

Greenland's geopolitical reality and its political-economic consequences

By Jens Kaalhauge Nielsen, Associate Professor, Ph.D. Political Science Yale, University of Greenland

DUPI Working Paper No. 2001/6

Geopolitics is an old concept, which received its classic modern form in the work of Friedrich Ratzel,¹ Rudolf Kjéllen, Harold J. Mackinder, Alfred T. Mahan, and Karl Haushofer. It can be regarded as an intellectual approach that aims at establishing a political grammar of world politics, through a scientific discipline based on the objective reality of geography. Thus, geopolitics is often seen as a "realistic" attempt to establish world policy as an objective science based on some kind of "physico-spatial reference". The implicit assumption is a discreet claim that it is possible to study international politics and the allocation of power as one studies the weather: as a system based on objective, natural laws with a fixed and firmly established pattern of forces and indispensable reference points. Hence, Halford J. Mackinder believed that he could identify "the Geographical Pivot of History."² In this way, somewhere behind the concept of geopolitics as a scientific concept lies a compelling idea: a theory of the international system based on sheer objective forces, which can be reduced to the invariable necessities of an ultimate "physical" matrix that was merely given expression by the vocabulary of "national interests." We find the same notion in the concept of "realpolitik," the idea that it is possible to conduct a policy grounded on a realm of crucial necessities, as in Bismarck's policies framed in the image of Iron and Blood.

Today, however, it is obvious that such a science never was and never will be. Since it is clear that the modern "geographical realities" are not a simple network of "physical logistics" based on "natural resources" but that geography itself is a social "construction" based on the dynamics of historical parameters the inherent logic of social systems themselves. It is a part of the picture, however, that most of the theorists of geopolitics took a broader approach than sheer naturalism. In reality almost all these theorists did not

¹ Friedrich Ratzel's influence on modern geography is legendary. Robert E. Dickinson writes about Ratzel: "There is no doubt that Friedrich Ratzel has been the greatest single contributor to the development of the Geography of Man." Robert E. Dickinson (1969), *The Makers of Modern Geography*, New York: Friederich A. Praeger, p.64.

² Halford J. Mackinder (1904), "The Geographical Pivot of History." *Geographical Journal*, vol.23, pp.421-444.

work with unmediated geographical facts but discussed the social coding of geopolitical space.³ For Mahan,⁴ it became a study of the worldwide control over strategic lines of communication; for Ratzel, it became a study of "die Geographie der Staten, des Verkehrs und des Krieges." Kjellén, for his part, was even more involved with the realm of cultural and social factors,⁵ suggesting modern system theory. It is also notable that Mackinder in his famous paper explained, "I have no wish to stray into excessive materialism."⁶ The refutation of a "pure" objective science of "geography" does not negate the relevance of physico-spatial parameters of the world, but it does show that that "reality" always-already is socially - and ultimately culturally - configured. Obviously, of course, at each historical point in time there does exist a geopolitical reality as long as we understand that this reality is the function of the social configuration of "geographical" factors.

Thus, the concept of geopolitics is still an interesting and intellectually challenging one, because it raises the compelling question of how the "geographical" dimension is configured as a factor in the social interaction of the world - of which political manifestations are a special case. Hence, the concept of geopolitics is of theoretical interest for at least two reasons:

a) because the physical, spatial parameters of the world, as an object of social science analysis might still provide us with a special pathway into the scientific study of international politics.

b) because it is important to identify a pattern of "objective" correlation in the international order which can save modern social analysis from the pitfall of relativism.

The challenge is to re-interpret the concept and turn its meaning away from the old naturalistic interpretation so as the social organisation of the world's geophysical realities, and its related symbolic meaning move centre-stage in analysis. In all this, one must not forget that from a political point of view, geography has symbolic implications. All state-leaders and political analysts must deal with the fact that the geography of the world is also a mental landscape, which is exploited in the field of tourism and where symbolic implications have political effects every day. To maintain a particular geographical image can be part of a political strategy for diplomatic recognition and a tool

³ In reality, the early school of geopolitics did produce a rich literature, brilliant in its sensitive analysis, which came very close to a plausible account of many of the prevailing objective conditions for the power politics of their time. Hence, the work of Mahan had great influence on the thinking of Presidents William McKinley and Theodore Roosevelt. G.R. Sloan (1988), *Geopolitics in United States Strategic Policy, 1890-1987*, Brighton, UK: Wheatshaf Books, p.20.

⁴ Alfred Thayer Mahan (1987), *The Influence of Sea Power upon History, 1660-1783*, New York: Dover.

⁵ Rudolf Kjellén (1916), *Staten som Lifsform*, Stockholm.

⁶ Mackinder, op.cit. p.422.

in the pursuit of gains of various kinds. However, due to space limitations, we cannot pursue the question of the function of the cultural symbolisation of the geographical realm of the world, which in the final analysis would demand a complete theory of symbolic politics.

In the following analysis, I will conduct an interpretative analysis of Greenland's foreign policy viewed in the light of its geopolitical realities, and discussed with reference to social organisation.

The purpose is to understand the societal capacities by which Greenland can approach societal and economical sustainability, and to use that in order to consider the possibility of a Greenlandic State fulfilling the role of a sovereign actor in the international system. This paper can only go a short way into a systematic logical analysis of the objective *Gestalt* in Greenland's' strategic possibilities. A more full-scale analysis must wait.

GREENLAND'S GEOGRAPHICAL SPACE

At first glance, the geographical distinctiveness of Greenland is paramount. Indeed, the contrast between its huge area in the Arctic zone and the extremely sparse population, which inhabits its coastline, has established many of the characteristic parameters, which determine its distinctiveness as a society. One of the most striking facts about Greenland is that it is a tiny micro-state,⁷ with only 57,000 inhabitants one of the smallest in the world. This very small community inhabits a titanic part of the world's landmass in the form of an island, most of which is permanently covered with ice, yet which supports a surprisingly rich variety of climate, flora, geology, and wild life. The amazing distance from North to South is 2,670 kilometres and only 740 kilometres separate the North of Greenland from the North Pole. The southern point of Greenland, however, is far to the South, at the same latitude as Oslo and Saint Petersburg. Greenland is an extension of the American continent but functions as a bridge between it, Russia and Europe. Its military importance is a well-known case of this role. The Arctic region has in modern times attained an irreducible military significance. The Thule Air Base plays a key role in the whole structure of the US ballistic missile early-warning system. Hence, the

⁷ By a microstate, I will speak of states or significantly independent administrative territories, such as home rule areas, with no more than 1million inhabitants. Zhen-Hua Liu and Carson L. Jenkins mention that there are 270 territorial units in the world, of which 200 are independent states. According to Liu and Jenkins 70 out of the 200 independent states are microstates. Z-H. Liu and C.L. Jenkins, "Country Size and Tourism Development: A Cross-nation Analysis." In Lino Briguglio et al (ed.) (1996): *Sustainable Tourism in Islands and Small States, Issues and Politics*, New York: Pinter, p. 92.

paramount military significance of Greenland is an integral part of its geopolitical realities.

Observing these facts, we detect a kind of paradox. The world's biggest island is home for one of the tiniest microstates in the world. The uniqueness of the Greenland case starts with this basic fact. For many microstates are tiny communities on tiny islands, or situated on very small pieces of land (as in the case of Andorra and Kuwait) such that the geographical extent of their territories does not offer any great variations in temperature, flora, fauna, or situation. The Greenland case is very different, and some of the potential for the Greenland community is embodied in this fact. Within its gigantic landmass, it can offer a richer range of options for tourism, industry and demographic expansion than is possible for most of other microstates. Indeed, Greenland is a place with a substantial but vague promise of a great future.

For quite a while, Greenland was by definition a place at the furthest outskirts of what the world considered to be the world. It was peripheral both in a geographical and in a civilisational sense: who would actually settle in a place of eternal ice, with an Arctic climate? Historically, the reason why this community is one of the smallest in the world derives from its being in a place where living conditions, until very recently, were so extreme that it was an impossible to sustain a sizeable population. Indeed, through most of their history the Inuit population was very low due to cycles of hunger and epidemic. Hence, through most of world history, Greenland was kept on the absolute periphery of the world. The harsh climate and the distance from the main centres of civilisation made this an essential condition for the destiny of the place.

THE FOREIGN POLICY OF GREENLAND

Greenland's foreign policy was at one point the exclusive responsibility of the Danish State. It is still supposed to be so. But even before the introduction of the *Hjemmestyre* (Home Rule Government) the real situation was different. We must not forget that the origin of the new *Hjemmestyre*-regime was essentially an act of foreign policy. Since the new Home Rule order was the product of a strong political opposition to the EU and in reality Greenland politicians conducted Foreign Politics on the grand scale by voting Greenland out of the EU.

Since the first days of the *Hjemmestyre*, Greenland has increasingly taken over element after element of its foreign politics. This process of taking in charge their own foreign politics has been characterised not by a single dramatic, "revolutionary" act, but by the "wisdom" of a thousand streams. In this

way, the effects and consequences of Greenland's foreign politics come to life bit by bit. Increasingly Greenland has developed a full range of activities. These activities include Greenland's participation in NAFO and other fishery organisations, and in the co-operation between the Nordic countries, including the Nordic Council.⁸ Furthermore, Greenland has emphasised its distinct character as a society and a people located in the Arctic and Polar Regions of the world: a process which found early political expression in the ICC (1980) and which reached a certain symbolic turning point with the creation of the Arctic Council in 1996. Within this process, Greenland has used the path of the United Nation to a very high extent. Of crucial symbolic significance have been the United Nation's concept of "indigenous people" and their proclaimed rights - a policy running in parallel with the Danish Government's active policy in support of indigenous people, which is based on the legislation which the *Folketing* passed in 1994. Thus, in the context of the Human Rights Commission, Greenland has a representative participating actively in the Working Group for Indigenous People's rights (WGIP),⁹ and has participated in the Danish delegation to the Commission's yearly sessions in Geneva. Likewise, since 1992 a Greenland representative has had a permanent option to participate in the Danish parliamentary delegation to the UN. An important step in the process of taking over more and more functions in foreign politics was the establishment of an international office under the Secretary of the *Landsstyreformand* (the Home Rule Government's Premier) in 1994. In 1996, the office got its own director and its name was changed to the Foreign Office.

Obviously, when we speak of the channels by which Greenland has demonstrated independence of political will, we cannot forget the Thule Issue, which skilful historians have turned into a continuous "cause célèbre". The quest for a political voice and ideological identity is perhaps most drastically played out in regard to the American military present in Greenland. However, the purpose has most often been to try to influence the Danish Government by playing the American card. Due to the "dangerous" nature of this issue Danish politics were inherently exclusive and elitist.¹⁰ Using the Thule Air Base as a reference point, Greenland politicians have countless times conducted their own foreign politics, at least within the orbit of symbolic politics. The latest case has been around the possible upgrading of the U.S. missile defence system in Thule.

⁸ The Nordic Council consists of the 5 Nordic countries, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Finland, and Iceland, plus representatives for the three home rule areas, Greenland, the Faroe Islands, and the Åland Island. The Council was established 23 March 1962.

⁹ The WGIP was established by a UN resolution of 7 May 1982.

¹⁰ For a discussion of this issue, see Hans Mouritzen (1998), "Thule and Theory: Democracy vs. Elitism in Danish Foreign Policy." *Danish Foreign Policy Yearbook 1998*, Copenhagen: Danish Institute of International Affairs, pp.79-101.

Finally, in an historical irony, Greenland has increasingly begun to align itself with the EU. Increasing efforts have been made to get at least one foot into the warm, and Greenland has so far benefited from a very favourable fishing agreement. Indeed, the political love affair with the EU has reached the point where Ole Dorph, the influential major of Ilulissat (the main city in the Disco Area) has stepped forward into the political limelight and publicly declared himself a supporter of EU membership. Ole Dorph has suggested that Greenland conduct a new plebiscite, and he subscribes to a vision of Greenland in some way using the EU as a counterweight to the US. He imagines that Greenland can use EU machinery to combat the U.S. ban on the export of sealskin.¹¹ The editor of *Sermitsiak* (one of the two newspapers in Greenland), following up Ole Dorph's idea, speculates about the benefits that will follow if Europe, and not Denmark, take over economic responsibility for Greenland.¹²

On a broad spectrum, Greenland has increasingly become a genuine actor in its own sphere of foreign policy. Does this mean that Greenland, has become (or at least is in the process of becoming) in all but name a real sovereign nation, the real master of its own political situation?

THE ISSUE OF SOVEREIGNTY AND SUSTAINABILITY

The concept of sovereignty is a difficult but compelling one. Since Jean Bodin claimed that "the prerogatives of sovereignty are indivisible"¹³ which, of course, is a logical derivative of his claim that it is "the absolute and perpetual power",¹⁴ the correct interpretation of it has kept philosophical debate alive. We shall not try to contribute to the ultimate solution to this question. We merely assert that when we speak of sovereignty, we should separate sovereignty as a measure of the legitimisation of authority from sovereignty as a measure of an actor's capacity to exercise the constituents of power. Taking the latter, we should treat sovereignty as an ideal type. This implies that, from the point of view of power relations, it is always an approximation to an ideal. In a world where all production and social relations are increasingly globalised and societally interpenetrated, the potentialities of "autarchic" self-sufficiency

¹¹ Ole Dorph (2000), "Siunut: Grønland bør være fuldgyldigt EU-medlem." *Sermitsiak* 1. September 2000. No.35. vol. 42. page 3. Dorph's position in Foreign politics was further strengthened after he became a member of the *Selvstyrekommision* (Self-Government Commission), which will play a key role in the further development of Greenland's Foreign Politics. Press bulletin of 3 January 2001 from the Home Rule Government.

¹² *ibid.* page 2.

¹³ Jean Bodin (1992), *On Sovereignty: Four chapters from the Six Books of the Commonwealth*. Edited and translated by Julian H. Franklin. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p.104.

¹⁴ *Op Cit.* p.1.

are clearly limited. At least, as regards an actor's actual operational freedom, in a historical world system of power-relations, the notion of sovereignty must be regarded as an approximation.

The question is: What are the conditions for Greenland to become a sovereign nation, if that is what the Greenland community desires? For quite a while there has been a lot of talk about independence within political circles in Greenland. Opinion polls show that 80 per cent of Greenlanders are in favour of some kind of independence, but not if it will result in a reduction of the comparatively high Greenlandic standards of living.¹⁵ In that response from the Greenlandic population one can detect an important limitation for the exercise of any political will.

For one thing is certain: Whatever degree of relative autonomy one assigns to the political system, politics cannot be successfully conducted if the gap between it and economic, societal, and cultural realities is too great. Generally, it becomes problematic to obtain real sovereignty if one does not have a society, which is economically and societally sustainable.¹⁶ I hesitate to make this statement absolute, since the political order of the modern world is by no means a simple, mechanical reflection of economic or societal factors. Obviously, there exists an orbit of "action" that legitimises Carl Schmitt's talk about "the exception,"¹⁷ which for Schmitt is not an accidental but an ontological principle. However that may be, political sovereignty and the sustainability are normally strongly correlated, so as a general rule a certain minimum of nation-state sovereignty requires a minimum degree of sustainability.

The concept of "sustainability" is to some extent a modernised version of the old geopolitical discussion of "autarky". But the newer concept, at least in regard to the economic sphere,¹⁸ does not assume any absolute self-sufficiency in factors of production, but only a relative, self-sustaining equilibrium in factors of exchange. It is important here to emphasise that there are at least two aspects of the concept of sustainability: the economic aspect and the societal. By economic sustainability we refer to the equilibrium by which a nation is able to establish a level of production that equals the sum of its con-

¹⁵ Although Greenland exhibits many structural features of a "Third World" country, it has a high standard of living and is, in consumption level, a clear member of the affluent Western World. The living standard of Greenland is supposed to be on the level of Great Britain and Canada. The "miracle" behind this high standard of living is the *bloktilskud*. From the perspective of living standards alone, Greenland is the wonderland of the Arctic.

¹⁶ The relation between sovereignty and sustainability is not a simple "mechanical" relationship, since the very concept of the political system needs to be taken carefully into analytical consideration. The exclusiveness of politics as an independent sphere is not disputed. The argument pursued here is not one of economic determinism. However, the relative autonomy of the political sphere does not negate the fact that each historical situation has economic, social, and cultural conditions and points of absolute reality. But the constraints are not imprescriptable causes but are shaped by system dynamics.

¹⁷ Carl Schmitt (1988), *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*, Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press.

¹⁸ However, the concept of "autarky" is still present in the concept of societal sustainability.

sumption and investment, when these allocative streams are measured in cash terms. Within the realm of international trade sustainability is defined as the balance between export and import. The concept of societal sustainability is more complex. Primarily by this concept we refer to whether a society, through its agencies of socialisation and its sources of societal capacity, is able to produce the necessary pattern of social roles and the corresponding pattern of competencies that the level of societal development requires.

WHAT ARE THE CONDITIONS FOR GREENLAND'S SUSTAINABILITY?

The basic economic and societal reality is that modern Greenland is not a sustainable society. Its overall social order depends on Danish transfer money amounting to no less than 60 per cent of the state budget. At least in the current state of the game, the wealth of Greenland's vast territory does not secure the country a solid income, or provide it with the necessary degree of economic sustainability.

In order to understand this we will briefly analyse the structural characteristics of Greenland's industrial sector. Greenland's economy has often been divided into four sectors, or "pillars," and for the sake of convenience we will accept this classification. The four sectors are a) fishery and hunting, b) tourism, c) raw materials, and d) land-based industry.

If we look at these four sectors, it becomes clear that the only exporting sector at the moment is the fishery industry. Indeed, fishery contributes 90-95 per cent of export income¹⁹ by and large. And this is the only sector where production is not a derivative from the Danish transfer money.

Obviously, the huge area of Greenland suggests many potential economic options, the most important undoubtedly being the possibility of finding and utilising a variety of important raw materials. Thus, the raw-material sector is of great future importance for Greenland, but the cold, simple truth is that at present it does not provide Greenland with any income worth speaking of. This pattern might change, but the latest drilling for oil in the Fylla Bank Area, west of Greenland's capital Nuuk, in the summer of 2000 had a negative outcome. Equally important, even in the best of circumstances, it is highly probable that it will take about 15-20 years before Greenland is able to earn a sizeable income from oil and gas, even after success has been achieved in drilling. But the raw material sector is a kind of joker, since production relies on world-market prices and there is nothing yet to suggest that Green-

¹⁹ 25 per cent of Greenland's workforce, or 6,400 people, is employed in fishery. The fishery industry provides Greenlandic society with roughly DKK 2 billion in export earnings.

land will turn into an Arctic Kuwait. Companies are reluctant to invest in the Arctic because of the extremely high cost of production. So the realisation of the great potential in the raw material sector depends on a variety of factors over which Greenland has little or no influence. Furthermore, the potential benefit of an oil or gas boom is financial rather than social, since the employment effect of a raw material sector has been calculated as rather small. The dream of an Arctic economic breakthrough in the domain of raw materials is therefore both a very uncertain and a slippery notion.

Another important option associated with vast geographical extent is the market value of the landscape as a leisure and consumption product. In theory there should exist boundless opportunities for the development of a sizeable and dynamic tourism industry. Given the magical beauty of the Greenlandic vistas, with their icebergs, Northern lights, and rich wildlife, the idea of successful Greenlandic tourism appears more than self-evident. However, the realities are different. The numbers of tourists is not very impressive, and is far below the 61,000 well-off tourists per year that the Greenland tourism authorities were dreaming of.²⁰ At present the infrastructure in Greenland is not able to cope with an influx of tourists as high as 61,000; it does not have the hotels, the ships and other facilities to serve such numbers. It is difficult to get a precise estimate of the income from the current level of tourism or whether the tourist industry today is producing anything, which could rightly be called a surplus. The experts cannot agree whether Greenland tourism is producing an effective surplus or whether it is actually a loss-making transaction paid for by the Home Rule Government.²¹ In her analysis of the tourist industry, economist Lise Lyck has declared, "The strategy for tourism must today be considered a failure."²² The main reason she advances is that the strategy for tourism in Greenland has been developed too separate from the transport-sector and has involved the private sector too little. But whatever the case might be, it is certain that the "earnings" from the Greenland tourism do not amount to much. In other words, the current income of tourism is marginal by comparison with the Greenland Home Rule Budget. The tourist industry is not the magic key to a sustainable Greenlandic economy.

²⁰ In 1997 there were 16,200 tourists, and it was estimated that they provided an income of about DKK 150 million and full-time jobs for 220 people. Greenland Tourism, whose strategy was aimed at Denmark and Germany, claimed 26,000 tourists in the year 2000. However, newly increased airport fees might function as a brake on rapid development.

²¹ Hence, in her book on tourist strategy, Lise Lyck argues that the official calculation of a tourist surplus does not take various hidden costs into consideration and "that tourism has brought a net economic loss to Greenlandic society." (p. 91) See, Lise Lyck (ed.) (1998): *Turismstrategi og -udvikling i Grønland*, Nordic Press.

²² Lise Lyck (1999), *Arctic International Trade: A Study focused on the Greenlandic International Trade Regime*, Copenhagen Business School, p.18.

The fourth, and last pillar, in the classic account of Greenland's industry is the so-called "land-based sector", which basically is a residual concept for all those industries that are not involved in fishery, raw materials and tourism. The land-based industries consist of trade, production, construction, services, consulting, and the restaurant-business. It is the biggest industrial sector, measured both by earning and employment.²³ By and large, land-based industry trades in the domestic market in Greenland, although a recent study of the industry in Nuuk has identified a small but vital export sector centred on production.²⁴ Trade is the largest fraction in the export sector, and the biggest trade firm is the Government-owned KNI. Another important segment is construction firms, which are all private companies. The key characteristic of the land-based sector under present conditions is that it functions as a service organ for the Government and its policies for the social environment. Indeed, without the Home Rule Government and without the Danish transfer-money, this sector would be a shadow of its present self,²⁵ or, more baldly stated, without the Danish transfer-money the whole system would collapse.

If one sums up this picture, then one can say that the geopolitical realities of Greenland as regards geographically determined sources for economic sustainability are only positive in one category out of three; that is, for natural sources in the ocean surrounding Greenland. But fishery is a very delicate source of income, which provides Greenland with only a weak economic foundation, as long as it is the only industry existing independently of transfer money.

Greenland dominates the world-market in cold-water shrimps, but prices are sensitive to those for warm-water shrimps. The potential instability of the set-up is symbolised by the fragile finances of Royal Greenland,²⁶ the dominant Greenland firm in the fishery business. Thus, Greenland's economic foundation from the point of view of sustainability is based on a one-dimensional industrial structure. Fishing cannot provide a solution for Greenland's need of economic and societal security. As the fishery industry

²³ The land based industries contributes with about 60 per cent of the combined industrial earnings, employ 33 per cent of the workforce, but contributes only with 1 per cent of the export earnings. Mogens Danielsen et al. (1998): *Mål og strategier i den grønlandske erhvervsudvikling*. Sulisa, p.12.

²⁴ Jens Kaalhaug Nielsen (2000), *Elementer til en foreløbig analyse af Nuuk Erhvervsråd's virksomheds-undersøgelse*, September 2000. ("Elements towards a developing analysis of the Nuuk' Industrial Council business monitoring") A report for the Industrial Conference in Nuuk, "Vision 2000," 21-22 September 2000 sponsored by the Nuuk Trade Council and the Municipality of Nuuk. For further reading, Jens Kaalhaug Nielsen (2000), *The role of Nuuk's industry within the frame of Greenland's societal development*, Working Paper presented in a conference in Huhmari, Finland, November 2000.

²⁵ 84 per cent of the construction sector's combined sales are based on direct contracts with the Home Rule Government. See *Grønlands Baseselskab A/S, 1996*. Even this number is deceiving since much of the residual "private" contracts are in some way or the other the effect of the presence of the Home Rule Government and the *bloktilskud* money.

²⁶ *Mandag Morgen* survey, June 1998.

becomes more and more efficient, the numbers employed in this sector decline more quickly. Therefore, fishery is no basis for Greenland's societal sustainability, even if the income from fishing were to become more financially sound. In short, the solution to Greenland's future employment problems is certainly not to be found in the fishing industry.

Overall, the above analysis indicates that neither fishery, raw materials, nor tourism taken alone or in combination can solve the problem of Greenland's societal development. The only feasible solution is that Greenland embarks on a process of industrial diversification with its epicentre in the land-based industries.²⁷ It is in the sector of land-based industries that the future of Greenland will have to be found.

Part of Greenland's "physical" reality is that it is a microstate. One aspect of that reality is that, given its size and condition, a microstate tends to develop huge imports, which implies that to get order into its trade balance, it will need to turn itself into an export-machine. Hence, export-orientation becomes a strong imperative for Greenland's industrial development. In other words, not only is industrial diversification necessary for Greenland but it is also very important to link that to a drastic increase in export-oriented industrial capacity. The development of an export industry will of course imply Greenland's increased involvement in the institutions central to the globalising forces of World development.

IT IS NOT GEOGRAPHY AS PHYSICAL SPACE, BUT AS A COMMUNITY'S SOCIETAL CAPACITIES THAT IS THE REAL MATRIX OF POLITICAL POWER

The above analysis demonstrates that the vast geographical area of Greenland together with boundless potentialities does not in and by itself secure a reliable sustainability, not even an economic one. It is not geographical reality but the international market as a social construction that mediates the battle and decides the winners and losers in the present world system. I use the term "mediate," because rather than constituting it, the market mediates the world system as a hierarchical sphere of production. The *constitutive* factor is found in a social system's cultural capacity to build up institutions, rather than in the "geographical" factors of the country in question. The total sum of the system's capacity to build up social institutions can be called "social capital."

²⁷ For a further discussion of this issue, see Jens Kaalhaug Nielsen (2000), "Kriterierne for Grønlands økonomiske bæredygtighed - og deres strategiske implikationer." ("Criteria for Greenland's economic sustainability - and their strategic implications") *Politica*, Vol. 32, no.1, pp.22-32.

Generally speaking, the core sustainability of a nation is embodied in the concept of societal sustainability. The most basic factor in society's achieving sustainability is the degree to which it can produce and command societal capacities²⁸ through adequate integrative institutions. By the concept of societal capacities, we refer to the accumulated effects of the society's motivational pattern within its configuration as learning processes. The most important factor in the process of production is the concept of learning, and one of the most crucial integrative institutions is obviously the education system that the given society can command. Deep down the Achilles' heel of the quest for societal sustainability in Greenland is the shortage of higher education, which is the reason why so many Danes occupy the Greenland administrative apparatus. Obviously, the lack of education is felt also in the most sensitive parts of Greenlandic industry and it functions as the greatest obstacle to continuous industrial development in Greenland. Various segments of Greenland's industry complain about the lack of a sufficient qualified work force. On a deeper level of social analysis, the educational gap reflects Greenland's status as a latecomer to the process of modernisation, implying an imbalance between the cultural system and the operational level of the social system.

The geographical framework, and its latent and manifest resources, provides a range of options and limitations, but the key to future development lies not in the sheer "objective" correlates of geographical factors, but in the vitality of Greenland's future societal development. This is a development, which in turn stands or falls on whether the dynamic of social differentiation can be released within Greenland's societal pattern. The crystallising mechanism for this process is education.

THE CURRENT REALITIES OF GREENLAND'S FOREIGN POLITICS

The current realities of Greenland's foreign politics exhibit many ambiguities and open questions. On the one hand, we get the sense of a new Inuit nation, which is slowly taking charge of its own foreign policy and trying to define its political destiny on the international level. The increased speed of the process by which Greenland is trying to define its parameters as a foreign affairs actor is not unrelated to the extent to which Greenland has become globalised on both the cultural, social, and economic levels. From one point of view, the

²⁸ On "societal capacities" see, Jens Kaalhaug Nielsen (2000), *Teleonomy, the cognitive complex, societal capacities, and social capital: Elements for the theoretical analysis of institutional change - A prolegomena with Greenland as an empirical illustration*. Paper presented at the 8th Nordic Arctic Research Forum, Copenhagen Business School, 22-23 January, 2000

process by which Greenland has "invented" its political realm on the international level is a political spill-over of the cultural, social and economic issues raised as Greenlandic society itself has become globalised. As modern societies begin the quantum shift to globalisation, the realm of foreign politics will increasingly become a natural symbolic "playing field" for various political actors who need an institutional matrix that answers to the psychological imperatives imposed by globalisation. In other words, the globalising process tends to blur the distinction between foreign and domestic policy. The openness of society makes any issue in principle a foreign policy issue, while it becomes difficult for domestic politics to ignore the "international aspects" which are penetrating everything on the local level. The mythology and magic power of foreign politics in this way becomes a natural pole of attraction both for psychological and for objective reasons.

The question is to what degree the expanding universe of Greenlandic foreign policy represents the action of a real sovereign state - even if this "state" has the nominal status of a Home Rule Government. How shall we evaluate the political and geopolitical realities of the Greenland foreign politics? The question is to what extent Greenland's increased institutional involvement in the realm of foreign politics is for real.

Through strategic and tactic moves, Greenland has succeeded in positioning itself better, but the improved capacity to command a foreign apparatus does not solve the basic problem of political sovereignty. Because political sovereignty is not a matter of the cavalcade of political achievements, but is ultimately a function of whether the framework of sovereign acts grows out of a sustainable economic and societal base, especially the latter. Only if such a base is established is politics definitively more than a sum of tactical opportunities, which rely on mere historical coincidence. This does not mean that genuine gains cannot be obtained. In the current international conjuncture Greenland is profiting as a free rider from the beneficent attitude to indigenous peoples and from other symbolic-ideological factors which play to its advantage. But the force of these achievements is the product of the world order's normative and ideological goodwill, not ultimately based on the country's own capacities and powers. To utilise the benefits of the ideological, normative orientation of the modern world is of course an adequate road for social survival. But from the point of self-sustainable capacities, it might turn into something "artificial" and potentially dysfunctional when the balance between myth and reality has passed a certain threshold. To phrase it differently, it is not enough that Greenland is successful on the horizontal level if there is no vertical depth.

Although Greenland's foreign policy has gained many victories lately, one still senses an element of "the unreal" in this process. For example, the official declaration of solidarity and brotherhood in regard to the new state of Nunavut is one thing; the actual trade pattern of Greenland and the objective structure of this trade pattern quite another.²⁹ The quest for Inuit solidarity is understandable but in reality it has very little to show by way of socio-economic measures. In this way, the implications of the diplomatic declarations and the notion of an "Inuit brotherhood" are merely banners waving in the wind. In this way, many things in the Home Rule Government's foreign policy have an aura of "make-believe."

True sovereignty is a product of the nation's inherent resources. In this sense, the genuine source of political sovereignty must emergence out of the fabric of society itself and is related to its societal capacity to reach sustainability within its deep structure. In this way, the foundation of foreign politics is not given essentially by the capacity to position oneself within the international system itself; rather it is constituted by the degree to which political sovereignty is socially embedded at the base of the acting unit itself.

Of course, Greenland's current problem in reaching the appropriate level of sustainability is not unrelated to its geographical realities. Greenland, although a modern dynamic society, is still linked to its location as a remote Arctic region. In various ways, the problem for Greenland, when one analyses the current lack of economically feasible raw material and tourist sectors, is that the remoteness of the Arctic still functions as a barrier for many possibilities and many options. Even in the modern world, it is more difficult and more costly to establish businesses and production units in the Arctic sphere. In this way, Greenland cannot run from its geographical realities. The extreme condition of the Arctic is not a factor one just can suspend. It is still a part of Greenland's reality and it is a part of what determines its options on the international scene. In this sense, the old geopolitical school is still entitled to some credit for their angle of analysis. The situation embodied in Greenland's geographical situation is currently ambiguous: on the one hand, it is an obstacle for social expansion and, on the other hand, it offers a tremendous promise of future wealth and sustainability.

²⁹ See: Lise Lyck, *Arctic International Trade: A Study focused on the Greenlandic International Trade Regime*. Op.cit. pp.35-37.

THE LATEST "POLICY" DEVELOPMENT AND THE GRAND STRATEGY OF GREENLAND'S FOREIGN POLITICS

Greenland's general aims in foreign policy in recent years have focussed on: a) getting its own representatives into positions within the international politics game, b) making Greenland visible in the international community. This process has been convincingly got underway and Greenland has today become pretty well connected within various networks and institutions in the international community – or at least is in the process of establishing such links. These trends have been structured around several axes, which can be identified as:

1. Using the old ties with Denmark and with the Scandinavian countries while trying to redefine the rules of the game in its relations with Denmark.
2. Opening up to the EU environment.
3. Opening up on the "Western side" by approaching Canada, Nunavut, and the US.
4. Strengthening Arctic co-operation.
5. Strengthening the platform provided by the UN and similar international organisations.
6. Strengthening ties to small societies in the North Atlantic area.

Under 1) Various forces in Greenland have increasingly aimed at a redefinition of the *Rigsfællesskab*, so that the institution is no longer the name of a Danish Commonwealth but rather of a kind of federation-oriented partnership.³⁰ The recent establishment of the high-profile *selvstyrekommission* (self-Government commission) is a part of that strategy or at least a tool to "modernise" the concept of the *Rigsfællesskab*. In regard to the Nordic Council of Ministers, Greenland is pressing to change the concept of a Nordic neighbourhood ("nærområde"), which was originally developed with reference to areas east of the Nordic countries, within the former Soviet Union. Greenland wants the concept stretched to mean that areas west of Greenland are in the Nordic neighbourhood, so that Greenland can claim this title for the Canadian areas of Nunavut and Nunavik.

³⁰ Already the Greenlandic Premier (Landsstyreformanden) Lars Emil Johansen has raised the issue of redefinition of the meaning of the *Rigsfællesskab* during the *Landstinget* (Greenlandic Parliament) autumn session in 1997. The IA politician Kupuik Kleist raised the same issue in 1995. Likewise, Jonathan Motzfeldt has stressed the theme of an equal partnership based on mutual respect but he has not encouraged or supported the request for a direct change of the constitutional foundation of the *Rigsfællesskab*.

Under 2) Greenland is working hard to get linked up with the EU without taking membership. This has been done in several ways by working within the OLT-arrangement and benefiting from a variety of programmes within that option. The most important implication of the OLT-arrangement is that Greenland has free access to the EU market for its fish products without duty or restrictions. Accordingly, the process of linking up is established through a very beneficial fishery agreement with the EU, and by taking part in "the Arctic Window" approach that is an integral part of the Northern Dimension initiative of the EU. The Arctic Window functions as a medium by which Greenland tries to link its activities in various regions with that of the EU, including the work of the Arctic Council, while hoping these "functional overlaps" will create symbiotic effects for Greenland's overall geopolitical strategy. Greenland is also putting pressure on Denmark in an attempt to host a major EU Conference in Greenland in 2002. The new emphasis on the EU was clearly symbolised in the much-hyped visit by the President of the European Commission, Romano Prodi, in July 2000. In order to maximise the EU option, Greenland established a representation in Brussels in 1992 and, since 1993, it has employed the lobby firm EBCD to follow and influence the legislation process in the European Parliament on issues such as fishery and marine mammals. The use of a lobby firm might be seen in the context that Greenland has an interest in counter-lobbying the extensive lobbying conducted by the Greenpeace organisation, which Greenland often finds itself in confrontation with.

Under 3) Greenland is trying in various ways to connect itself to the West of the Davis Strait and it is using various channels, but particularly the goodwill of Denmark, in pursuing that end. Greenland wants to be able to place itself in a key position towards Canada's "Northern Foreign Policy" approach. In order to facilitate this policy, Greenland has had a representative placed in the Danish Embassy in Ottawa since 1998. The westward connection was also highlighted when the Canadian Foreign Minister Axworthy visited Nuuk in the summer of year 2000. It is, furthermore, a part of the new pattern that English is increasingly encouraged as an educational language in Greenland and some Greenlandic nationalists are even hoping that English might replace Danish some day.

The creation of Nunavut (1 April 1999) functions as a major symbolic and emotional catalyst for many Greenlanders, since, Nunavut is the only other "state" in the world beside Greenland herself that is ruled by a majority of Inuit. Naturally, in the autumn of year 2000 a declaration of intent on co-operation was signed with the Nunavut Government. But more importantly Greenland obtained Denmark's acceptance of a conference scheduled for 2001

with the participation of Canada, Denmark, Greenland, and Arctic Canada. The aim of the conference is to find ways to strengthen the co-operation between Greenland and Arctic Canada. Greenland is in this way using Denmark as an active tool in an attempt to open a window to the West. As a matter of fact, apart from the hymn to an Inuit Brotherhood, the link to Arctic Canada has in reality been very weak. But now it is in a process of opening up, and various fact-finding commissions are visiting "the other side" in an attempt to find out what the neighbour actually looks like. However, the level of activity in that direction is not great: the aeroplane departures in the direction of Canada are limited to one a week, and the plane is not necessarily full.

Greenland's relation to the US is of a different kind, marked by stress and latent confrontation. Greenland is very upset about the US ban on the use of seals and marine mammals for the clothing and fashion industry (the MMPA legislation), and is attempting to reverse or undermine this decision.³¹ Again, the US presence in the Thule Base has long stood as a "problematic" symbol for a leadership that was brought up with the anti-imperialistic and Marxist ideologies in Copenhagen in the 1960s and 1970s. In particular, the IA is marked by a long tradition of strong anti-American sentiments. Greenland has an interest in keeping the issue of Thule "hot" and is trying to press the US in Thule in various ways: by placing further pressure in regard to the separation of the Dundas Area from the base area; and by increasing requests to use the base for civil flying. Likewise, Greenland is trying to frustrate or question an attempt by the US to establish a new missile defence system at the Thule Base by stressing that the new missile system might be in violation of the ABM Treaty of 1972. More interestingly, Greenland is pressuring Denmark to work for a re-negotiation of the 1951 Greenland Defence Agreement between Denmark and the US. Greenland wants to use the 50-year jubilee to reassess the Treaty. Greenland is attempting to warm up the issue by arranging a major security policy seminar in Nuuk in March 2001 where vital participants in Greenland's security politics are invited. The purpose is not to force the US out of Greenland, which is regarded as utopian request; rather, it is grounded in the hope that the US can be persuaded to pay for its "lease" of Greenlandic territory. Greenland is well aware that global military logistics place it in a unique position, where it always will be under some kind of superpower hegemonic control, as Finn Lynge has correctly emphasised. However, the new spirit among decision-makers in Greenland is that since they

³¹ However, one should take note of Greenland's tactics. They decided not to conduct a case against the US within the WTO system but to try by more indirect means to soften up the US position through various political arguments and insider pressure.

are bound to this objective condition, and can do nothing about it, they had better benefit as much as they can from the parameters of objective necessity.

Under 4) Greenland is attempting to strengthen the Arctic dimension in various ways, some of which are mentioned above. Two major tools in Greenland's Arctic policy are the Arctic Council and the ICC. The Arctic Council, where Denmark represents Greenland, consists of 8 Arctic countries and 6 permanent participants, including the ICC³². The main issues for the Council have been environmental politics, but also questions in regard to Inuit rights and the use of marine mammals for commercial purposes. Greenland has been extremely dissatisfied with the US chairmanship of the Council. In the yearly report about foreign politics issued by the *Landsstyreformanden*, it is officially stated that "in its period as chairman the US has directly obstructed or toned down a series of principal questions."³³ From October 2000, the chairmanship of the Council passed to Finland. Greenland was prominent at the last Arctic Council meeting in Barrow, where Premier Jonathan Motzfeldt was leading the Greenland, Danish, and the Faroe team.

Under 5) Greenland is active in various ways within the UN system. In particular, Greenland is working to promote the concept of "indigenous people and their rights", and invests great effort in keeping the issue of "indigenous rights" as a permanent agenda item at various UN meetings, conferences etc. Greenland is using the Danish State and the ICC as agents for promoting this process. In the summer of the 2000, a major goal of Greenland's politics in the UN was finally accomplished when a permanent council for indigenous people's affairs was established.³⁴ The new forum functions as a permanent advisory council for the ECOSOC.³⁵ As a part of this strategy, Greenland is working on promoting a World declaration of "Indigenous Peoples Rights." It is also the aim of the Home Rule Government to participate in a conference in South Africa in 2001 on the topic of "racism, xenophobia and related intolerance." Another important part of the international network, which Greenland is currently establishing, is its participation in the work of the WTO.

Under 6) This point refers primarily to Greenland's relationship to Iceland and to the Faroe Islands. Greenland and the two other islands are part of the West Nordic Parliamentary Co-operation Council, which was established as early as 1985. This area of Greenland's geopolitical environment has not been

³² The ICC is an NGO and not officially part of the Home Rule Government.

³³ *Udenrigspolitisk Redegørelse ved Landsstyreformanden*. EM/13 2000. p.4.

³⁴ The idea of a permanent council under the UN was already articulated during a meeting in Nuuk in 1991. Yet, it was when the IA politician Henriette Rasmussen articulated her idea at the UN World Conference on Human Rights in 1993 that the idea first became an active discursive element within the international arena.

³⁵ ECOSOC is the United Nations Economic and Social Council. The Human Rights Commission is a subunit of this Council.

a high priority, yet it is worth mentioning that a maritime border dispute between Iceland and Greenland in regard to a capelin fishery area known as "the Banana" was solved in 1997. Iceland, however, has a kind of symbolic importance, since, the entrepreneurial spirit of the Icelanders and what is considered as the economic miracle of Iceland is generally regarded as a kind of role model for the strategy of small islands. The Faroe Islands for its part has contributed to Greenland's Foreign Politics in the sense that its claim to independence has functioned as a catalyst for the Greenlandic discussion.

As can be seen, the foreign policy of Greenland is today a pretty diversified enterprise, where the country tries to maximise its options in various directions. It can look less like a strategy than an ever-expanding level of activity marked by a simple desire to "be placed on the map" and become part of the global context. The two Government parties³⁶ are marked by two different "philosophies" about life and about the relationship with Denmark, and they might therefore counterbalance and neutralise each other's efforts to pursue a strategy. Yet, there are many indications in the current policy that a distinct Greenlandic Grand Strategy has been constructed for the future - although it is not completely clear whether it just looks like a strategy or actually is one. However, one can interpret this to imply that Siumut and IA, at least at this juncture, agree upon a strategy of opening up an Arctic Window to the West. However this "agreement" does not conceal that there exists a "philosophical" tension between the two actors and the associated competition over visions of Greenland's long-term strategy.

The two parties, Siumut and IA, are divided more by "mentalities" than by a rock-solid ideological doctrine,³⁷ although, of course, some elements of ideological orientation are a part of the agenda. Obviously, the differences between the two parties' political mentalities have important implications for the foreign politics "chosen" - to the degree, of course, that foreign politics are a conscious act. With the pitfalls and stereotypes which follow any generalisation, one can say, that the Siumut Party represents the sapient, "moderate" no-nonsense mainstream Greenlander, most often employed in a Home Rule Government institution, a Greenlander who tends to take an open-minded view of life and who has an appreciative and practical view of the relationship to Denmark. Lately, however, the party has got its own flamboyant, radical, nationalist opposition. IA, on the other hand, is a kind of "generation party,"

³⁶ After the national Greenlandic election of 16 February 1999, Siumut and IA established a joint Government.

³⁷ It makes very little sense to divide the two parties into a "left" and "right," since, the IA is both more "left" and more "right" than Siumut. Indeed, you can say that both on the "nationalist" and the "economic liberal" dimensions, the IA is actually more "rightwing" than the Siumut.

since it has an extraordinary concentration of people in the 30-40 age group³⁸ and is marked by a more ambivalent, discontented view of the world. Its ideological universe tends to become a melting pot for strong opinions, which vacillate between pragmatism and radicalism. The party, which originally had its roots in the radical left, is today mostly a kind of nationalistic liberal party with various connotations of a socialist past hanging in the air. The party has a capricious relationship to Denmark, and the ideological tone is one of scepticism if not hostility toward Denmark.

The two parties' foreign policy strategies are different: Siumut aims at an all-round global strategy, with a hidden love for Europe in its heart, while the IA aims at a Western strategy with a basic agenda that is more or less critical towards Denmark, and anti-Americanism as an additional feature. These attitudes are reflected in the two parties' attitudes towards the *Rigsfælleskab*, where Siumut want increased autonomy within the framework of the *Rigsfællesskab*, while the IA demands that Greenland becomes an independent nation-state. Generally, when one analyses the current tendencies in Greenland's foreign politics, one must probably reach the conclusion that the new strategic axis is that of a "Western Strategy" although strong forces are keeping Greenland within the orbit of Europe. Indeed, the strategy of opening up towards the EU may very well prove to be the most decisive and important move in recent years. By a "Western Strategy," we refer to a strategy by which Greenland is opening up to the Western hemisphere of its geopolitical orbit. It is a strategy, which can be seen as a way to weaken and relativise the dependence on Denmark, while it stands at the same time as a token of mythic politics, highlighting the sacral Inuit realm of cultural identification as the underlying archetypical theme. The ultimate aim of this strategy seems to be to persuade Denmark, and the Canadian Government or perhaps the EU, to create some kind of objective miracle out of the Nunavut-Greenlandic relationship. Although, in reality there is very little objective Gestalt to be found in the socio-economic situation of Nunavut as a foundation for such a relationship.

In analysing these cultural, social, political, and economic dimensions of the geopolitical questions within the realm of Arctic politics, we should not forget that a very important potential actor, Russia, is present by its absence.³⁹ At least, it cannot escape an acute observer that if we consider the demographic structure of the Arctic realm, we find that more than two out of four people in the Arctic are living in Russia but that Russia is by and large a non-entity in the geopolitical mapping in the minds of the Greenland Govern-

³⁸ See the opinion poll conducted by HS Analysis. Featured in *Sermitsiak*, no.49, December 8th 2000. p.10.

³⁹ The Greenlandic relations with Russia are extremely limited, basically restricted to a fishery agreement.

ment. Actually, there lives far more people in the city of Murmansk than there are Inuits throughout the Arctic realm. We should not forget that the Inuit amount to roughly 3-4 per cent of the population living in the Arctic.⁴⁰

One might ask the question whether Denmark obtains any benefit out of the process by which Greenland increasingly becomes an independent foreign policy actor? This is a very difficult question. For which Danish values are we to take as criteria for Denmark's interests? Pia Kjærsgaard's⁴¹ or Poul Nyrup Rasmussen's, for example? It depends also how independent "independence" is? Whether it is inside or outside a home rule system. However, if one believes that the actualisation of an absolute Inuit independence is an inevitable process and that the time when Greenland could become a genuine part of the Danish Kingdom is over, then any benefit lies in the way partnership with Greenland in the future will give Denmark a strong influence and natural position in the political framework that is going to shape the geopolitical future of the Arctic and Greater North Atlantic realm. The Danes have got a license to remain "Vikings" so to speak.

All this points to a theoretical question, namely, the role of the political level of human action. In other words, what kind of role does "politics" play in regard to socio-economic and socio-cultural variables? Obviously, Greenlandic foreign politics has by many measures been a very successful and skilful enterprise, and it has clearly optimised Greenland's capacity to gain access to important resources within the world community. However, the crucial point to make here is that this in itself leads nowhere if the necessary underlying politics is not conducted within the socio-economic structure and, in the final analysis, within the educational-cultural realm. The risk is that the success in international politics becomes a "happy land," a mental escape from the real problems and the hard work of re-shaping and differentiating the industrial structure and upgrading the general educational level within the core structure of Greenland society.

CONCLUSION

In our time, the concept of "geopolitics" leaves us with a puzzling uncertainty. On the one hand, we feel convinced, at least on an intuitive level, that power politics in the world reflect some kind of "geographical reality" and that poli-

⁴⁰ Henry P. Huntington (1998), "People of the Arctic." In Simon J. Wilson et al. (ed.) *AMAP - Assessment Report: Arctic Pollution Issues*. Oslo: Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme, pp.141-182.

⁴¹ Pia Kjærsgaard is the leader of the Danish People's Party, which recently gained strong support in the Danish population. The party opposes the Social Democratic Party's immigration policy and might very well take a different attitude to the transfer money (*bloktilskud*) than the Social Democrats.

tics necessarily must be played out within that reality. On the other hand, we are equally aware that the old classical notion of a geographical distribution of social space is under strong critical pressure.

In a modern technological world, where space is measured in emails and airport arrivals, the parameter of physical space is in the process of transformation. The general processes that we call globalisation are reshaping the form and meaning of geographical and social space. From a temporal point of view, the classical concepts of space and "natural resources" appear to be subject to change and relativisation. In the age of mass transportation, mass communication, and the internet, the social implications of geographical space are changing rapidly, but not only in the simple "material" sense in which physical space can be "surmounted." The transformation has also a great impact on the embeddedness of social and cultural systems within geographical space, since both social and cultural systems are becoming the objects of a worldwide process of interpenetration.

This does not mean that the "geographical" dimension disappears as an analytical factor. As a matter of fact, as Rummel has shown, the geographical distance between actors is a crucial element in the determination of what he calls "foreign behaviour."⁴² Mouritzen has pointed to the same, using the term "non-mobility."⁴³ Yet, the code by which this factor is transposed into the social and cultural dimensions of the modern world is clearly in the process of change and re-institutionalisation. However, this increased complexity must not lead to the conclusion that the international system is not contained within an orderly and hierarchical⁴⁴ structure. Complexity is not another name for "anarchy." This is, however, not the place to give the last word on this state of affairs. What I have suggested here is that a future concept of geopolitics at a higher level than the classical notion would be able to reflect the factor of social organisation embodied in the way geography is conditioning human interaction.⁴⁵ More generally, the geopolitics of the modern world is a function of the geographical distribution of societal capacities within the logic of action systems and its historical distribution of action units. As a "realist" concept, geopolitics stresses the objective Gestalt of the "logistical" im-

⁴² Rudolph Rummel (1969): "Some Dimensions in the Foreign Behavior of Nations" in James N. Rosenau (ed.) *International Politics and Foreign Policies*. New York: The Free Press, pp.600-621.

⁴³ Hans Mouritzen (1998): *Theory and Reality of International Politics*. Aldershot: Ashgate, pp.7-11.

⁴⁴ I use the term "hierarchy" in a cybernetic sense and not (primarily) in the sense of institutional stratification.

⁴⁵ As mentioned earlier, the old theorists of geopolitics were aware of this fact. In the end of his paper read to the Royal Geographical Society on 25 January 1904, Mackinder said, "I have spoken as a geographer. The actual balance of political power at any given time is of course, the product, on the one hand, of geographical conditions, both economic and strategic, and on the other hand, of the relative number, virility, equipment, and organisation of the competing people." Mackinder, op.cit. p.437.

plications of the actual, historical, and spatial distribution in the relative power structure of the action system.

I have attempted here to analyse the geopolitical significance of Greenland with a study approaching the above assumptions. My analysis argues that Greenland is a microstate with a hinterland containing a tremendous promise of future potential. However, the level of social organisation of the modern Greenland State has not been able to utilise this potential, apart from the factor of fishery. Furthermore, fishery is not able to secure the necessary degree of economic sustainability. Real sustainability, however, is not simply a question of obtaining the necessary economic resources. On the contrary, it is to a large extent a question of reaching the necessary degree of societal sustainability by developing the necessary complexity and refinement of societal capacities.

The lack of societal and economic sustainability leaves Greenland in a kind of halfway situation. From a point of "noble" isolation, the tiny Greenlandic community has recently arrived on the international scene, in the wake of globalisation, trying to cope with the new reality of the extraordinary complexities of modernity. A community still living half in the past, yet already engulfed by the future. Faced by the challenge of globalisation, it has responded by reclaiming its foreign politics. The framework of Greenland's foreign politics and its status as a non-official state of quasi-sovereignty reflects the possibilities, the ambiguities, and the "make-believe" atmosphere of this situation. Behind the face of Greenlandic foreign policy, there is a gulf between potentiality and reality. The quest for sovereignty is never simply a matter of the manipulation of the variables of symbolic politics or the function of a so-called political "discourse." In this context, the notion of geopolitics, in its classical sense, provides a very valuable service, because it is organised around the recognition that within the orbit of politics one cannot ignore the "real."

REFERENCES

- Althusius, Johannes (1995): *Politica*. Indianapolis: Liberty Fund.
- Bodin, Jean (1992): *On Sovereignty: Four chapters from The Six Books of the Commonwealth*. Edited and translated by Julian H. Franklin. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Christiansen, Henriette (1999): *Legitimitet og kulturel identitet: Et skisma mellem ideologi og praksis illustreret ved ønsket om grønlandsk selvstændighed 1998-99*. Speciale. Institut for Statskundskab, Københavns Universitet.

- Dickinson, Robert E. (1969): *The Makers of Modern Geography*. New York: Friederich A. Praeger.
- DUPI (1997): *Grønland under den kolde krig: Dansk og amerikansk sikkerhedspolitik 1945-68*. Dansk Udenrigspolitisk Institut.
- Fischer, Gerard and Pierre Encontre (1998): "The Economic Disadvantages of Island Developing Countries: Problems of Smallness, Remoteness and Economies of Scale." In Godfrey Baldacchino & Robert Greenwood (ed.) *Competing Strategies of Socio-Economic Development for Small Islands*. Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, Canada: The Institute of Island Studies, University of Prince Edward Island.
- Hooghe, Liesbet (1996): "Building a Europe with the Regions: The Changing Role of the European Commission." In Lisbeth Hooghe (ed.) *Cohesion Policy and European Integration: Building Multi-Level Governance*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Huntington, Henry P. (1998): "People of the Arctic." In Simon J. Wilson et al. (ed.) *AMAP - Assessment Report: Arctic Pollution Issues*. Oslo: Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme. pp.141-182.
- Kjellén, Rudolf (1916): *Staten som Lifsform*. Stockholm.
- Kaalhauge Nielsen, Jens (2001): "Government, Culture and Sustainability in Greenland: A Microstate with a Hinterland" in: Ali Farazmand, Godfrey Pirrotta & Lino Briguglio (eds.), 2001, *Public Organization Review* (a special issue) Forthcoming.
- Kaalhauge Nielsen, Jens (2001): *Communication-patterns, power structure and industry in Greenland*. A paper for the ICASS IV: The Fourth International Congress of Arctic Social Science, 16-20 May.
- Kaalhauge Nielsen, Jens (2001): *Udenrigspolitik, globalisering & bæredygtighedens dilemmaer*. Oplæg til Udenrigspolitisk seminar på Ilisimatusarfik, university of Greenland, den 23 Marst.
- Kaalhauge Nielsen, Jens (2001): *Har Grønland en "Grand Strategy" for dets udenrigspolitik i det Arktiske og StorAtlantiske område?* Offentlig foredrag på Ilisimatusarfik, university of Greenland, 6 Marts.
- Kaalhauge Nielsen, Jens (2000): *The role of Nuuk's industry within the frame of Greenland's societal development*. Working Paper presented in a conference in Huhmari, Finland, November.
- Kaalhauge Nielsen, Jens (2000): *Elementer til en foreløbig analyse af Nuuk Erhvervsråd's virksomheds-undersøgelse*. September. ("Elements to a temporary analysis of the Nuuk' Industrial Council business investigation.") A report for the Industrial Conference in Nuuk, "Vision 2000," September 21-22, 2000 sponsored by the Nuuk trade council and the Municipality of Nuuk.

- Kaalhauge Nielsen, Jens (2000): "Kriterierne for Grønlands økonomiske bæredygtighed - og deres strategiske implikationer." *Politica*, Vol. 32, no.1, pp.22-32.
- Kaalhauge Nielsen, Jens (2000): *Teleonomy, the cognitive complex, societal capacities, and social capital: Elements for the theoretical analysis of institutional change - A prolegomena with Greenland as an empirical illustration*. Paper presented at the 8th Nordic Arctic Research Forum, Copenhagen Business School, January 22-23.
- Landsstyreformanden (2000): Udenrigspolitisk Redegørelse ved Landsstyreformanden. EM/13.
- Landsstyreområdet for Økonomi (2000) *Landetsstyrets Politisk-Økonomiske Beretning 2000*. Hjemmestyret. Marst.
- Landsstyret (2000): *En vision for fremtiden: Oplæg til Strukturpolitisk Handlingsplan*. Hjemmestyret, September.
- Landsstyret (1999): *Rapport fra den dansk-grønlandske arbejdsgruppe til identifikation af de udenrigs- og sikkerhedspolitiske sagsområder, hvor Grønland har interesse*. www.gh.gl
- Liu, Z-H. and Jekins, C.L. (1996): "Country Size and Tourism Development: A Cross-nation Analysis." In Lino Briguglio et al (ed.) *Sustainable Tourism in Islands and Small States, Issues and Politics*. New York: Pinter.
- Lyck, Lise (2000): *Erhvervsvilkår i Grønland*. Nordic Press.
- Lyck, Lise (1999): *Arctic International Trade: A Study focused on the Greenlandic International Trade Regime*. Copenhagen Business School.
- Lyck Lise (ed.) (1998): *Turismestrategi og -udvikling i Grønland*. Nordic Press.
- Lyng, Finn (1998): *Selvstændighed for Grønland?* København: Arctic Information.
- Mackinder, Halford J. (1919): *Democratic Ideals and Reality*. New York: Henry Holt.
- Mackinder, Halford J. (1904): "The Geographical Pivot of History." *Geographical Journal*, vol.23. pp.421-444.
- Manan, Alfred Thayer (1987): *The Influence of Sea Power upon History, 1660-1783*. New York: Dover.
- Mouritzen, Hans (1998): "Thule and Theory: Democracy vs. Elitism in Danish Foreign Policy." *Danish Foreign Policy Yearbook 1998*. Danish Institute of International Affairs. pp.79-101.
- Mouritzen, Hans (1998): *Theory and Reality of International Politics*. Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Osherenko, Gail and Oran R. Young (1989): *The Age of the Arctic: hot conflicts and cold realities*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Paldam, Martin (1994):** *Grønlands økonomiske udvikling: Hvad skal der til for at lukke gabet?* Aarhus Universitetsforlag.
- Petersen, Nikolaj (1998):** "Denmark, the IGC 1996 and the Future of the European Union." *Danish Foreign Policy Yearbook 1998*. Editors, Bertel Heurlin and Hans Mouritzen. DUPI.
- Petersen, Nikolaj (1992):** *Grønland i Global Sikkerhedspolitik*. Det Sikkerhedspolitiske Udvalg.
- Pritchard, Sarah (2000):** "The Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples remains on its troubled path through the UN." *The Indigenous World 1999-2000*. Copenhagen: IWGIA. pp.381-419.
- Rummel, Rudolph (1969):** "Some Dimensions in the Foreign Behavior of Nations" in James N. Rosenau (ed.) *International Politics and Foreign Policies*. New York: The Free Press.
- Schmitt, Carl (1988):** *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press.
- Sigurdsson, Jón et al. (2000):** *Nordic Region 2000 - Open to the Winds of Change*. Nordic Ministers for Co-operation.
- Sloan, Roosevelt. G.R (1988):** *Geopolitics in United States Strategic Policy, 1890-1987*. Brighton, UK: Wheatshaf Books.
- Thomsen, Hanne (1996):** "Between Traditionalism and Modernity." *Cultural and Social Research in Greenland 95/96*. Nuuk: Ilisimatusarfik/Atuakkiorfik.