejdet-mellem-Groenland_USA. Accessed 9 November 2021.
- BBC News (2020). "US Announces Millions in Aid for Resource-rich Greenland." 23 April 2020. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-52396715#:~:text=The%20US%20has%20announced%20a,by%20the%20Danish%20territory's%20government.&text=The%20US%20is%20competing%20with,fishing%20and%20Danish%20government%20subsidies>. Accessed: 15 November 2021.
- Bech Hansen, Thomas (2018). "Greenland's Desire for Independence Is a Fight Based on Rhetoric and Laws." *RUC*, 30 November 2018. <https://ruc.dk/en/news/greenlands-desire-independence-fight-based-rhetoric-and-laws>. Accessed: 9 November 2021.
- Björkholm, Mikaela & Allan Rosas (1990). *Ålandsöarnas demilitarisering och neutralisering*. Åbo: Åbo Akademi Press.
- Breum, Martin (2021). "Greenland's New Leadership Will Be Challenged by A Push for Faster Independence." *Arctic Today*, 9 April 2021. <https://www.arctictoday.com/greenlands-new-leadership-will-be-challenged-by-a-push-for-faster-independence/>. Accessed: 22 April 2021.
- Breum, Martin (2020a). "Greenland's Premier: 'We must Work Towards Independence'." *High North News*, 20 January 2020. <https://www.highnorthnews.com/en/greenlands-premier-we-must-work-towards-independence>. Accessed: 9 November 2021.

- Breum, Martin (2020b). "US, Greenland Reach Agreement on Thule Air Base Contract, Long A Source of Dispute." *Arctic Today*, 29 October 2020. <https://www.arctictoday.com/us-greenland-reach-agreement-on-thule-air-base-contract-long-a-source-of-dispute/>. Accessed: 14 November 2021.
- Danish Act No 578, June 24 (2005) Assumption Act of the Faroe Islands. <https://www.government.fo/en/foreign-relations/constitutional-status/the-assumption-act/>. Accessed: 27 August 2021.
- Danish Act No. 80, May 14 (2005) Foreign Policy Act of the Faroe Islands. <https://www.government.fo/en/foreign-relations/constitutional-status/the-foreign-policy-act/>. Accessed: 27 August 2021.
- Danish Act No. 137, March 23 (1948) Home Rule Act of the Faroe Islands. <https://www.government.fo/en/foreign-relations/constitutional-status/the-home-rule-act/>. Accessed: 27 August 2021.
- Etzold, Tobias (2020). "Influence through Cooperation. Nordic, German and EU Interests in the Arctic." *Friedrich Ebert Stiftung*, August 2020.
- European Parliament (n.d.). "Fact Sheet – The West Nordic Council." https://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2009_2014/documents/deea/dv/0503_/0503_11.pdf. Accessed: 15 November 2021.
- Evers, Niklas (2019). "Åländska företag har svårt att hitta sommarjobbare: 'Kom över, det finns jobb här'." *Svenska Yle*, 10 July 2019. <https://svenska.yle.fi/artikel/2019/07/10/alandska-foretag-har-svart-att-hitta-sommarjobbare-kom-over-det-finns-jobb-har>. Accessed: 7 November 2021.
- Falles principerklæring mellem Regeringen og Grønlands Landsstyre om Grønlands inddragelse i udenrigs- og sikkerhedspolitikken. May 14, 2003. <https://naalakkersuisut.gl/~media/Nanoq/Files/Attached%20Files/Udenrigsdirektoratet/DK/Itilleq.pdf>. Accessed: 9 November 2021.
- Fields of Responsibility Assumed by the Greenland Home Rule Government (I and II) and Greenland Self-Government (III) Respectively. <https://studylib.net/doc/18164969/a-list-of-the-fields-where-greenland-has-assumed-responsi>. Accessed: 9 November 2021.
- Finnish Government (2021). "Centenary Celebration of the Autonomy of the Åland Islands Set to Begin." <https://valtioneuvosto.fi/en/-/centenary-celebrations-of-the-autonomy-of-the-aland-islands-set-to-begin>. Accessed: 7 November 2021.
- Gardiner, Karen (2021). "Europe's Most Cooperative Islands?" *BBC*, 29 June 2021. <https://www.bbc.com/travel/article/20210627-europes-most-cooperative-islands>. Accessed: 30 August 2021.
- Government of the Faroe Islands (2019). "Coalition agreement." 14 September 2019. <https://www.government.fo/en/the-government/coalition-agreement/>. Accessed: 20 July 2021.
- Government of the Faroe Islands (2016a). "The Faroe Islands apply for membership in the Nordic Council and Nordic Council of Ministers." 14 October 2016. <https://www.government.fo/en/news/news/the-faroe-islands-apply-for-membership-in-the-nordic-council-and-nordic-council-of-ministers/>. Accessed: 20 August 2021.
- Government of the Faroe Islands (2016b). "The Faroe Islands apply for membership in the Nordic Council and Nordic Council of Ministers." 14 October 2016. www.government.fo/en/news/news/the-faroe-islands-apply-for-membership-in-the-nordic-council-and-nordic-council-of-ministers/. Accessed: 19 August 2021.
- Government of the Faroe Islands (n.d.a.). "Missions of the Faroe Islands abroad." <https://www.government.fo/en/foreign-relations/missions-of-the-faroe-islands-abroad/>. Accessed: 31 August 2021.
- Government of the Faroe Islands (n.d.b.). "Bilateral relations between the Faroe Islands and the European Union – formal texts." <https://www.government.fo/en/foreign-relations/missions-of-the-faroe-islands-abroad/the-mission-of-the-faroes-to-the-european-union/bilateral-relations-between-the-faroe-islands-and-the-european-union/>. Accessed: 30 August 2021.
- Government of Greenland (2020). "Nordisk redegørelse 2020." Sags nr Jr.Nr.: 2020-13514. <https://naalakkersuisut.gl/~media/Nanoq/Files/Attached%20Files/Udenrigsdirektoratet/DK/Nordisk%20Redegoerelse/Nordisk%20redeg%C3%B8relse%202020.pdf>. Accessed: 9 November 2021.

- Government of Greenland (2019). “Nordisk redegørelse 2019.” Sags nr Jr.Nr.: 2019-12965. <https://naalakkersuisut.gl/-/media/Nanoq/Files/Attached%20Files/Udenrigsdirektoratet/DK/Nordisk%20Redegoerelse/Nordisk%20Redeg%c3%b8relse%202019.pdf>. Accessed: 9 November 2021.
- Government of Greenland (2015). “Udenrigspolitisk Redegørelse 2015.” Sags nr Jr.Nr.: 2015-532. <https://naalakkersuisut.gl/-/media/Nanoq/Files/Attached%20Files/Udenrigsdirektoratet/DK/Udenrigspolitisk%20redogørelser/Udenrigspolitisk%20Redeg%C3%B8relse%202015.pdf>. Accessed: 16 November 2021.
- Government of Greenland (2011). “Udenrigspolitisk Strategi och redegørelse.” EM 2011/14. http://www.kamikposten.dk/lokal/last/container/da/hvadermeningen/pdf/udenrigspolitisk_strategi_og_redegørelse__efteraarssamlingen_2011.pdf. Accessed: 15 November 2021.
- Government of Greenland (n.d.a.). “Nordic Cooperation.” <https://naalakkersuisut.gl/en/Naalakkersuisut/Departments/INNAS/Nordisk-Samarbejde>. Accessed: 15 November 2021.
- Government of Greenland (n.d.b.). “Economy and Industry in Greenland.” <https://naalakkersuisut.gl/en/About-government-of-greenland/About-Greenland/Economy-and-Industry-in-Greenland>. Accessed: 9 November 2021.
- Government of Greenland (n.d.c.). “Politics in Greenland.” <https://naalakkersuisut.gl/en/About-government-of-greenland/About-Greenland/Politics-in-Greenland>. Accessed: 9 November 2021.
- Government of Greenland (n.d.d.). “International Relations.” <https://naalakkersuisut.gl/en/About-government-of-greenland>. Accessed: 9 November 2021.
- Government of Greenland (n.d.e.). “The West Nordic Cooperation.” <https://naalakkersuisut.gl/en/Naalakkersuisut/Departments/INNAS/Nordisk-Samarbejde/Vestnordisk-samarbejde>. Accessed: 15 November 2021.
- Government of Iceland, Ministry for Foreign Affairs (2020). “Greenland and Iceland in the New Arctic.” December 2020. <https://www.government.is/library/01-Ministries/Ministry-for-Foreign-Affairs/PDF-skjol/Greenland-Iceland-rafraen20-01-21.pdf>. Accessed: 15 November 2021.
- Grønlands Hjemmestyre (2004). “Landstingets Årsberetning 2003.” <https://ina.gl/media/2526889/d-in-atsisartut-website-inatsisartut-gl-media-7374-%C3%A5rsberetning-2003-dk.pdf>. Accessed: 15 November 2021.
- Gram Mortensen, Bent Ole & Barten, Ulrike (2016). “The Greenland Self Government Act: The Pitfall for the Inuit in Greenland to Remain an Indigenous People?” *The Yearbook of Polar Law Online*. 8(1): 103–128.
- Gunnarsson, Björn et al. (2015). “Air Ambulance and Hospital Services for Critically Ill and Injured in Greenland, Iceland and the Faroe Islands: How Can We Improve.” *International Journal of Circumpolar Health* 74(1): 25697.
- Hannikainen, Lauri (1993). *Ahvenanmaan itsehallinnon ja ruotsinkielisyiden kansainoikeudelliset perusteet*. Turku: Åbo Akademin ihmisoikeusinstituutti.
- Häggblom, Johanna (2021). “‘Vi har ju alltid gått vår egen väg’ – nu firar Åland 100 år av självstyre.” *Hufvudstadsbladet*, 9 June 2021. <https://www.hbl.fi/artikel/vi-har-ju-alltid-gatt-var-egen-vag-nu-firar-aland-100-ar-av-sjalvstyre/>. Accessed: 7 November 2021.
- Inatsisartut (2019). “Årsberetning for Inatsisartut 2018.” <https://ina.gl/media/2541619/2018-aarsberetning-for-inatsisartut-web-da.pdf>. Accessed: 15 November 2021.
- Inatsisartut (2018). “Årsberetning for Inatsisartut 2017.” <https://ina.gl/media/2534284/v-produkter-2017-aarsberetning-for-inatsisartut-da.pdf>. Accessed: 15 November 2021.
- Inatsisartut (2017). “Årsberetning for Inatsisartut 2016.” <https://ina.gl/media/2531484/2016-aarsberetning-for-inatsisartut-da-web.pdf>. Accessed: 15 November 2021.
- IWGIA (2021). “The Indigenous World 2021: Kalaallit Nunaat (Greenland).” <https://www.iwgia.org/en/greenland/4227-iw-2021-kalaallit-nunaat-greenland.html>. Accessed: 9 November 2021.

- IWGIA (n.d.). "Indigenous Peoples in Greenland." <https://www.iwgia.org/en/greenland.html>. Accessed: 9 November 2021.
- Jacobsen, Marc & Pram Gad, Ulrik (2018). "Setting the Scene in Nuuk. Introducing the Cast of Characters in Greenlandic Foreign Policy Narratives." In Kristian Søby Kristensen & Jon Rahbek-Clemmesen (eds.), *Greenland and the International Politics of the Changing Arctic*. Abingdon: Routledge. 11–27.
- Kielsen, Inaqi (2017). [Speech]. 2 November 2017. <https://norden.org/sv/node/20275>. Accessed: 15 November 2021.
- KVF (2021). "Faroer granted associate membership of the WHO." 26 May 2021. <https://kvf.fo/greinar/2021/05/26/faroer-granted-associate-membership-who>. Accessed: 20 August 2021.
- Könberg, Bo (2014). *The future Nordic Co-operation on Health*. ANP 2014: 731. Nordic Council of Ministers. <https://www.norden.org/en/information/future-nordic-health-co-operation>. Accessed: 30 August 2021.
- Jensen, Mogens (2020a). "Ministeren for nordisk samarbejdes redegørelse om det nordiske samarbejde." <https://www.ft.dk/samling/20201/redegoerelse/r2/index.htm>. Accessed: 15 November 2021.
- Jensen, Mogens (2020b). "Ministeren for nordisk samarbejdes redegørelse om det nordiske samarbejde." https://www.ft.dk/ripdf/samling/20191/redegoerelse/R10/20191_R10.pdf. Accessed: 15 November 2021.
- Lag om Finlands delegation i Nordiska Rådet, 1.4.1960/170. <https://www.finlex.fi/sv/laki/ajantasa/1960/19600170>. Accessed: 15 November 2021.
- Lindholm, Julia (2019). "Åland – The Sole Nordic Winners of the European Sustainability Award 2019." *European Small Islands Federation*, 9 April 2019. <https://europeansmallislands.com/2019/04/09/aland-the-sole-nordic-winners-of-the-european-sustainability-award-2019/>. Accessed: 8 November 2021.
- Lindstrøm, Merete (2018). "Befolkningen er splittet i forhold till självstaendighed." *Kalaallit Nunaata Radioa*, 14 December 2018. <https://knr.gl/da/nyheder/befolkningen-er-splittet-i-forhold-til-selvst%C3%A6ndighed>. Accessed: 12 November 2021.
- Lykketoft, Mogens (2022). "Foreword." In Laust Høgedahl (ed.), *Greenland's Economy and Labour Markets*. Abingdon: Routledge. xii–xiii.
- Markussen, Ulunnguaq (2019). "Vores fremtidige ønske." Bachelor's thesis, 3 June 2019, University of Greenland.
- Matthews, Alex (2020). "Strategic Hot Spot Greenland Sparks Global Tug-of-War." *DW*, 23 May 2020. <https://www.dw.com/en/strategic-hot-spot-greenland-sparks-global-tug-of-war/a-53492341>. Accessed: 15 November 2021.
- Ministers for Co-operation (2007). "Betänkande från arbetsgruppen med uppgift att föreslå initiativ som kan förstärka de självstyrande områdenas deltagande i nordiskt samarbete." (Åland Document). 5 September 2007, Åland. <https://www.norden.org/sv/declaration/alandsdokumentet>. Accessed: 27 August 2021.
- Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland (n.d.). "The Special Status of the Åland Islands." <https://um.fi/the-special-status-of-the-aland-islands>. Accessed: 7 November 2021.
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Greenland (n.d.). "Ministry of Foreign Affairs." <https://naalakkersuisut.gl/en/Naalakkersuisut/Departments/Udenrigsanliggende>. Accessed: 15 November 2021.
- Modeen, Tore (1973). *De folkrättsliga garantierna för bevarandet av Ålandsöarnas nationella karaktär*. Mariehamn: Ålands kulturstiftelse.
- Nielsson, Egill Thor (2013). "The West Nordic Council and Its Arctic Engagement." <https://arcticyearbook.com/arctic-yearbook/2013/2013-briefing-notes/63-the-west-nordic-council-and-its-arctic-engagement>. Accessed: 15 November 2021.
- Norden (2006). "De självstyrande områdena och nordiskt samarbete. Generalsekretärens kortläggning." <http://norden.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:769073/FULLTEXT01.pdf>. Accessed: 20 November 2021.
- Norden (2004). "Handlingsprogram Nordiskt fiske-, jord-, och skogsbruks- och livsmedelssamarbete 2005–2008." 7 October 2004. <https://nordicforestresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Handlingsprogram-Nordiskt-fiske-jord-och-skogsbruks-och-livsmedelssamarbete.pdf>. Accessed: 15 November 2021.

- Nordens institut på Åland (n.d.). "Om NIPÅ." <https://www.nipa.ax/sv/om-nipa>. Accessed: 7 June 2021.
- NordGen (n.d.). "The Board of NordGen." <https://www.nordgen.org/en/about/organisation/the-board-of-nordgen/>. Accessed: 27 August 2021.
- Nordic Co-operation (2019). "The Nordic Countries Need a Joint 'Climate Law'." <https://www.norden.org/en/news/nordic-countries-need-joint-climate-law>. Accessed: 15 November 2021.
- Nordic Co-operation (2018a). "Patients protected against doubtful nomadic doctors." 11 December 2018. <https://www.norden.org/en/news/patients-protected-against-doubtful-nomadic-doctors>. Accessed: 27 August 2021.
- Nordic Co-operation (2018b). "The Nordic Council Environment Prize 2018 Goes to the Natural Resource Council of Attu, West Greenland." <https://www.norden.org/en/news/nordic-council-environment-prize-2018-goes-natural-resource-council-attu-west-greenland>. Accessed: 15 November 2021.
- Nordic Co-operation (2016). "Landsstyreforslag: Færøernes ansøgning om at blive fuldgyldigt medlem af Nordisk Råd, Nordisk Ministerråd og omfattet af alle nordiske aftaler og konventioner." 27 June 2017. <https://www.norden.org/en/node/17822>. Accessed: 30 August 2021.
- Nordic Co-operation (n.d.a.). "Official Nordic co-operation." <https://www.norden.org/en/information/official-nordic-co-operation>. Accessed: 18 November 2021.
- Nordic Co-operation (n.d.b.). "Nordiska ministerrådet." https://www.norden.org/sites/default/files/2020-01/Organisationsdiagram_svensk.pdf. Accessed: 19 August 2021.
- Nordic Co-operation (n.d.c.). "Facts about Åland." <https://www.norden.org/en/information/facts-about-aland>. Accessed: 30 August 2021.
- Nordic Co-operation (n.d.d.). "Presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers in 2020." <https://www.norden.org/en/information/presidency-nordic-council-ministers-2020>. Accessed: 15 November 2021.
- Nordic Council of Ministers (2019). "Working Together on Solutions for the Future." <https://norden.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1362970/FULLTEXT01.pdf>. Accessed: 20 August 2021.
- Nordic Council of Ministers (2006). *De självstyrande områdena och det nordiska samarbetet. Generalsekreterarens kartläggning*. ANP 2006:743. Nordiska ministerrådet. <http://norden.diva-portal.org/smash/record.jsf?pid=diva2%3A769073&dswid=-5778>. Accessed: 28 October 2021.
- Nordic Energy Research (n.d.). "The Board." <https://www.nordicenergy.org/about-us/the-board/>. Accessed: 29 August 2021.
- Nordic Labour Journal (2021). "From Faroese independence to Nordic cooperation." 1 February 2021. <http://www.nordiclabourjournal.org/artikler/portrett/portrait-2021/artikle.2021-01-28.7014048791>. Accessed: 30 August 2021.
- Nordisk kulturfond (n.d.). "About us." <https://www.nordiskkulturfond.org/en/about-us/#Organisation>. Accessed: 30 August 2021.
- Nordisk Samarbejdsforum (2012). "Et samarbejde mellem Faerøerne, Grønland og Åland til Nordisk Råd." Nordisk Ministerråd, 29 October 2012, Helsinki.
- Nordiska rådet Finland's delegation (2019). "Verksamhetsberättelse 2018." 6 March 2019. https://www.parliament.fi/SV/vaski/KasittelytiedotValtiopaivaasia/Sidor/B_12+2019.aspx. Accessed: 3 June 2021.
- Nordiskt samarbete (2017). *Ett värdefullt samarbete*. ANP: 2017:778. Nordiska ministerrådet och Nordiska rådet. <https://norden.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1152251/FULLTEXT02.pdf>. Accessed: 26 April 2021.
- Nordiskt samarbete (n.d.). "Tidigare sessioner." <https://www.norden.org/sv/information/tidigare-sessioner>. Accessed: 12 November 2021.
- NORA. "About NORA." https://nora.fo/what-is-nora?_l=en. Accessed: 23 July 2021.
- NORA. "North Atlantic Think Tank." https://nora.fo/think-tank-recommendations?_l=en. Accessed: 30 August 2021.
- OJ L 226, 29 August 1980.
- OJ L 371, 31 December 1991.
- Olafsson, Árni (1982). "International Status of the Faroe Islands." *Nordisk tidsskrift i Int'l Ret* 51(29): 29–38.

- Palmer, Richard (2021). "Styra eller låta sig styras? Reflexioner kring Ålands autonomi och ekonomiska välfärd." In Sia Spiliopoulou Åkermark (ed.), *Styr ålänningarna sitt öde? Demokratiperspektiv på Åland*. Mariehamn: Cavannus. 51–71.
- Paul, Michael (2021). "Greenland's Project Independence." *SWP Comment*, 10 January 2021.
- Pram Gad, Ulrik & Jacobsen, Marc (2021). "300 år med et forviklet fællesskab." *DIIS Comment*, 26 May 2021. <https://www.diis.dk/publikationer/300-aar-forviklet-faellesskab>. Accessed: 14 November 2021.
- President of the Republic of Finland (2020). "Report on Foreign and Security Policy, and Nordic Cooperation Discussed by the President of the Republic of Finland and the Ministerial Committee on Foreign and Security Policy." <https://www.presidentti.fi/en/press-release/report-on-foreign-and-security-policy-and-nordic-cooperation-discussed-by-the-president-of-the-republic-and-the-ministerial-committee-on-foreign-and-security-policy/>. Accessed: 24 November 2021.
- Rahbek-Clemmensen, Jon (2019). "Let's (Not) Make A Deal: Geopolitics and Greenland." *War on the Rocks*, 28 August 2019, <https://warontherocks.com/2019/08/lets-not-make-a-deal-geopolitics-and-greenland/>. Accessed: 9 November 2021.
- á Rógvi, Kári (2015). "Revideringar av självstyrelselagstiftningen för Färöarna." In Sia Spiliopoulou Åkermark & Gunilla Herolf (eds.), *Självstyrelser i Norden i ett fredsperspektiv*, Nordiska rådet och Ålands fredsinstitut. 142–161, https://peace.ax/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Sjalvstyrelser_i_norden_webbversion1.pdf. Accessed: 23 September 2021.
- Sasi, Kimmo (2021). [Opening remarks] Nordiska Perspektiv på Självstyre: Åland, Grönland och Färöarna, 25 August 2021, Helsinki.
- Sermitsiaq (2021). "Ny koalition skal forhandle ansvarsområder hjem til Grønland." 11 April 2021, <https://sermitsiaq.ag/ny-koalition-forhandle-ansvarsomraader-hjem-groenland>. Accessed: 9 November 2021.
- Snaevarr, Árni (2017). "Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Greenland's Aspirations for Independence in Times of Climate Change." October 2017. <https://hr.un.org/sites/hr.un.org/files/editors/u439/Greenland%20Aspirations%20for%20Independence%20in%20Times%20of%20Climate%20Change.pdf>. Accessed: 15 November 2021.
- Simolin, Susann (2021). "Att påverka och påverka – Ålands ambitioner och självbestämmande inom EU." *Ålands Fredsinstitut*, nr 2–2021.
- Spiliopoulou Åkermark, Sia, Saila Heinikoski & Pirjo Kleemola-Juntunen (2018). *Demilitarisation and International Law in Context: The Åland Islands*. New York: Routledge.
- Spiliopoulou Åkermark, Sia (ed.) (2011). *The Åland Example and Its Components – Relevance for International Conflict Resolution*. Mariehamn: The Åland Islands Peace Institute.
- Statistics Faroe Islands (2021a). <https://hagstova.fo/en>. Accessed: 19 August 2021.
- Statistics Faroe Islands (2021b.) "Labour force." <https://hagstova.fo/en/society/labour/labour-force>. Accessed: 21 July 2021.
- Statistics Greenland (2020). "Greenland in Figures 2020." May 2020. <https://stat.gl/publ/en/GF/2020/pdf/Greenland%20in%20Figures%202020.pdf>. Accessed: 9 November 2021.
- Stephan, Sarah (2014). "Making Autonomies Matter. Sub-State Actor Accommodation in the Nordic Council and Nordic Council of Ministers." *European Diversity & Autonomy Papers, EDAP* (3): 1–41.
- Stoltenberg, Thorvald (2009). *Nordic Cooperation on Foreign and Security Policy*. Proposals presented to the extraordinary meeting of Nordic foreign ministers. 9 February 2009, Oslo.
- Suksi, Markku (2013). "Explaining the Robustness and Longevity of the Åland Example in Comparison with Other Autonomy Solutions." *International Journal on Minority and Group Rights*, 20(1): 51–66.
- Suksi, Markku (2009). "Legal Foundations, Structures and Institutions of Autonomy in Comparative Law." In Jorge Costa Oliveira & Paulo Cardinal (eds), *One Country, Two Systems, Three Legal Orders – Perspectives of Evolution*. Berlin Heidelberg: Springer. 495–519.

- Sølvará, Annika (2020). "International and comparative experiences." [Conference presentation]. Knowledge and Research as Motors for Regional Development and Innovation, 22 October 2020, Mariehamn. *Ålands fredsinstitut* (YouTube). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3x3qaWLEZBg>.
- Søndergaard, Jørgen S. (2006). "Grønland i nordisk samarbejde 1984–2004." In Hanne Petersen (ed.), *Grønland i Verdenssamfundet: udvikling og forandring af normer og praksis*. Forlaget Atuagkat 2006. 161–186.
- The Nordic Institute in Greenland (n.d.). "Information and Communication." <https://napa.gl/en/about-us/annual-report-2020/information-and-communication/>. Accessed: 15 November 2021.
- The Nordic House in the Faroe Islands (n.d.). <https://www.nlh.fo/en/>. Accessed: 28 October 2021.
- The Act on the Autonomy of Åland (Självstyrelselag för Åland), 16 August 1991/1144.
- Treaty of Cooperation between Finland, Denmark, Iceland, Norway and Sweden Concerning Co-operation, Helsinki, 23 March 1962, in force 1 July 1962. Available at: <http://norden.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:702145/FULLTEXT01.pdf> (accessed 12 April 2021).
- Vestnordisk Råd (2019). "Vestnordisk Råds rekommendationer." nr. 1/2019. <https://www.vestnordisk.is/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Oversigt-over-rekommandationer-efter-aarsmoede-2021.pdf>. Accessed: 15 November 2021.
- Vestnordisk Råd (n.d.). "Om Vestnordisk Råd." <https://www.vestnordisk.is/om-vestnordisk-rad/>. Accessed: 15 November 2021.
- West, Hallbera (2021). "Kvaliteten i Färöarnas utvidgade självstyre och relationen till Danmark." [Seminar presentation] Nordiska perspektiv på självstyre: Åland, Grønland och Färöarna, 25 August 2021, Helsinki.
- Wigell, Mikael (2013). "The Åland Example and Norm Entrepreneurship." *International Journal of Minority and Group Rights*, 20(1): 67–84.
- Åland.ax (2021). "Facts about Åland." <https://www.aland.ax/en/facts-about-aland>. Accessed: 7 November 2021.
- Åland Government (2017). "Minister Nina Fellman till Färöarna." 27 April 2017. <https://www.regeringen.ax/nyheter/minister-nina-fellman-faroarna>. Accessed: 20 August 2021.
- Ålandhotels (n.d.). "Facts about Åland." <https://www.alandhotels.fi/en/aland/facts-about-aland>. Accessed: 7 November 2021.
- Ålands lagting (2021). "Nordiska Rådets Berättelse 1/2020–2021" Ålands Delegation i Nordiska Rådet, 27 January 2021. https://www.lagtinget.ax/dokument/nordiska-radets-berattelse-12020-2021-49079#_Toc63257887. Accessed: 13 September 2021.
- Ålands lagting (2020). "Policy för Ålands delegation i Nordiska rådet." Ålands delegation i nordiska rådet, 21 October 2020.
- Ålands lagting (n.d.). "Lagtingets handlingar." <https://www.lagtinget.ax/dokument?search=nordiska+r%C3%A5det&period=All&type=All&responsibile=All>. Accessed: 15 November 2021.
- Ålands landskapsregering (2021a). "Landskapsregeringens externpolitik." Meddelande nr 2/2020–2021. 14 January 2021. <https://www.lagtinget.ax/dokument/meddelande-22020-2021-48834>. Accessed: 15 November 2021.
- Ålands landskapsregering (2021b). "Inspel från Åland gällande gränsrestriktioner och testning vid gränserna." ÅLR 2021/1178, 9 February 2021. <https://www.regeringen.ax/sites/www.regeringen.ax/files/attachments/protocol/nr3-2021-enskild-rk1c.pdf>. Accessed: 15 November 2021.
- Ålands landskapsregering (2020). "Årsredovisning 2020." https://www.arkivet.ax/sites/default/files/attachments/page/arsredovisning_2020.pdf. Accessed: 7 November 2021.
- Ålands landskapsregering (2019). "Åländsk lagstiftning." <https://www.regeringen.ax/alandsk-lagstiftning>. Accessed: 7 November 2021.
- Ålands landskapsregering (2016). "Fullvärdigt medlemskap för Åland i det formella nordiska samarbetet." Meddelande nr 4/2015–2016, 15 September 2016.
- Ålands statistik- och utredningsbyrå (2021a). "Studeranden utanför Åland." <https://www.asub.ax/sv/statistik/studerande-utanfor-aland-2020>. Accessed: 7 November 2021.

Ålands statistik- och utredningsbyrå
(2021b). “Konjunkturindikatorer 2020.”
Översikter och indikatorer 2021:1,
10 February 2021, [https://www.asub.
ax/sites/www.asub.ax/files/statistics/
o20211_konjunkturindikatorer_2020.
pdf](https://www.asub.ax/sites/www.asub.ax/files/statistics/o20211_konjunkturindikatorer_2020.pdf). Accessed: 8 November 2021.

Ålands statistik- och utredningsbyrå (2020).
“Befolkningens språk, födelsort och
medborgarskap 31.12.2020.” [https://
www.asub.ax/sv/statistik/befolknin-
gens-sprak-fodelseort-och-medbor-
garskap-31122020](https://www.asub.ax/sv/statistik/befolkningens-sprak-fodelseort-och-medborgarskap-31122020). Accessed:
7 November 2021.

Ålands statistik- och utredningsbyrå
(n.d.). “FN-indikatorer för hållbar
utveckling.” [https://www.asub.ax/
sv/temaomraden/hallbar-utveckling/
fn-indikatorer-hallbar-utveckling](https://www.asub.ax/sv/temaomraden/hallbar-utveckling/fn-indikatorer-hallbar-utveckling).
Accessed: 13 September 2021.

INTERVIEWS

Faroe Islands

Interview 1, 16 June 2021, online
Interview 2, 5 July 2021, online
Interview 3, 22 July 2021, online
Interview 4, 9 September 2021, telephone
Additional information through email
communication with Interviewee 5,
30 August 2021

Greenland

Interview, 29 March 2021, online, Greenland
Interview, 29 April 2021, online, Denmark
Interview, 6 May 2021, online, Greenland
Background Discussion, 18 January 2021,
online, Denmark

Åland

Interview, 3 June 2021, online, Åland
Interview, 7 June 2021, online, Åland
Interview 1, 8 June 2021, online, Åland
Interview 2, 8 June 2021, online, Åland
Interview, 14 June 2021, online, Åland
Interview, 6 September 2021, online, Åland

CONTRIBUTORS

Katja Creutz is the Programme Director of FIIA's Global Security programme. Her main field of expertise is international law, with a special focus on issues of responsibility, human rights and global governance. Dr Creutz holds a Doctor of Laws degree and a Master of Laws programme degree from the University of Helsinki and a Master of Political Science degree from Åbo Akademi University. She has previously worked as Research Fellow at the Erik Castrén Institute of International Law and Human Rights of the University of Helsinki. Her recent publications include 'Nordic Cooperation amid Pandemic Travel Restrictions' (2021) and 'Nordic Experiences in the UN Human Rights Council: A *Tour d'Horizon* of 2019 with Iceland and Denmark' (2021).

Sia Spiliopoulou Åkermark, Doctor of Laws, is Director of the Åland Islands Peace Institute and Associate Professor of International Law. She has worked in academia, non-governmental organisations and research institutions. Her work focuses on diversity, minorities, territorial autonomy solutions and legal restraints on the use of force. Spiliopoulou Åkermark has served as an expert and President of the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention on National Minorities of the Council of Europe. She is a member of the Contact Group between the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in Finland and the Åland Government. Her publications include *Demilitarization and International Law in Context – The Åland Islands* (Routledge 2018) and *Självstyrelser i Norden i ett fredsperspektiv – Färöarna, Grönland och Åland* (2015, digital open access), which was supported by the Nordic Council.

PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED IN THE SERIES

- Katja Creutz, Sofie Berglund, Telli Betül Karacan, Alberto Giacometti, Kristi Haugevik, Ninna Nyberg Sørensen, Mari Wøien Meijer, Axa Lares**
Nordic cooperation amid pandemic travel restriction, FIIA Report 68 (2021)
- Niklas Helwig (ed.)**
Strategic autonomy and the transformation of the EU: New agendas for security, diplomacy, trade and technology, FIIA Report 67 (2021)
- Bart Gaens, Ville Sinkkonen**
Great-power competition and the rising US-China rivalry: Towards a new normal?, FIIA Report 66 (2020)
- Teemu Tammikko, Tuomas Iso-Markku**
The EU's external action on counter-terrorism: Development, structures and actions, FIIA Report 65 (2020)
- Antto Vihma, Gunilla Reischl, Astrid Nonbo Andersen, Sofie Berglund**
Climate change and populism: Comparing the populist parties' climate policies in Denmark, Finland and Sweden, FIIA Report 64 (2020)
- Niklas Helwig, Juha Jokela, Clara Portela (eds.)**
Sharpening EU sanctions policy: Challenges and responses in a geopolitical era, FIIA Report 63 (2020)
- Ryhor Nizhnikau, Arkady Moshes (eds.)**
Ukraine and its regions: Societal trends and policy implications, FIIA Report 62 (2020)
- Emma Hakala, Harri Mikkola, Juha Käpylä, Matti Pesu & Mika Aaltola**
Suomen huoltovarmuus ja Baltian alue: Tiivistyvät yhteydet muuttuvassa turvallisuussympäristössä, FIIA Report 61 (2019)
- Leo Michel & Matti Pesu**
Strategic deterrence redux: Nuclear weapons and European security, FIIA Report 60 (2019)
- Katja Creutz, Tuomas Iso-Markku, Kristi Raik and Teija Tiilikainen**
The changing global order and its implications for the EU, FIIA Report 59 (2019)
- Arkady Moshes, András Rác (eds.)**
What has remained of the USSR: Exploring the erosion of the post-Soviet space, FIIA Report 58 (2019)
- Marcin Kaczmarek, Mark N. Katz and Teija Tiilikainen**
The Sino-Russian and US-Russian relationships: Current developments and future trends, FIIA Report 57 (2018)
- Kristi Raik, Mika Aaltola, Jyrki Kallio and Katri Pynnöniemi**
The security strategies of the US, China, Russia and the EU: Living in different worlds, FIIA Report 56 (2018)
- Harri Mikkola, Mika Aaltola, Mikael Wigell, Tapio Juntunen ja Antto Vihma**
Hybridivaikuttaminen ja demokratian resilienssi: ulkoisen häirinnän mahdollisuudet ja torjuntakyky liberaaleissa demokratioissa, FIIA Report 55 (2018)
- Mika Aaltola, Charly Saloniemi-Pasternak, Juha Käpylä and Ville Sinkkonen (eds.)**
Between change and continuity: Making sense of America's evolving global engagement, FIIA Report 54 (2018)
- Marco Siddi (ed.)**
EU member states and Russia: national and European debates in an evolving international environment, FIIA Report 53 (2018)
- Elina Sinkkonen (ed.)**
The North Korean Conundrum: International responses and future challenges, FIIA Report 52 (2017)
- Mika Aaltola and Bart Gaens (eds.)**
Managing Unpredictability
Transatlantic relations in the Trump era, FIIA Report 51 (2017)
- Tuomas Iso-Markku, Juha Jokela, Kristi Raik, Teija Tiilikainen, and Eeva Innola (eds.)**
The EU's Choice
Perspectives on deepening and differentiation, FIIA Report 50 (2017)
- Mika Aaltola, Christian Fjäder, Eeva Innola, Juha Käpylä, Harri Mikkola**
Huoltovarmuus muutoksessa: Kansallinen varautumisen haasteet kansainvälisessä toimintaympäristössä, FIIA Report 49 (2016)
- Juha Pyykönen**
Nordic Partners of NATO: How similar are Finland and Sweden within NATO cooperation? FIIA Report 48 (2016)

- Kristi Raik & Sinikukka Saari (eds.)**
Key Actors in the EU's Eastern Neighbourhood: Competing perspectives on geostrategic tensions, FIIA Report 47 (2016)
- Toivo Martikainen, Katri Pynnöniemi, Sinikukka Saari & Ulkopoliittisen instituutin työryhmä**
Venäjän muuttuva rooli Suomen lähialueilla: Valtioneuvoston selvitys- ja tutkimustoiminnan raportti
- Mika Aaltola & Anna Kronlund (eds.)**
After Rebalance: Visions for the future of US foreign policy and global role beyond 2016, FIIA Report 46 (2016)
- Katri Pynnöniemi & András Rác (eds.)**
Fog of Falsehood: Russian Strategy of Deception and the Conflict in Ukraine, FIIA Report 45 (2016)
- Niklas Helwig (ed.)**
Europe's New Political Engine: Germany's role in the EU's foreign and security policy, FIIA Report 44 (2016)
- András Rác**
Russia's Hybrid War in Ukraine: Breaking the Enemy's Ability to Resist, FIIA Report 43 (2015)
- Katri Pynnöniemi, James Mashiri**
Venäjän sotilasdoktriinit vertailussa: Nykyinen versio viritettiin kriisiajan taajuudelle, FIIA Report 42 (2015)
- Andrei Yeliseyev**
Keeping the door ajar: Local border traffic regimes on the EU's eastern borders, FIIA Report 41 (2014)
- Mika Aaltola, Juha Käpylä, Harri Mikkola, Timo Behr**
Towards the Geopolitics of Flows: Implications for Finland, FIIA Report 40 (2014)
- Juha Jokela, Markku Kotilainen, Teija Tiilikainen, Vesa Vihriälä**
EU:n suunta: Kuinka tiivis liitto? FIIA Report 39 (2014)
- Juha Jokela (ed.)**
Multi-speed Europe? Differentiated integration in the external relations of the European Union, FIIA Report 38 (2013)
- Sean Roberts**
Russia as an international actor: The view from Europe and the US, FIIA Report 37 (2013)
- Rosa Balfour, Kristi Raik**
Equipping the European Union for the 21st century: National diplomacies, the European External Action Service and the making of EU foreign policy, FIIA Report 36 (2013)
- Katri Pynnöniemi (ed.)**
Russian critical infrastructures: Vulnerabilities and policies, FIIA Report 35 (2012)
- Tanja Tamminen (ed.)**
Strengthening the EU's peace mediation capacities: Leveraging for peace through new ideas and thinking, FIIA Report 34 (2012)
- Harri Mikkola, Jukka Anteroinen, Ville Lauttamäki (eds.)**
Uhka vai mahdollisuus? Suomi ja Euroopan puolustus- ja turvallisuusmarkkinoiden muutos, FIIA Report 33 (2012)
- Touko Piiparinen & Ville Brummer (eds.)**
Global networks of mediation: Prospects and avenues for Finland as a peacemaker, FIIA Report 32 (2012)
- Mia Pihlajamäki & Nina Tynkkynen (eds.)**
Governing the blue-green Baltic Sea: Societal challenges of marine eutrophication prevention, FIIA Report 31 (2011)
- Arkady Moshes & Matti Nojonen (eds.)**
Russia-China relations: Current state, alternative futures, and implications for the West, FIIA Report 30 (2011)
- Teija Tiilikainen & Kaisa Korhonen (eds.)**
Norden – Making a Difference? Possibilities for enhanced Nordic cooperation in international affairs, FIIA Report 29 (2011)
- Timo Behr (ed.)**
Hard Choices: The EU's options in a changing Middle East, FIIA Report 28 (2011)
- Jyrki Kallio**
Tradition in Chinese politics: The Party-state's reinvention of the past and the critical response from public intellectuals, FIIA Report 27 (2011)
- Steven Parham**
Controlling borderlands? New perspectives on state peripheries in southern Central Asia and northern Afghanistan, FIIA Report 26 (2010)
- Mari Luomi**
Managing Blue Gold: New Perspectives on Water Security in the Levantine Middle East, FIIA Report 25 (2010)
- Tapani Paavonen**
A New World Economic Order: Overhauling the Global Economic Governance as a Result of the Financial Crisis, 2008–2009, FIIA Report 24 (2010)
- Toby Archer, Timo Behr, Tuulia Nieminen (eds)**
Why the EU fails – Learning from past experiences to succeed better next time, FIIA Report 23 (2010)
- Louise Wiuff Moe**
Addressing state fragility in Africa: A need to challenge the established 'wisdom'? FIIA Report 22 (2010)
- Tarja Cronberg**
Nuclear-Free Security: Refocusing Nuclear Disarmament and the Review of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, FIIA Report 21 (2010)

Kristian Kurki (ed.)

The Great Regression? Financial Crisis in an Age of Global Interdependence, FIIA Report 20 (2009)

Anna Korppoo & Alex Luta (ed.)

Towards a new climate regime? Views of China, India, Japan, Russia and the United States on the road to Copenhagen, FIIA Report 19 (2009)

Minna-Mari Salminen & Arkady Moshes

Practise what you preach – The prospects for visa freedom in Russia-EU relations, FIIA Report 18 (2009)

Charly Saloniuss-Pasternak (ed.)

From Protecting Some to Securing many: Nato's Journey from a Military Alliance to a Security Manager, FIIA report 17 (2007)

Toby Archer & Tihomir Popovic

The Trans-Saharan Counter-Terrorism Initiative: The US War on Terrorism in Northwest Africa, FIIA Report 16 (2007)

THE FAROE ISLANDS, GREENLAND AND THE ÅLAND ISLANDS IN NORDIC COOPERATION

Nordic political cooperation, embodied by the Nordic Council and the Nordic Council of Ministers, encompasses the five Nordic countries and the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland. This long-standing regional cooperation functions as a model of inclusiveness and democratic sustainability as it strengthens the cooperation networks between all the jurisdictions with legislative competences and enables the participation of the three islands that do not enjoy formal statehood. The Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland have for decades participated in the Nordic institutions, and their contribution to Nordic cooperation extends beyond niceties.

The participation of the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland in Nordic cooperation increases knowledge about different governance arrangements, peoples and rights. In addition, their substantive knowledge and expertise have played a decisive role in areas such as Arctic affairs and sustainability, with the protection of the environment high up on their agendas. Their participation is an incremental process, however, where the status of the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland in Nordic cooperation is entangled with national and international political and legal considerations. While all three seek parity, the Faroe Islands have appeared as the driving force for further integration into Nordic cooperation. /