

## **Abstract**

The Arctic and the developments occurring in the region has raised considerable international awareness over the last years. This region has gone from being mostly unknown to becoming the most sought after region among the international actors.

The climate change has caused a change in the region, where the ice is melting creating new shipping routes combining other continents than before. Research done in the region shows a significant amount of undiscovered raw resources, such as oil, mineral and gas. The fisheries routes are changing and the new shipping lanes can further enhance the tourism industry. Thus, there are many opportunities in the Arctic region just waiting to be discovered.

The small countries the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland are geopolitically situated within the Arctic region, and Greenland is the main country of interest for resource exploitation. As these are small countries they might have difficulty in dealing with the international interest in the region, especially to turn it into their advantage. Therefore it is interesting to examine if these small countries will stand stronger together against the bigger actors trying to get a foothold in the Arctic region.

In order to get an indication of whether the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland are interested in cooperation and how enhanced cooperation can be perceived, it is important to look at the history first knowing that these countries have been colonized, and some still are. Regarding cooperation it will be relevant to examine the cooperation these countries already have and put it in the notions of liberal institutionalism and regionalism to get an indication of what works best for them. This will to a large extent be put in an Arctic perspective, as it is cooperation in the Arctic that is examined.

After outlining the existing cooperation of the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland, they will be looked at in more detail. Qualitative research with an analytical approach will be utilized throughout the thesis when using extensive data research in order to get to a conclusion

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After examining all these different factors in detail and outlining the similar interests and goals of the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland, the conclusion is that in this Arctic development and the with the geostrategic position of these countries, enhanced will be beneficial and also very likely.

## Introduction

“[...] up to the 1900s or so the Arctic was largely unknown, both to us in the Arctic and definitely to the rest of the world, an unknown part of the world. By 2000, we made it *our* Arctic. But I believe now, in this century, it has already become the *global* Arctic” (Grímsson, 2012)

In the last couple of years there have been significant changes in the Arctic region. These changes are resulting from the climate change, which causes the ice around Greenland and the North Pole to melt, revealing more land and new shipping and trade routes. Thus, there is a considerable focus on the Arctic region, its development, and the new possibilities that will arise, which consequently is the focus at both governmental and organizational level. More interest areas of economic importance are the gas, oil, and minerals hidden in the Arctic, which are now accessible, as well as the increased access to new fishing areas. This implies that there will be a lot of activity in the Arctic region in the future, which will create major possibilities for the nation states in the region, as well as challenges.

The three small countries, the Faroe Islands, Greenland, and Iceland are in a good geopolitical position in the Arctic, and are consequently receiving much attention from the international arena. As geographical neighbors these countries have a lot in common and do not only share waters, but also share the same history, political structure and have a somewhat same position in the international arena, where they are considered small players. Iceland has a bigger role as an independent country - compared to the Faroe Islands and Greenland that still are under the Danish Crown - and is more active in the international arena. However, factors such as the history and size of the country, makes it possible to draw a parallel to the Faroe Islands and Greenland.

As indicated above the small West Nordic countries have various identifiers as they have the same economic reliance, having a small state economy depending on natural resources. The size of the land, population and the GDP limits the resources, both economically and politically, that can be spent on international negotiation and trade and their shared history of colonization arguably ties a bond between them and makes them reluctant to join any cooperation endangering their sovereignty.

Denmark issued a paper on the Arctic strategy for the Kingdom of Denmark 2011-2020, involving Denmark, the Faroe Islands and Greenland. In 2013 the Faroe Islands issued a paper on Arctic strategy on its own, stating that since there are explicit areas the Faroese government has taken over, which also will be affected by the Arctic development, there is need for an Arctic paper, covering only Faroese interests.

One of the recommendation in the Faroese Arctic paper is to create a sustainable Arctic cooperation between the West Nordic countries – including the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Iceland – and this a recommendation that I find very relevant and interesting. Iceland issued an Arctic Strategy in 2011, further stating this importance. My hypothesis is that a coordinated strategic cooperation between these three small countries will enhance the influence and capability to stand against the foreign pressure from the bigger nation states, such as China, Russia and America.

In order to get a clear indication of how cooperation to this degree can come about, I need to examine other previous and contemporary cooperation between the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Iceland. This will include cooperation where the Faroe Islands and Greenland act within the Danish Kingdom such as the Nordic Council, the Arctic Council, NORA and EU. Further, cooperation between these countries without Danish interference will be examined and analyzed. Hopefully this will conclude with an answer on how to best create a strategic cooperation between the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Iceland.

Hence my problem formulation reads as follows:

*What are the geopolitical grounds and mutual interest for enhanced cooperation between the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Iceland in an Arctic reference area?*

- *A qualitative analysis of the geopolitical challenges for enhanced cooperation in the West Nordic/Arctic Region.*

## **Methodological Approach**

### **Theme**

This project is written within the field of Culture, Communication and Globalization, and the study framework the thesis is written within is the International Relations and the Global Order (IRGO) stream. When working on a project within this area it is relevant to examine the Nordic cooperation between the West Nordic states in this era of Arctic development, especially since this era is argued to be a consequence of the globalization process.

As mentioned in the introduction, my hypothesis is that cooperation between the three small countries, the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland will enhance the influence in the international arena and make them stronger compared to acting individually. This is based on the assumption that as these West Nordic countries are small players in the international arena, it might arguably be easy to influence and maybe take over these countries by the bigger international players. If, however, the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland enhance their cooperation and hence become closer allies, they can stand stronger and together have more influence in international politics.

This project will not only examine the cooperation between the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland as countries, but also the cooperation and influence as members of Nordic and international organizations such as the Nordic Council of Minister, Overseas Countries and Territories, the European Economic Area and so on. This might help when arguing the pros and cons of institutional membership.

Further it will be interesting to outline the level of cooperation and influence the Faroe Islands and Greenland can contribute with as part of the Danish Crown compared to Iceland as a sovereign country.

### **Conceptual Framework**

Since I am a Faroese citizen, I have a natural interest in this country and its possibilities as a small player. In order to assess cooperation between small countries in an international arena

with several big and influential players, the Faroe Islands will be examined alongside Greenland and Iceland. As has been indicated earlier and will be outlined later in the thesis there are a number of factors that make it possible and relevant to draw a parallel between these three countries. One factor and a term, which will be frequently used, is that the countries are neighbors in the West Nordic region, and it is this region that makes it relevant to examine the countries in regards to the Arctic development. There are other countries in this region, however, for this thesis the focus will be on the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland. Because of the global climate change, the Arctic region is experiencing considerable developments that arguably affect the Arctic countries, hence the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland, as they are situated in the Arctic Region, according to the Arctic Region definition utilized in this thesis. Therefore, the focus of this project is to examine the cooperation between three small neighboring West Nordic countries within the Arctic region - the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland.

In the section on cooperation as members of institutions the Faroe Islands and Greenland will be referred to as under the Danish Crown, unless otherwise stated.

When examining the history and development of the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland the time span will be from discovery to World War II as this gives time for illustrating the national identity of these countries, as well as the political development will be illustrated. As the thesis examines the relevance of cooperation between these three countries as being part of the same region, both West Nordic region, but mainly as part of the Arctic Region, it is important to the geographical position of the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland in the West Nordic Region, as well as the Arctic Region. When looking at the possibility for enhanced cooperation it is further important to examine whether or not these countries have the legal rights to make decision over their territory, especially relevant in regards to the Faroe Islands and Greenland. The United Nations Convention of the Law of the Sea will be utilized in order to confirm these rights.

The notion of liberal institutionalism will be utilized in the section on Theoretical Framework, as this is a theory relevant to utilize when examining the cooperation between countries as members of an institution. However, as this thesis also examines the cooperation between countries as neighbors, the notion of regionalism will further be utilized. In order to get an indication on how countries react when having disputes affecting their national interests, the Prisoner's Game theory will briefly be outlined.

The European Union will be discussed several times in this thesis, and being aware that the institution has been known under different names, however, in this thesis the European Union will be referred to as EU.

## **Methodology**

The research strategies utilized in this project will be based on qualitative research with an analytical approach, as the approach utilized in this thesis is to collect data in order to examine the problem. When analyzing grounded theory will be utilized as a theory: [...] that was derived from data, systematically gathered and analyzed through the research process” (Strauss and Corbin cited in Bryman, 2008: 541). When collecting data, and examining these three countries and their interaction with the international arena, the internet will be utilized to a large extent. In this high-tech era governments, institutions, as well as countries have their own websites, where documents, speeches and news letters are publicized and updated regularly, these online tools will be largely utilized when gathering information. Books and journals will, however, also be utilized.

The interpretivist epistemological paradigm is relevant to utilize in this thesis as data will be collected in order to get an understanding of the problem. This can further be put in perspective with Max Weber and his notion of 'Verstehen', where he argues that sociology is a: [...] science which attempts the interpretive understanding of social action in order to arrive at a causal explanation of its course and effects” (Bryman, 2008: 15). Interpretivism is based on social science, which is constantly evolving, which one must have in mind. This is highly relevant for this thesis, as the factors examined are constantly evolving in this globalized world, especially the Arctic development, which further influences the different actors interested in the region, as well as it might change the researchers understanding and interpretation.

The Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland and their interaction with the regional and international area is considered socially constructed, as different factors can affect how this cooperation and notion of the social world are viewed. Constructivism: [...] asserts that social phenomena and their meanings are continually being accomplished by social actors” (Bryman, 2008: 20). As the Arctic development as well the construction of institutions in international

relations is constantly evolving this can be considered socially constructed, hence relevant to utilize.

In regards to the validity of the research, I have to acknowledge that I am from the Faroe Islands, hence there is a chance of me being bias and tend to sympathize more with the Faroe Islands. I will remain aware of this bias throughout the research and data collection and will relieve any possible bias in order to ensure confirmability and validity of my research.

### **Flow of Arguments**

The first section consists of the theoretical framework. The first theory presented will be that of liberal institutionalism, which will be the theory utilized when examining how countries act and react when members of institutions, especially when national interests are at risk. The second theory presented is Prisoner's Dilemma which will be utilized when examining cooperation in regards to what countries are willing to sacrifice in order to stay in the cooperation. The third and last theory is that of regionalism, as this theory arguably represents cooperation between neighboring states.

The second section looks at the three countries, the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland in more detail. Mainly the historical perspective will be examined in order to establish their common interest, national interest and political development. After the historical perspective has been examined the legal rights within their territory need examination in order to establish whether these three small countries have the legal rights to make decision concerning their territory. Especially the Faroe Islands and Greenland are in a peculiar situation as they are under the Danish Kingdom, which questions their rights. The definition of the Arctic Region is further important to establish as well as the position of the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Iceland in this region in order to establish what influence and actions these countries can contribute with in the Arctic development.

The third section examines the existing cooperation the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland already have established. In this regard the cooperation these countries have in the Arctic Region will be examined; the Nordic cooperation will further be outlined; the European cooperation, mainly EU is important and lastly bilateral agreements the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland have signed will be examined.



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The fourth section examines the cooperation already outlined in the previous section in more detail. This will be done in an attempt to understand the cooperation the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland already have established in order to be able to pinpoint the challenges, as well as benefits, gained from the different form of cooperation.

The last section will finalize the findings and answer the research question.

## **Theoretical Framework**

This section will present the theoretical framework that will be utilized in the analysis when examining the cooperation between the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland.

Andrew Heywood (2011:53) argues that when people are looking at the world, they create their own understanding of the world, and hence theory is important, as: “it gives shape and structure to an otherwise shapeless and confusing reality”. This argument can be referred to Weber’s notion of ‘Verstehen’, which is mentioned in the Methodology section.

In global politics the most relevant theories have evolved out of international relations, and one of the most dominant theories is Liberalism (Heywood, 2011: 53). The first theory utilized in this paper stems from the before mentioned theory, namely Liberal Institutionalism. The second theory gives a brief introduction to the Prisoners Game theory, which can be linked to liberal institutionalism. The last but equally important theory in this section is ‘Regionalism’, which is perceived as a modern global theory within international relations, and some argue this theory is a result of globalization (Heywood 2011: 480-506). Nevertheless this is a theory relevant to utilize in this study.

### **Liberal Institutionalism**

When examining the institutions the Faroe Islands and Greenland are members of as part of Denmark, and Iceland is member of as an independent country, a theory worth utilizing in the analysis is that of liberal institutionalism.

Immanuel Kant and his paper on ‘Perpetual Peace’, written in 1795, is seen as the core idea behind liberalism. Kant’s paper presented many ideas seen in the liberal theory today, and one of Kant’s ideas was that the creation of a democratic federation would prevent war and secure peace and stability. As Dunne (2008:112) quotes Kant: “But peace can neither be inaugurated nor secured without a general agreement between the nations; thus a particular kind of league, which we will call a pacific federation is required” (1991: 102-5). This liberal idea of nation states creating a kind of league in order to secure peace is further evident in the creation of the League of Nation after World War I. It was the American President, Woodrow Wilson, who advocated about the need of an international institution in order to restore peace and economic

stability after the war. In 1918, Wilson made his famous 'Fourteen Points' speech, where he stated that an association of democratic nation states had to be formed, and the League of Nations was born. This association of nation states, however, proved to be a failure, as the big players, the United States and the Soviet Union decided not to join because of ideological and political reasons, leaving the association a neutral cooperation between 'satisfied' states (Dunne, 2008: 113-14). Nevertheless, Kant's and Wilson's idea of cooperation between democratic nation states in order to preserve peace and create economic growth is perceived as the main idea behind the European Union (EU) and the United Nations (UN), and many argue that these liberal, democratic institutions paved the way for the present day liberal institutionalism.

As indicated above, there are different versions of liberalism theory today. David Baldwin (1993:4) outlines four versions, commercial liberalism, republican liberalism, sociological liberalism and liberal institutionalism. As a short introduction to these versions, commercial liberalism links free trade and market economy to peace; republican liberalism links democracy with peace; sociological liberalism refers to transnational activities and interdependence; however, liberal institutionalism is the version most relevant to this study, and will therefore be outlined in more detail in order to be utilized in the analysis.

Liberal institutionalism differs from the traditional version of liberalism in the assumption that cooperating states will not resort to war or violence, because it is in their good nature, but rather emphasizes that it is in their own interest to do so. As a dichotomy to liberalism, realists argue that competing nation states will resort to war in order to preserve national interests. Liberal institutionalists agree on the egoist part, however, as Goldstein and Pevehouse argue: "Even if we grant your assumptions about the nature of states and their motives, your pessimistic conclusions do not follow" (2008: 54). As this quote indicates liberal institutionalists have moved, to some extent, away from the liberal assumption that if nation states join a federation or institution, the common good will be the primary goal and rather state that each nation state will always preserve national interests first. However, if cooperating, the national interests can be preserved and enhanced in peace: "States can create mutual rules, expectations, and institutions to promote behavior that enhances (or at least doesn't destroy) the possibilities for mutual gain" (Goldstein & Pevehouse 2008: 54). Hence the liberal thinking has transformed from being all idealistic towards being more pragmatic since the end of World War II.

Lamy (2008: 132) states that liberal institutionalists emphasize the need for cooperation between nation states in this competitive international arena, and also stresses the benefits from becoming members of an institution. The need for cooperation is an assumption, which will be examined in the analysis of the three Nordic countries, as well as their involvement in international institutions, hence the relevance of the liberal institutionalist theory. Liberal institutionalism further states that cooperation is relevant between countries with mutual and similar interests, which will be argued is the case of the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland. As Lamy (2008: 134) argues: “The anodyne for neo-liberal Institutionalists is to create institutions to manage issue-areas where states have mutual interests”. This argument illustrates the view of how nation states sharing mutual interests benefit from cooperating, which, again, is what this paper will examine, both within an institutional framework and as individual countries.

As already indicated, international institutions are of great importance to liberal institutionalists as the institutions are seen as the main mechanism needed to restore stability in a world containing of sovereign countries (Heywood, 2011: 64). Hence liberal institutionalists consider the domestic state power as a system in need of a sovereign power in order to keep an order in the international arena. The EU arguably results from this ideology being an institution where European countries cooperate, share policies and interests and even share the same supranational government, and can arguably be seen as a model of success. According to Baldwin (1993: 5) the EU is of great importance, because: “[i]f progress toward integration continues, the neoliberals will presumably view this as support for their views”. This is of relevance as this point of view will be examined later, when analyzing the different institutions the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland are members of and where the benefit of this membership might be questioned.

The Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland are not member of this influential institution, but have signed agreements with the EU, securing certain national interests, hence questioning the need of membership. Iceland, though, has been in the process of negotiating potential membership, which will be examined later in this paper. Therefore, as this paper examines the cooperation between the small Nordic countries, institutionalism, liberal institutionalism, is relevant to examine in order to clarify what benefits the small countries the most.

Another important and relevant feature of the liberal institutionalist version is the question of relative versus absolute gains (Baldwin 1993: 5-6). Baldwin argues that liberal institutionalists

emphasize absolute gains from international cooperation between countries with common interests. Other theories emphasize relative gains, where countries cooperate in order to prevent others from gaining more, while liberal institutionalists want the cooperating countries to maximize their absolute gains (1993: 5-6). This is therefore, another perspective worth utilizing when examining the benefit of cooperation between the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland.

For the purpose of this study the words of Jackson and Sørensen (2003: 106-7) summarizes the liberal view highly relevant when stating that: “Liberals recognize that individuals are self-interested and competitive up to a point. But they also believe that individuals share many interests and can thus engage in collaborative and cooperative social action, domestically as well as internationally, which results in greater benefits for everybody at home and abroad”. As outlined, liberal institutionalism is one of the contemporary versions of liberalism, where especially the idealistic view of countries acting for the common good and not for the country's own self-interest divides these versions of liberalism. They do agree that countries can cooperate, especially countries sharing mutual interests, in order to gain the most for every party involved, however, the interest of the country is always the main indicator. The relevance of this theory lies in the fact that it is the cooperation between countries, and especially as members of institutions that will benefit them in the international arena that will be examined with the small Nordic countries, the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland as subjects.

Liberal institutionalism refers to Prisoner's Dilemma game (PD), when illustrating that cooperation is possible between countries. Therefore, in order to fully understand the cooperation between the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland in the analysis, the PD game theory will be briefly outlined in more detail next.

### **Prisoner's Dilemma**

The Prisoner's Dilemma game theory is developed as a means to describe the possibilities and challenges that arguably arise from cooperation. As Little (2008: 303) puts it, the PD theory: “[...] focuses on the interaction between two actors, each with only possible strategies – one cooperative and the other competitive – and so strategic interaction involves four possible outcomes”. In the real world the situation is not this simple, however, this makes it possible to

develop a model useful for many social situations. The Prisoner's Dilemma model puts forward the hypothesis that there are two criminals, accused of a crime, where both individually are given the option to confess and be given the freedom in return, while the other will get a long prison sentence; if the prisoner decides to stay silent, he will be released if the other prisoner also remains silent; however, if both confess they will both get prison sentences, though a bit shorter than if one confesses and the other does not (McLean & McMillan 2009: 434; Goldstein & Pevehouse 2013: 58-60; Little 2008: 303-05). The model is illustrated in the box below:

	<b>Silent</b>	<b>Confess</b>
<b>Silent</b>	3,3	4,1
<b>Confess</b>	1,4	2,2

As this model illustrates, if both prisoners stay silent there will be a Pareto optimal outcome, which is a criterion: “[...] when an exchange between two parties has reached its most efficient or optimum point” (Little 2008: 304). The numbers 1 and 4 illustrate the case if one prisoner confesses and the other stays silent, which will benefit one prisoner and not the other. The numbers 2 illustrate the case that both prisoners confess and both will be given a prison sentence. The model, therefore, demonstrates that if both prisoners cooperate, both will benefit and reach the Pareto optimal outcome. The argument is that if the prisoners act rationally, they will think of their own (national) interests and not cooperate, hence, not gaining the Pareto optimal outcome. Using the PD game theory in the analysis will help illustrate how and to what extent cooperation between the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland will benefit, and how this might influence the nation states’ self-interest as rational action is preserving the national interest. Some refer to this situation as the non-zero-sum game, where: “[...] coordination of moves can maximize the total payoff of the players, although each may still maneuver to gain a greater share of that total payoff” (Goldstein & Pevehouse 2013: 58). This non-zero-sum game is relevant to utilize in the paper when analyzing the cooperation between these three small Nordic countries, where the goal of course is to benefit and gain the most for each country.

After outlining theories that mainly look at countries cooperating within institutions the next theory will examine how cooperation within regions might be beneficial.

## **Regionalism**

Regionalism: “[...] is a process through which geographical regions become significant political and/or economic units, serving as the basis for cooperation and, possibly, identity”. (Heywood 2011: 481). This quote is very appropriate in the case of the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland as geographically these countries can be perceived as neighbors, hence, arguably have one of the key factor for establishing political and economic cooperation. As Heywood (2011:482) further puts it, regionalism is a theory comprising political, social and economic cooperation between a number of countries within a geographical region.

Heywood defines two different approaches to regionalism, where the first approach refers to a sub-national factor, which is a course of regionalism within the country. Examples of this approach are evident with federalism, as in the United States of America (USA), Brazil, Pakistan and Australia. The second approach deals with the course of regionalism between countries. This is referred to as transnational regionalism and deals with cooperation and integration between nation states within the same region of the world, as mentioned above (Heywood 2011: 481). It is the latter approach to regionalism that is relevant for this thesis.

The European Union (EU) is often linked to regionalism for the same reason, as mentioned earlier: the regions are in distinctive geographical areas. This therefore: “[...] leads to a tendency to identify regions with continents, as applies in the case of the European Union (EU)...” (Heywood 2011: 481). This quote indicates that regionalism can be utilized when examining institutions; however, this theory will mainly be examined in relation to countries. After identifying the geographical factor of regionalism, Heywood goes on to identify other components that, which will be argued later in this paper, are some of the main indicators of the benefit of regional cooperation between the Faroe Island, Iceland and Greenland: “An alternative basis for regional identity is socio-cultural, reflecting similarities of religion, language, history or even ideological belief amongst a number of neighbouring states” (2011: 482). The Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland share the same history of colonization and even though Iceland has gained independence, one might argue that these countries feel the same sense of belonging as a consequence of being colonized. As these three neighboring countries have been colonized by the same power, namely Denmark, the same basic values and beliefs have arguably been imposed on them, and therefore there are ideological and religious factors that these countries

further share. These factors will be examined in greater detail in the next section in order to emphasize the identifiers. Heywood goes on to argue that cultural identity is important and mentions the Nordic Council as an example of how culture is a decision-maker in a potential membership (2011: 482). The Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland are members of the Nordic Council, though, the Faroe Islands and Greenland have membership through Denmark (norden n/d). After outlining all these different factors identified with regionalism, one might argue that regional cooperation is relevant for these three small countries in the West North. It is important that the Faroe Island, Iceland and Greenland perceive the factors mentioned above as somewhat identical, hence seeing the possibility in economic and political cooperation.

The Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland are small countries that in the contemporary Arctic interest are at risk of disappearing in the development and hence not being able to gain the possible benefits. Hence the link to globalization or as Heywood (2011:488) puts it: “Regionalism became increasingly attractive as rapidly expanding global capital flows and an increasing trend towards transnational production patterns appeared to undermine the viability of the state as an independent economic unit”. In short Heywood argues the fact that in the globalized contemporary world countries become increasingly dependent on each other and therefore different sort of cooperation is created. One might argue that if it is important for countries to cooperate in this globalized world, it is vital for the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland to cooperate when considering their small scale body in the international arena.

Since the 1980’s there has been a development in the Regionalism theory, commonly referred to as the ‘new’ regionalism. Bjørn Hettne (1996) outlines some of the main differences between the ‘old’ regionalism and the ‘new’ regionalism; since the end of the Cold War, regionalism has changed from being mainly shaped in a bipolar perspective, to a multipolar perspective. Hettne argues that in the time of the Cold War, where the world system was dominated by the USA and the Soviet Union, the quasi-states tended to create bipolarity within themselves and it was not until the end of the Cold War that multipolarity developed in international relations. Another factor which describes the ‘new’ regionalism is the fact that in the Cold War regionalism was imposed on nation states, whereas today regionalism is created within states: “[...] where the constituent states now experience the need for cooperation in order to tackle new global challenges” (Hettne, 1996: 5). Furthermore, the old regionalism emphasized specific areas, such



as only focusing on security areas or economic areas, whereas today it is a process involving several areas. Hettne mentions that in this process there are subjects such as trade, economy, social policy, environment, and so on. The old regionalism further involved only states, where the new regionalism also involves international players, such institutions and movements. In sum, Hettne argues that the new regionalism is linked to globalization, where regions cooperate on important issues in order to be able to respond to the international pressure resulting from globalization (United Nations University, 1996). This summarize of 'old' and 'new' regionalism gives a good indication on how the world has changed and how it today is interlinked with cooperating economic and politic entities. Again, this theory can be linked to the process of examining the cooperation of the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland as it entails factors such as trade, social policy, economy etc., which arguably are factors that will be influenced by the Arctic development.

After examining the different theories that will be utilized in this project the next section will cover the history and development of the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland in order to stress the fact that it is possible to draw a parallel between these countries and examine the possibilities of cooperation.

## **The West Nordic Region**

Before examining the cooperation between the Nordic countries, the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland, and the challenges for cooperation, the reasons and similar interests between these three small Nordic countries will be analyzed. It is significant to examine the West Nordic neighbors, the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland to be able to draw a parallel between them in the analysis. The countries will be examined individually, where the general information such as population, GDP, demography and so on will be looked at using the National Statistics Organizations, the Nordic Statistical Yearbook 2013 published by the Nordic Council of Ministers as well as other relevant sources. Further the history of the countries will be examined, especially the political and economic development, which will give an indication on how the countries act in the international arena, hence indicate the reaction towards the international pressure which might arise with the Arctic development. As these countries do not have the same history, though similar, this section will start with Iceland, as, in this context, it is perceived to be the first country with an independent role in national and foreign policy. Next the Faroe Islands will be examined and this section will end with an examination of Greenland.

Jón Th. Thór (2012: 17) explains that the concept 'West North' has many meanings geographically, historically, culturally, economically and politically. He argues that today the concept is utilized in a political and institutional mode when discussing Nordic cooperation, however, he argues that in order to get an indication of this concept it is important to examine every meanings mentioned earlier. Considering that the three small countries will be outlined individually, it might arguably seem somewhat unnecessary to examine the history of the West North. However, when examining the history one gets an indication of how the identity and culture of the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland came about and how it has evolved and why it is comparable.

When looking at the population of the West North it is only approx 430.000 people, which is a very small number compared to the rest of the world. When, however, looking at the sea area surrounding these three countries, it covers a large part of the Northern hemisphere (Thór, 2012: 18). The three small countries are all islands, Greenland being the largest island in the world and they are part of two continents. This fact indicates the significance of the geopolitical importance of these three West Nordic countries; hence the attention from the international arena and the

benefits gained if dealt with correctly. The Faroe Islands and Iceland are part of Europe, while Greenland is part of North America, but is very close to Europe. Historically and culturally West- and North Norway also belong to the West Nordic Region (ibid), however, these areas will not be analyzed in this thesis as these areas arguably are not relevant for this thesis. Thór (2011: 20-21) further mentions the ocean as the main influence on the culture and society in the West North. Not only is the ocean the connection and link of communication between the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland, it is also the most important natural resource of the West North as well as the main food chamber. Therefore the ocean has had a huge affect on the development of these small countries and is arguably one of the many factors they have in common.

Another important factor that these countries have in common and arguably has molded their opinion on foreign pressure and influence is their past as colonies. The Faroe Islands and Greenland are still under the Danish Crown, however, Iceland managed to gain its independence in 1944. Not only has this experience affected the view on foreign influence but has also a historical significance for the development of the small countries in the West North. One more example of the importance examining the history of these three countries in order to utilize the outcome in the analysis.

Even though the West Nordic Region has been perceived as a cold and unfriendly region by the main European countries, there have been many battles fought over the West Nordic territory and natural resources, especially since the 1900<sup>th</sup> and the geopolitical development after World War II (ibid: 29). This indicates the geopolitical significance of the West Nordic Region, which, as mentioned earlier, covers a large area in the North Atlantic, hence covers a large part of the Arctic Region. Therefore, a parallel can be drawn to the geopolitical significant position of the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland today in regards to the Arctic development and the interest in the region from the international arena. This geopolitical position of the West North has been sought after for centuries, however, as this thesis examines the impact of the Arctic development, which is perceived as a new trend, the thesis will look at the importance of the geopolitical position since the end of World War II, as it is arguably not necessary to look further back.

”The Nordic countries have much in common – their way of life, history, language and social structure. Many of these common features and the results of their joint efforts may be described

by statistics. This is why the Nordic Council of Ministers publishes the Nordic Statistical Yearbook” (Nordic Statistical Yearbook 2014: 3).

The Nordic countries members of the Nordic Council of Ministers are: Denmark, Finland, Sweden, Norway, Åland, Iceland, Greenland and the Faroe Islands and it is, of course, the last three countries that will be outlined below. It will be the data from 2014 that will be utilized.

## **Geography**

### **The Faroe Islands**

The total area of the Faroe Islands is 1.396 sq. km. and the coastline is 1.289 km. hence this is a very small country in regards to area size. The population pr. 1 January 2014 was 48.228, which compared to other countries is a very small number. 19.948 of these citizens live in Tórshavn, the capital of the Faroe Islands. The form of government is home rule, as part of the Danish Kingdom and the parliament is called Lagtinget, which consists of 33 seats. The Faroe Islands is not member of the EU, but joined NATO in 1949 – due to Danish membership (ibid: 10). The Faroe Islands has its own Prime Minister, however, the Head of state is the Danish Queen, and the national currency is the Danish krone, which indicates the big Danish influence on the Faroe Islands.

### **Greenland**

The total area of Greenland is 2.166.086 sq. km. As mentioned earlier, Greenland is the biggest island in the world, which the size of the area provided by the Nordic Council of Ministers clearly indicates. The coastline is 44.087 km. and as a comparison, one can see above that the size of the coastline is 40 times that of the Faroe Islands. The population was pr. 1 January 2014 56.282, where 16.818 live Nuuk, the capital of Greenland. This is a somewhat dichotomy when looking at the Faroe Islands, as the country is much smaller, and therefore smaller population, however, Greenland only has a few thousands more citizens. Even though, the size of the population is a point where these two countries are comparable. The form of government is Self Government, within the Danish Kingdom and the parliament is called Inatsisartut or Landstinget and has 31 seats. Greenland joined the EU in 1973, when Denmark joined, however, left the Union in 1985. It is member of NATO, and has been since Denmark joined in 1949. As with the

Faroe Islands the head of state is the Danish Queen and the national currency is the Danish krone (Nordic Statistical Yearbook, 2014: 11).

## **Iceland**

The total area of Iceland is 103.492 sq. km. and the coastline is 6.088 km. This makes the size of the country considerably bigger than the Faroe Islands but still much smaller than Greenland. The population pr. 1 January 2014 was 325.671, where 208.752 people live in Reykjavík, the capital. This, again, is different from the two countries above, as there are much more people living in Iceland, even though, the size of the area is much smaller than Greenland. Iceland has a republic government and the parliament is called the Alþingi and consists of 63 seats. Iceland is not member of the EU, but has been members of the European Economic Area (the EEA) since 1994. The country is also member of NATO, and has been since 1949. The Head of Government is the Prime Minister and Iceland also has its own Head of State, as well as its own national currency, the Icelandic krona, which all are indications of independence from Denmark compared to the Faroe Islands and Greenland.

## **History**

A countries' history can be examined and analyzed through centuries, as most countries have a long and interesting history to tell. However, as it might arguably require too much time and as space is limited, the history from the 1800<sup>th</sup> and 1900<sup>th</sup> will be examined in this thesis. This time is frequently referred to as the "Era of Nationalism", as these centuries represent the fight for political and economical independence from Denmark by Iceland, the Faroe Islands and Greenland (Thór, Joensen & Thorleifson, 2012: 396). The reason why this time is relevant is because this is arguably the time when the national identity was created and where the Northerners fought in order to create a society, politically, culturally and economically that they desired and were proud of. Hence it can be argued that this is the kind of society they want to preserve and strengthen today.

Because of differences in time, where Iceland is the first country to fight for independence, the history of Iceland will be examined first. The purpose of this section is to be able to draw a parallel and hence identify reasons and similarities between these three small countries in the North, before looking at the challenges of cooperation.

## **Iceland**

A very significant factor that these three countries have in common is that they either are or have been under the Danish Kingdom. In order to be able to draw a parallel to the history and sense of belonging between the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland, the history and especially history of colonization and wish for independence will be examined. As stated earlier in this paper, Iceland has gained its independence, which will be examined later in this section, but before the discovery and creation of the country will briefly be examined.

The first signs of settlements in Iceland were Irish ancestors, however, there are no signs of any permanent settlements. The first settlement was, as with much of Western Europe, left to the Vikings. The Vikings might have learned about Iceland from the Irish, when preying upon the country in the 9<sup>th</sup> century, or they may: “[...] as later Icelandic tradition maintains, have stumbled upon it while accidentally bypassing the Faroes” (Seðlabanki, 1996). Archeological records show that around year 900 Iceland, rich in natural resources, was being rapidly settled (ibid). The next 300 years saw the significance of natural resources in that the land was settled by farmers and fishers; there was the emergence of chieftains as leaders; the parliament, Althingi, was established around year 930; Christianity was introduced to Iceland around year 1000, and with a slight pressure from Norway, Iceland converted to Christianity, hence following the path of Western Europe (ibid). The archeological evidence and research shows an interesting history well worth examining further, but for the purpose of the thesis the time will be fast forwarded to year 1262. A year that Icelanders see as a fateful date in regards to the story of independence.

It was King Hákon “the Old” of Norway that wanted to extend Norway's territory to include Iceland: “After all, it belonged to the ecclesiastical province of Norway; its trade was mainly with Norway; and its upper class had close cultural and social links to Norway, prominent Icelanders being eager to accept courtier status with the king, thus becoming in feudal terms his liegemen” (Seðlabanki, 1996). This resulted in sworn allegiance to the Norwegian crown by 1262. This era, therefore, is arguably the first time Iceland experienced colonialism.

The end of 14<sup>th</sup> century provided Iceland the second experience of colonialism when Norway came under the Danish crown, including Iceland (ibid). The unification of Norway and Iceland

under the Danish Kingdom is known today as the Kalmar Union, which was: “[...] the personal union between the three kingdoms of Denmark, Norway and Sweden. Also included in this fellowship was Finland, that was part of Sweden (until 1809), and Iceland, Greenland, the Faroes and the Shetland archipelago, belonging to Norway, meaning that the union encompassed all of the Nordic countries” ([danmarkshistorien.dk](http://danmarkshistorien.dk), n/d). As this quote implies this union included all the countries examined in this theses, and academics have also in recent times argued about the advantages with such a Nordic Union today. However, the importance lies in the fact that by the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century Iceland, as well as Greenland and the Faroe Islands, became part of the Danish Kingdom. After the Napoleonic war in 1814 Denmark was forced to give Norway to Sweden, however, Iceland, the Faroe Islands and Greenland stayed under Danish Kingdom and the great powers did not object to this (Seðlabanki, 1996).

As a little parallel to the situation today, Iceland was the first country of these three small Nordic countries to gain independence. The Faroe Islands and Greenland have also regularly pointed out the desire to gain independence, though. Here the parallel can be drawn, because according to Thór, Joensen & Thorleifson (2012: 396-97) the Icelanders fight for independence in the 19<sup>th</sup> hundreds became somewhat of a model for the fight of the Faroes and Greenlanders.

According to Icelanders, the struggle for independence started around the year 1830 influenced by the revolution in Paris (Thór, Joensen & Thorleifson, 2012: 397-98).

“The first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which was the age of romantic movement in European culture and of the growing influence of political liberalism and constitutionalism, saw the general ascendancy of nationalism, and the nation state was regarded as the only true forum for politics and government” (Seðlabanki, 1996).

This statement that the nation state was the only true forum for politics and government influenced several young Icelandic scholars starting to speak up and the national feeling among the Icelanders arguably resulted in the wish and demand for a separate assembly in Iceland.

The wish of the Icelandic people was granted when King Christian VIII issued a resolution stating more national powers to the Icelandic people (ibid: 400-401). Resulting from this the new Althing was created and situated in Reykjavík, where the first election was in 1844 and the first gathering of officials was on 1 July 1845.

After some many negotiations between the Icelandic and Danish a constitutional amendment was signed in 1901 offering Iceland full autonomy (Thór, Joensen & Thorleifson, 2012: 407). In the following years there were several meetings and discussions, both within the Althingi as well as between Althingi and the Danish government about the level of Icelandic autonomy. The fact that Iceland had to survive without help during World War I only strengthened their feelings of independence. In 18 December 1918 a Treaty was signed between the Icelandic and Danish governments stating the recognition of Iceland as an independent and absolute kingdom in a union with Denmark (ibid: 410). 25 years later, when the Union Treaty had to be renewed, it was World War II and Iceland were taken over by the Americans, the majority of the Icelandic population voted against the renewal and the connection with Denmark was cut. Hence, on 17 June 1944 and Icelandic republic was established and the fight for independence had ended (ibid: 411).

### **The Faroe Islands**

As mentioned above the timespan for when Iceland started its fight for independence cannot be compared to the Faroe Islands and Greenland, as Iceland started earlier. Their wish for independence can, however, be compared and when examining the Faroes struggle for independence, one might argue, as also mentioned above, that the Faroe Islands were largely influenced by Icelandic.

When the double monarchy of Denmark and Norway stopped to exist in 1814, the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Iceland came under the Danish Crown (Thór, Joensen & Thorleifson, 2012: 415). Consequently the Faroe Islands became an autonomous Danish county with a chief administrative officer as highest authority. There were no Faroes representative that could be used as counselors in regards to Faroes matter at this time, meaning that Denmark sent Danish representatives to handle the Faroes public business (ibid). In a dichotomy to Iceland, where the Althing was reestablished in 1845, the Faroe Islands did not have such an assembly, hence the Danish constitution was implemented without further discussions (ibid: 416).

Eight years after Althingi was established in Iceland, the Faroes government, Løgtingið, was established in 1852. Before the establishment of Løgtingið, the Danish government already acknowledged that Danish laws did not automatically apply to the Faroe Islands, hence the



Faroese county was perceived different from the other Danish counties. This was further evident in 1955, when each law had a paragraph stating the 'this law does not apply to the Faroe Islands' (Thór, Joensen & Thorleifson, 2012: 416). This meant that new Danish laws did not automatically apply to the Faroe Islands, however, this also means that several of the older Danish laws changed in Denmark still imply in the Faroe Islands today (ibid: 417).

The financial opportunities for Løgtingið to create developments were very limited (Thór, Joensen & Thorleifson, 2012: 418). Taxes had not been introduced so the income came from e. g. whaling, inheritances, tickets and so on, which was not much, hence the developments in the public and business sectors were very limited up till World War II. Further, the higher employments were mainly taken by Danish officials, and it was not until the establishment of Løgtingið that more power came in Faroese hands (ibid).

In comparison to the Icelandic national movement, which started with Icelandic students studying in Denmark, it was also Faroese students in Copenhagen that came together sharing the national feeling (Thór, Joensen & Thorleifson, 2012: 419). The foundation had already been set by the Faroese priest, V.U. Hammershaimb, who created the Faroese grammar, published in 1854, further producing a draft of the Faroese writing. Writers and poets gathered around the Faroese language and the national feeling, which resulted in the establishment of the Faroese association called Føroyingafelagið, very much at large today, where Faroese students and inhabitants in Copenhagen gather around different Faroese events. The national feeling was finally starting to root (ibid).

In 1888 the famous Christmas meeting was held, where the Faroese language and culture were on the agenda (ibid). There were Faroese speeches and songs, and the Faroese national heroes Rasmus Effersøe and Jóannes Paturson made an impression, further enhancing the national feeling. Consequently a new meeting was held in January 1889, where Føroyingafelagið in the Faroe Islands was established with the purpose to bring honor to the Faroese language and develop a stronger unity within the Faroese population with the aim of getting independence, hence the national feeling was a reality and blooming further forming the Faroese identity (ibid: 419-20).

“The special constitutional status, combined with a growing export oriented economy and a cultural national awakening by the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, fuelled a Faroese nation-building process and establishment of political autonomy” (Faroe Islands, n/d).

As states above the national feeling awakened in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century created a foundation for the Faroese identity, arguably compared to Iceland where the public perceived the national feeling worth fighting for resulting in independence. This appeal to a national feeling and wish for independent did not gain support from everyone, as some wanted to remain under the Danish Kingdom, evident in the creation of the Unionist Party in 1906, supporting the Danish Kingdom, and the formation of the Independence Party in 1909 (Thór, Joensen & Thorleifson, 2012: 420).

Up to World War II there were continuous struggles between the Faroe Islands and Denmark concerning Faroese language, legal rights, trade and so on without any considerable changes in the political structure. It became legalized to teach and preach in the Faroes language as well as it became legal to get married in the Faroes language (Thór, Joensen & Thorleifson, 2012: 420-426). Therefore, the national struggle starting in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and up to the World War II saw the victory of the language, however, the political struggle was still ongoing, which will be further outlined later in this section.

## **Greenland**

Researchers have found DNA proving that the first settlement in Greenland can be traced back to about 4500 years ago: “Known to researchers as the first Paleo-Eskimo culture, it gave way to a second Paleo-Eskimo culture some 2,500 years ago and then 700 years ago to the Thule culture of the present-day Inuit peoples” (The New York Times, 2008). This makes Greenland’s history different from Iceland the Faroe Islands, as the history is much older than the others countries’ and also the fact that most of the history is not traced by written sources but rather archeological findings (Mortensen et al., 2012: 47).

As mentioned in the quote above, the first settlers were paleo-eskimoes that came from Canada. The second flow of settlers were also from Canada, called the Saqqaq people and the following documented settlement was a different culture, the Dorset, named after Cape Dorset in Canada (Greenland, n/d). The first Norse settlement can be dated to 982 AD, when Erik the Red set foot

in South Greenland and archeology shows that the last sign of Norse settlement was seen in Greenland around 1450 AD (ibid).

The Norse settlement further brings the connection to Denmark, when, as already stated, Norway came under the Danish Crown at the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, bringing Greenland under the Danish Kingdom, known as the Kalmar Union, hence signifying the unification of the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland.

From the 15<sup>th</sup> century and till the 18<sup>th</sup> century Greenland was mainly occupied by settlements from Canada and Alaska (Mortensen et al., 2012: 49-54), which will not be examined in this thesis, as it lacks relevance. In 1721, the connection was reestablished between Greenland and Denmark, when the Norwegian priest, Hans Egede, went to Greenland as a missionary (danmarkshistorien.dk, 2012). The political and ideological arenas where Greenland was allowed to attend regarding internal matters came about in 1861, evolving over time and finally in 1950 municipalities were established, to be replaced by Landstinget, the government of Greenland, in 1979 (Thór, Joensen & Thorleifson, 2012: 434-35).

In 1776 the Royal Greenland Trading Company took over the administration of the colonies (ibid: 435). In the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century this entailed 7 colonies, ruled by principals which mean that the different colonies were rules individually (ibid). This indicates that the people already living in a big island, where there arguably were difficulties getting to the other colonies were bound to the principals, hence giving the principals a lot of power. This division of administrative units continues until 1950, when all the administrative tasks were collected into one joint unit.

The Danish parliament started to become more interested in Greenlandic affairs in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, hence made them realize the poor condition the country was in, and the totalitarian rule by the Royal Greenland Trading Company, resulting in reforms (Thór, Joensen & Thorleifson, 2012: 438-38). The result was Law nr. 138-1908 which was divided in two, one part for the management of Greenland and for the Royal Greenland Trading Company. This law did, however, not increase the influence of the Greenlandic people in the decision-making, as it still was difficult to form some kind of resistance towards the colonizers, as the law still preserved the dividing of the country (ibid). The resistance from the Royal Greenland Trading

Company to educate the Greenlandic people and giving them higher jobs, further made it difficult to be able to get an influence in Greenlandic matters. This struggle to gain influence and arguably frustration over lack of respect from the colonizers, resulted in a growing awareness amongst the Greenlandic people that they belonged to an independent country with an independent identity, a Greenlandic population in a Greenlandic country (ibid: 441). Hence the national feeling of independence was created.

This notion of identity created a debate in Greenland about, what this notion was, resulting in a decision to develop a culture and civilization in line with the European development (ibid: 441-42). The process can arguably be set in parallel with the Faroe Islands and Greenland as they were as influenced by the European movements as with each other. The Greenlandic fight for independence intensified in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, after World War II and will not be outlined in detail in this section, however, looking at the above, one might argue that Greenland's history of colonization has played a big part in their sense of belonging today.

### **Geopolitics**

Heywood (2011: 407) defines geopolitics as being:

“[...] an approach to foreign policy analysis that understands the actions, relationships and significance of states in terms of geographical factors, such as location, climate, natural resources, physical terrain and population”.

This definition of geopolitics is relevant for this thesis, as it is the geographical factors that arguably connect the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland, as well as their geographical position in the Arctic Region is what makes them interesting and relevant to examine.

In order to outline the geographical significance of these three countries this part will look at their position in the Arctic in accordance to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), and in the case of Faroe Islands and Greenland their rights to their territory and resources will be examined as some national areas are still under the Danish Kingdom and therefore not for the Faroe Islands and Greenland to govern.

### **The Arctic Region**

As this project focuses on the Arctic development, it is appropriate to briefly outline the definition of the concept.

There are many different definitions on the Arctic Region, but the one used for this thesis, and the one used by the eg. the Arctic Council is created by AMAP, which stands for Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme, an Arctic Council working group founded in 1991 (nordregio, 2013). In AMAP's assessment report from 1998, the Arctic is discussed as well as the definition of the Arctic Region is outlined. The report acknowledges the many definitions of the Arctic based on the physical-geographical characteristics, and therefore it was not possible for the AMAP report to introduce a single definition (*ibid*). The AMAP definition of the Arctic Region takes into consideration various factors such as, political boundaries, vegetation boundaries, permafrost limits, and major oceanographic features. “The region covered by AMAP is, therefore, essentially the terrestrial and marine areas north of the Arctic Circle (66°32'N), and north of 62°N in Asia and 60°N in North America...” (*ibid*). The most relevant with this definition is that all of Iceland and the Faroe Islands are covered, compared with the Arctic Circle. What is interesting is that Denmark is considered an Arctic country, even though not covered in the Arctic region, and so is USA. This is because of the Faroe Islands/Greenland and Canada respectively, which will be looked at in more detail in later sections.

## **Iceland**

The UNCLOS states that every sovereign country has the right to control its territorial sea not exceeding 12 nautical miles. The Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) is defined as a zone contiguous to a coastal countries' territorial sea, where the country has: “sovereign rights for the purpose of exploring and exploiting, conserving and managing the natural resources, whether living or non-living, of the waters superjacent to the seabed and of the seabed and its subsoil, and with regard to other activities for the economic exploitation and exploration of the zone..” (Index Mundi, 2014). The Law further states that the EEZ shall not exceed 200 nautical miles from where the territorial sea is measured (*ibid*). As Iceland is an independent, sovereign country, it has full legal rights over its territory, within the limits put forward by the UNCLOS. As outlined above, Iceland is covered in the general definition of the Arctic Region.

## **The Faroe Islands**

After World War II the Faroe Islands issued a referendum where the public could vote in favor or against complete independence from Denmark. Surprisingly there were more in favor of independence, albeit only a few votes in difference, even though, democracy had spoken (Thór, Joensen & Thorleifson, 2012: 428-29). The Danish Government opposed the result and asked the King to issue a new election, resulting in a parliamentary majority voting against independence. As a solution the Home Rule Act came into force in 1948 in the Faroe Islands, where the Faroese government takes over certain areas, thereby considered Faroese Special Affairs (The Government of the Faroe Islands, 2014). This included areas such as agriculture, fisheries and the education system.

The Faroese government is continuously taking over more and more areas, and in the 1993 this included the raw material in the Faroese underground (Løgmansskrivstovan, 2014), hence giving the Faroese government legal rights to make decisions over its own territorial sea.

## **Greenland**

Accordance to the AMAP definition of the Arctic Region, Greenland is covered in the region. However, as the UNCLOS states that the territorial sea belongs to the sovereign coastal country, therefore questioning Greenland's legal right to take decisions regarding their EEZ, being an autonomous country under the Danish Kingdom.

After the modernization of Greenland and the wish for enhanced independence, a referendum on greater autonomy was held in 1979, where 63% of the population voted in favor of a Home Rule, resulting in the establishing of the Greenland Home Rule in May the same year (Naalakkersuisut, n/d).

In the turn of the century the government of Greenland decided to evaluate the Home Rule, which resulted in the Self-Government act in 2008. After a national referendum where 75% of the public voted in favor of the Self-Government Act, the Home Rule was replaced in 2009 (ibid).

Through the Self-Government Act the government of Greenland has the sovereignty and administration over areas such as: education, health, fisheries, environment and climate (ibid).

Hence, Greenland has the legal rights to decide and control its territorial sea, according to the Self-Government Act.

## **Existing Cooperation**

### **Arctic Cooperation**

#### **Arctic Council**

The Arctic Council was formally established in 1996 with the signing of the Ottawa Declaration. The member countries are: the Government of Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, the Russian Federation, and the United States of America (Library. Arctic Portal, 1996). The Faroe Islands and Greenland are members of the Arctic Council as part of the Kingdom of Denmark. The purpose of the Council is to provide and ensure cooperation, coordination, and interaction among the member countries. This further involves the Arctic indigenous communities and other Arctic inhabitants. Among the many Arctic issues on the agenda, it is especially Arctic issues such as sustainable development and environmental protection that are focus areas for the Arctic Council. The Ottawa Declaration also declares that the members of the Arctic Council shall not deal with military security issues (ibid). The Arctic Council is considered the leading decision-making body concerning Arctic matters.

The Ottawa Declaration outlines the possibility of obtaining Observer Status, relevant for a) non Arctic states, b) intergovernmental and interparliamentary organizations, global and regional, c) non-governmental organizations: "...that the Council determines can contribute to its work" (ibid). This part of the declaration will be important when looking at other actors cooperating with the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland, such as the EU, determined to gain observer status in the Council, as outlined later in this thesis.

#### **Arctic Five**

In 2008 the Danish government made the decision to invite five of the eight Arctic countries to a meeting in Ilulissat, Greenland, in order to discuss the Arctic Ocean seabed and potential emergencies, such as oil spill (cbc news, 2008). The countries invited were the Arctic coastal states, Canada, Norway, USA, Russia and of course Denmark. The remaining countries in the Arctic Council Iceland, Sweden and Finland argued against this meeting and pointed out that such a meeting should be held at the Council with all countries present. However, the remaining



countries, as well as the Arctic Council, were assured that they would be kept informed. The reason for this meeting was the importance of examining issues only relevant for the coastal states (ibid). The result of this meeting was the Ilulissat Declaration, outlining the importance of preserving the Arctic Ocean, and the five coastal countries are responsible for managing and implementing the right measures (Ocean Law, 2008). Further the Law of the Sea is mentioned in the Declaration as the UNCLOS: "... provides for important rights and obligations concerning the delineation of the outer limits of the continental shelf, the protection of the marine environment, including ice-covered areas, freedom of navigation, marine scientific research, and other use of the sea" (ibid). The mentioning of the law further highlights the meetings motive to discuss the issues for preserving the Arctic Ocean and the continental shelf.

## **Nordic cooperation**

### **Nordic Council**

After World War II, when Europe was struggling to rebuild, structurally, financially and politically, the Nordic countries recognised the need to enhance cooperation between them and raise Nordic awareness internationally. This resulted in the establishment of the Nordic Council, the first session being held in the Danish Parliament in 1953 (norden, n/d). Not all of the Nordic countries were part of this Council, however, as Finland at this time had close relations with the Soviet Union. In 1955, after Stalin died, Finland joined the Nordic Council. Therefore in 1955 the Nordic Council consisted of Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Iceland and Finland. On 23 March 1962 the treaty was finally ratified in Helsinki, hence the Nordic Council is known as the Helsinki Treaty (ibid). In 1970 the Faroe Islands and Åland were invited to have a representative in the Council, as members of the Danish and Finnish delegation, respectively, and in 1984 Greenland could have a representative as part of the Danish delegation (ibid).

"The Nordic Council is the official inter-parliamentary body in the Nordic Region" (norden, n/d). As mentioned above the Nordic Council was created as a result of the desire to gain closer Nordic cooperation. Therefore the purpose of the Council is to work out relevant, positive agreements and solutions for the Nordic countries and its citizens. The MP's and ministers of the Council meet twice annually, for the Ordinary Session, held in Autumn and the Theme Session, held in Spring, where they make decisions, which the ministers subsequently recommend the

Nordic governments to implement (norden, n/d).

When looking at the structure of the Nordic Council, it is run by a Presidium and the Presidency rotates between the member countries for one year at a time. The political work of the Council is in the hands of committees and party groups, and the Council is managed by a Secretariat, as well as there is a national secretariat in every Nordic parliament (norden, n/d).

The Department of Administration and Law, and the Communications Department is shared with the Nordic Council of Ministers.

### **Nordic Council of Ministers**

The Nordic Council of Ministers is an intergovernmental body for Nordic cooperation founded in 1971, when the Nordic cooperation failed to establish a common economic body. It was mainly an attempt to ensure the Nordic cooperation in a period when some of the Nordic countries sought EU membership. The members of the Nordic Council of Ministers are the same as in the Nordic Council and each of the Nordic countries – the autonomous countries excluded – hold the presidency for one calendar year at a time. Each time the country holding the presidency: "... draws up a programme presenting the political priorities for intergovernmental co-operation during the year to come" (OECD, 2011: 206). The Council of Ministers can further be used to discuss external issues, such as issues related to EU that affect the members. To ensure that the autonomous countries are heard, agreements are usually reached through consensus (ibid).

### **NORA**

NORA, stands for: Nordic Atlantic Cooperation, and is an organization under the Nordic Council of Ministers. The region that NORA covers are the Faroe Islands, Greenland, Iceland and Coastal Norway and are these countries are: "...associated by their geographical location and by shared characteristics, common challenges and historical, institutional and cultural links" (NORA, n/d). The main activity of NORA is to collaborate between the business and research sector in the region in order to create a strong and vibrant region in the North Atlantic. The funding comes from the individual countries as well as from the Nordic Council of Ministers. The organization consists of twelve members, three from each country, that set out some main areas of interest for the region which consequently is turned into a multiple-year strategy plan (ibid). NORA acknowledges the common challenges and joint interests in the West Nordic countries, and when

being members of the Nordic Council and Council of Ministers arguably is an exclusive club with larger, more influential Nordic countries, NORA focuses on giving a voice only to the small countries in the region, the Faroe Islands, Greenland, Iceland and the North Coast of Norway.

The main office of NORA is located in Tórshavn, the Faroe Islands, with contact persons in Greenland, Iceland and Norway (ibid).

### **The West Nordic Council**

The West Nordic Council is another body consisting of the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland, proving the general interest among the parliaments of these three countries to maintain and enhance cooperation. The West Nordic Council also highlights the similar historical and cultural ties that these three small countries share, as well as surviving on natural resources, where fisheries is the main industry. (Vestnordisk Råd, n/d), identifying the main influence when acting in the international arena. The Parliaments of the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland each appoint six representatives and the presidium consists of one representative from each country, a president, a vice president and a second vice-president (OECD, 2011: 209). One might argue that when looking at an Arctic reference area this collaboration is very relevant, when the main objectives of the Council are: "...promoting West Nordic (North Atlantic) interests; acting as guardians of North Atlantic resources and North Atlantic culture; following up on governments' West Nordic co-operation; and liaising with the Nordic Council on issues of particular interest to the West Nordic communities" (ibid).

### **International Cooperation**

#### **The European Union**

Looking at European Cooperation first one cannot disregard the supranational, decision-making and highly influential institution, the European Union (EU). Without going into details the EU can in short be described as an institution consisting of the European Commission being the executive body in charge of proposing legislation, implementing decisions, upholding the EU treaties and dealing with the day-to-day business of the EU (Egeberg, 2007: 140-152); the Council of the European Union that is "...the epicentre of EU decision-making and plays a pivotal

role in the making of European policy” (Lewis, 2007: 155); and the European Parliament that together with the two before mentioned bodies exercises the legislative function of the EU (Scully, 2007: 175-186). This economic and political institution has 28 European countries as members that, when joining: “...sign up not only to the body of EU treaties, legislation, and norms (the so-called *acquis communautaire*), but also to a set of shared common values, based on democracy, human rights, and principles of social justice” (Cini, 2007:2).

The Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland have various forms of agreements with the EU, which will be examined in more detail below in order to outline what these different cooperation agreements entail and if there is evidence of similar interests behind these agreements.

### **The Faroe Islands**

As mentioned when examining the Nordic cooperation, the Nordic countries sought EU accession which resulted in the Kingdom of Denmark joining in 1973.

When Denmark joined the Union, the Faroe Islands got the option to become member of the EU as a part of the Kingdom of Denmark. Considering the treaties and policies the individual member countries were required to adapt, including the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP)<sup>1</sup>, the Faroe Islands decided to remain outside the Union, as most of the national economy relied on the fishing industry. The Faroese government and decision-makers acknowledge the importance and need for a close and dynamic cooperation with the EU and have agreed on bilateral agreements with the Union on fisheries and free trade. The present Faroese government is further examining the possibility to widen the agreement to entail the four freedoms; the free movement of goods, services, capital and persons (Faroe Islands, n/d).

### **EU's Research Programme**

In 2010 the Faroe Islands joined the EU research cooperation programme, The Seventh Framework Programme (FP7). This cooperation opened the doors for Faroese researchers, as they were able to apply for funding from the Programme, as well as gain insight and knowledge from researchers from other European member countries (Granskingarráðið - The Faroese

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<sup>1</sup>”The CFP is a set of rules for managing European fishing fleets and for conserving fish stocks... [...] it gives all European fishing fleets equal access to EU waters and fishing grounds and allows fishermen to compete fairly (EC).

Research Council, n/d). In January 2014 the FP7 was replaced by the new EU research programme, Horizon 2020 (H2020), and on December 2014 the Faroese Prime Minister and a representative from the Italian presidency together with the Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation signed the new agreement securing the Faroe Islands status as associated member in the new research programme, lasting from 2014 to 2020 (Granskingarráðið – The Faroese Research Council, 2014).

### **Free Trade Agreement**

The Faroe Islands and the EU have had a free trade agreement since 1991, revised in 1996, covering most of the export from the Faroe Islands, as well as ensuring duty-on export from EU (The Government of the Faroe Islands, n/d). The Agreement is very beneficial for the Faroe Islands as it covers most of the trade sector, however, the Agreement does not include free trade of services, capital and persons (ibid). As mentioned above the current Faroese government is working on how to expand the Agreement to cover all the four freedoms.

### **Iceland**

Iceland went through a national, financial breakdown in 2008 following the collapse of the banking system. In an effort to rebuild the country the new government, with Johanna Sigurdardóttir in the lead as Prime Minister, submitted an application to the EU in 2009. The Foreign Minister, Øssur Skarpheðinsson, said in a statement: “As a European nation already deeply integrated into European structures... we now look forward to taking the next logical step, in close cooperation with our European partners” (CNN International, 2009).

However, in 2013, a new government was established, and the new Prime Minister, Sigmundur David Gunnlaugsson, presented a coalition agreement focusing on solving the economic problems nationally (Financial Times, 2013). This statement is a dichotomy to the one made by Mr. Skarpheðinsson arguing for deeper integration in Europe, in this case EU accession, as the decision-makers in 2013 decided on solving matters nationally rather than supranationally. As the Finance Minister stated: “We believe the accession talks were started without the necessary support in Iceland” (ibid). One might argue that the government from 2009 had to react fast to the outcry from the public, in order to prove that the matters were being taken seriously, as the former government was blamed for the economic collapse. Hence the accession talks were

initiated, arguably before doing the necessary preliminary research. Iceland has not withdrawn its application yet, however, the Icelandic Prime Minister told the Icelandic radio in the beginning of this year that the plan is to withdraw it early this year (eu observer, 2015).

### **EFTA**

Even though Iceland is withdrawing its EU accession application, which arguably can create tensions in the relations between the Iceland and EU, Iceland has a history of close cooperation with the EU.

EFTA stands for European Free Trade Association and is an intergovernmental organization working to promote free trade and economic integration. EFTA was founded in 1960 by the Stockholm convention and consisted of seven countries: Austria, Denmark, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. Finland, Iceland and Liechtenstein joined later. However, as some of the before mentioned countries later became members of the EU and consequently left the Free Trade Association, EFTA today has four remaining members: Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland (EFTA, 2014).

### **EEA**

Iceland became member of the European Economic Area (EEA) in 1994, which is an agreement that: "...brings together the EU member states and the three EEA EFTA states – Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway – in a single market referred to as the "Internal Market" (EFTA, 2014). The EEA Treaty further states that when a country becomes member of the EU, it is obliged to join the EEA (ibid). In this way the EEA is continually enlarging, which in turn creates a large group of countries in a free trade agreement, and Iceland is a part of this group. The EEA Agreement does not cover Common Agricultural and Fisheries policies, which might explain how a country as protective of the fishing industry as Iceland, would join the agreement. The majority of the tasks of the Icelandic Embassy in Brussels are dealing with matters relating to the EEA Agreement and the Schengen Convention (Ministry for Foreign Affairs, n/d), indicating the volume of the internal market.

## **Greenland**

As outlined above the Faroe Islands decided not to join the EU, when Denmark became member of the EU in 1973. The Faroese government and people were able to decide on this subject because of the Home Rule Act of 1948. Greenland did not have Home Rule in 1973, and were therefore obliged to join the EU as part of the Danish Kingdom, albeit a referendum in Greenland in 1972 proved lack of support of EU membership (Naalakkersuisut – Government of Greenland, n/d). When Greenland signed the Home Rule Act in 1979, the withdrawal from the EU was one of the political tasks, and another referendum was held in 1982, again with the majority voting against EU membership (ibid). After several negotiations with EU officials a treaty was signed in 1985, called the Greenland Treaty, stating Greenland's withdrawal from the EU – the first and only country to have successfully left EU (ibid).

The Greenland Treaty also provided for the first fisheries agreement between Greenland and EU stating that EU would continue to keep its fishing rights and Greenland would continue receiving financial contribution as before the withdrawal (Naalakkersuisut – Government of Greenland, n/d). In 2002 Greenland got an even closer relations with the EU when joining the Overseas Countries and Territories Association (OCTA).

## **Overseas Countries and Territories Association (OCTA)**

OCTA consists of 22 member countries from the Caribbean, the Indian Ocean, the Pacific and other countries, such as Greenland. The vision of the Association is: “For all Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs) of the European Union (EU) to be on a path of sustainable development, whilst projecting our natural environment, by promoting economic and human development through cooperation with the EU as well as with regional and global partners” (OCTA, n/d). As this vision states, the goal is for the OCTs to cooperate in order to communicate their common views and interests as well as being a joint body when cooperating with the EU. In 2013 the EU and the OCTs signed a new association decision, the Overseas Association Decision (OAD), underlining the part of the OCTs in the European family, enhancing further cooperation, further engaging in policy dialogue with Brussels, and providing for funding possibilities amongst other subjects of mutual interest of the OCTs and the EU. The Decision is in effect for the years 2014 to 2020 (Naalakkersuisut – Government of Greenland, n/d). The priorities of OCTA are environment and climate change, renewable energies, financial services, trade and regional

integration, and research, education and innovation (OCTA, 2013). One might argue that these are priorities very relevant for the Government of Greenland, as the Arctic development is due to climate change, affecting the environment.

### **Joint Declaration**

In 2014 Greenland, the EU and Denmark approved a Joint Declaration recognising the historical, political, economic and cultural ties between them, as well as stating the strengthening of the relations between the parties (Naalakkersuisut – Government of Greenland, n/d). The declaration further defines areas for continued and enhanced cooperation, as well as strengthening of the relations (ibid). In short this is a political umbrella agreement and overall declaration of intentions.

### **The Fisheries Partnership Agreement**

As stated earlier the Greenland Treaty from 1985 contained a fisheries agreement between Greenland and the EU. In 2003 the agreement was reviewed and evaluated with an agreement to split the agreement into two: “... a continued fisheries agreement on commercial terms and, a partnership agreement” (Naalakkersuisut – Government of Greenland, n/d). In 2013 the commercial fisheries agreement came into force with the EU contributing 17.8 mio. Euros per year for fishing rights in Greenland Exclusive Economic Zone. The Agreement covers three year, from 2013 to 2015, and also allows for possible cooperation in the fishing industry if both parties would want to set up a project (ibid).

### **The Partnership Agreement**

When the commercialized Partnership Agreement only deals with the fishing industry, the Partnership Agreements focuses on: “... different areas ranging from research, sustainable development over industry and education and training and in long term perspective” (Naalakkersuisut – Government of Greenland, n/d). The goal is to diversify Greenland’s economy and the central area of focus is education and training. EU is funding an indicative amount of 217 mio. Euros over the period 2014 to 2020, which shall be spent on implementation (ibid).

These two Partnership Agreements, as well as the Joint Declaration from 2013 indicate a vibrant



and close relationship between Greenland and EU, where both parties stress the mutual benefit gained from these agreements. From a liberal institutionalism perspective this Agreement and relationship arguably stems from a mutual wish to gain from this cooperation. The question to ask is therefore, what EU will gain from this close relationship with this big island in the Arctic. A question examined closer in the next section.

## **Bilateral Agreements**

### **The Hoyvík Agreement**

In 2005 the Faroe Islands and Iceland signed an agreement creating a common market between the countries. It was signed in Hoyvík, the Faroe Islands, hence the Hoyvík Agreement (The Government of the Faroe Islands, 2005). The Faroe Islands and Iceland have always had good relations and the signing of this Agreement further cements this unity when it states that it: "... is the establishment of a single economic area covering the territories of Iceland and the Faroe Islands, where, within the substantive scope of this Agreement, any discrimination on the basis of nationality, place of establishment, or the place of origin of goods is prohibited" (ibid). As shall be examined in the next section the good and equal relationship claimed to be between the Faroe Islands and Iceland, might prove not to be the case, especially due to this Agreement.

### **Other**

In 2013 Iceland opened up a consulate in Nuuk, Greenland. This was done in a sign of good relationship between Iceland and Greenland, and the mutual wish to enhance their cooperation. Gunnar Bragi Sveinsson, Foreign Minister of Iceland and Aleqa Hammond, Premier of Greenland, issued a joint statement emphasizing the importance of this enhanced cooperation between Iceland and Greenland, especially in the Arctic developmen, which: "[...] are of fundamental importance for Iceland and Greenland (Utanríkisráðuneytið, 2013).

As mentioned earlier all three countries, the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland have stated the importance of cooperation between the three, wishing for e.g. free trade zone between the countries. Opening of the Icelandic consulate in Greenland further illustrates the close relations between the countries in the West Nordic region.

The Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland are members of the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO), the North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC) and the North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission (NAMMCO). As emphasized several times the fishing industry is of great importance for these three countries, hence strong cooperation with the fishing industry is vital. In NAMMCO the Faroe Islands and Greenland are represented in their own name and as part of the Danish Kingdom (NAMMCO, 2005).

### **The Faroe Islands**

As well as having Nordic Cooperation, EU Cooperation, and the Hoyvík Agreement, the Faroe Islands also have regional free trade agreements with Norway and Switzerland, and a Most-Favoured-Nation Treatment with Russia (Faroe Islands, n/d). The newest free trade agreement is with Turkey, which was signed in December 2014. These agreements arguably indicate that the Faroese approach to the international arena is through trade, hence utilizing the theory of liberal institutionalism stating that cooperation between countries in the globalised world will benefit on national level.

### **Iceland:**

In 2013 China signed its first ever Free Trade Agreement with an European country, when signing a Free Trade Agreement with Iceland. As with a free trade agreement the main aim was to: "... promote trade by abolishing tariffs on imports and to further enhance economic ties between the two countries" (Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2013). Being member in the EEA already gives Iceland a comprehensive list of free trade agreements with 28 of the EU member countries, but, as the Icelandic government states, this agreement with China is part of the governments long-term policy to establish a broader list of agreements (ibid).

### **Greenland:**

Being the largest island and geographically close to Canada, Greenland has close relationship with Canada. Especially their common heritage, culture and tradition within the indigenous community ties the bond. Greenland and the territory of Nunavut in Northern Canada have signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation, where shared interests are dealt with

(Nunavut, 2000). Greenland is also member of the Inuit Circumpolar Conference, where together with Canada, Alaska and Russia, the focus is cooperation between the Inuit people (Inuit Circumpolar Council, n/d).

This last part examined in Greenlands foreign policy might illustrate a challenge when examining the challenges and possibilities for enhanced cooperation between the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland in the next section, as this is a part of geography, culture and tradition, where the Faroe Islands and Iceland are excluded, though a strong part of Greenland's identity.

## **Arctic Strategies**

### **The Arctic Strategy of the Kingdom of Denmark**

The Danish government issued an Arctic strategy in 2011 entitled, Kingdom of Denmark Strategy for the Arctic 2011-2020, formally adopted by the Government of Denmark, the Government of the Faroe Islands and the Government of Greenland (European Commission, 2011). Because the Faroe Islands and Greenland are under the Danish Kingdom, and these two countries are covered in the definition of the Arctic Region, Denmark is considered an Arctic country. Hence, the strategy the Danish Government has produced, includes the Faroes and Greenland. As the Danish Foreign Ministry argues: “The purpose of the Arctic Strategy is to reinforce the foundation for appropriate cooperation on the many new opportunities and challenges that the Arctic is facing in areas such as scientific research, climate change, the protection of the environment and the use of natural resources” (Denmark in Canada, 2011).

The Arctic Strategy is divided into four areas: 1) A Peaceful, Secure and Safe Arctic; 2) Self-Sustaining Growth and Development; 3) Development with Respect for the Arctic Vulnerable Climate, Environment and Nature and; 4) Close Cooperation with our International Partners (Denmark, Greenland and the Faroe Islands, Kingdom of Denmark Strategy for the Arctic 2011-2020, 2011: 5).

The first chapter, dealing with a peaceful and secure Arctic has three sections, where the first section emphasizes the importance of peaceful cooperation particularly with a basis in the UNCLOS. The second section focuses on enhanced maritime security and last the section deals with enforced sovereignty and surveillance (ibid: 13-21). As the heading of the chapter indicates this chapter is about the importance of the Arctic and how to secure the region. The Ilulissat Declaration and the five Arctic coastal states are mentioned as being important actors in security, protection of the environment and search and rescue. The importance of enhanced maritime security consists of the reality that the melting of the ice opens new shipping routes, which consequently can result in more traffic at sea, both in regards to shipping and tourism. Therefore, it is important to cooperate in safety and rescue at sea, as well as the infrastructure needs to be able to meet the demands following the increase of traffic at sea. The last section deals with the

military and the importance of enforced sovereignty: "... by the armed forces through a visible presence in the region where surveillance is central to the task" (ibid: 20).

The second chapter is about 'Self-Sustaining Growth and Development' covering a wider range of areas from exploitation of mineral resources such as oil, gas and minerals; exploitation of renewable energy; sustainable exploitation of living resources; stronger integration in international trade; knowledge based growth and development; and arctic cooperation in health and social coherence (Denmark, Greenland and the Faroe Islands, Kingdom of Denmark Strategy for the Arctic 2011-2020, 2011: 23-41). The new possibilities following the development in the Arctic Region creates both benefits and challenges, especially for Greenland, and therefore, this chapter emphasizes the obligation for the Kingdom of Denmark to ensure sustainable exploitation of the natural resources, as well as ensuring correct cooperation both with the international and Arctic arena in order to prevail in this development.

As the title of the third chapter indicates it deals with the environment, nature and climate change. It argues the importance of knowledge about the consequences climate change can lead to in the Arctic and what this will mean to the people living there. The importance of protecting the environment and biodiversity is further argued as the climate change will effect the plants and animals in the Arctic. Therefore research must be strengthened and knowledge must be gained regarding the climate change and its impact (ibid: 43-47).

The final chapter covers cooperation with international partners, such as the EU, the Arctic Council, the Arctic Five, and bilateral agreements. Areas with relevance for cooperation are climate change, environment and nature, research and maritime safety, emphasizing the long tradition of global, regional and bilateral cooperation (ibid: 49-56). The chapter talks about global solutions to global challenges, entailing that the global challenges following the Arctic development need global solutions, hence global cooperation, involving large international organizations such as EU, UN, WTO and UNCLOS (ibid: 49). The Nordic and European cooperation partners already outlined above are also listed in this chapter as partnership important to strengthen and maintain concerning the Arctic. The chapter ends by highlighting the importance of bilateral agreements as well as staying in dialogue with players with an interest in the Arctic (ibid: 54).

The Arctic Strategy of the Kingdom of Denmark concludes by outlining how the implementation will be realized (Denmark, Greenland and the Faroe Islands, Kingdom of Denmark Strategy for the Arctic 2011-2020, 2011: 57). A cross-disciplinary steering committee will be established in order to ensure implementation, including representatives from the Government of the Faroe Islands and the Government of Greenland. Further the Arctic Strategy: "... falls within the existing division of competences and responsibilities between the State and Greenland's Self-Government, and the State and the Government of the Faroes" (ibid).

In summary the Danish Arctic Strategy continuously stresses the importance of cooperation. The cooperation should be dealt with in a peaceful manner with global, regional and bilateral partners. The Arctic development and international interest that follows leads to increased activity with shipping, tourism and resource exploitation. Therefore, safety at sea needs prioritizing, the infrastructure needs developing, and the resources need ensured sustainable exploitation. The Arctic with the increased activity and possible economic outcome also has negative affect and therefore the protection of the environment, wildlife and indigenous people is a task in the joint Arctic Strategy. Education, research and training is further fundamental.

Even though the Faroe Islands are covered in the Kingdom of Denmark Strategy for the Arctic, the Faroes Government issued: "... a strategic assessment to provide a deeper and broader understanding of the challenges and potential of the Faroe Islands in the years to come and their place in the future development in regional cooperation" (The Government of the Faroe Islands, 2014). The working group presented the Arctic Strategy to the Prime Minister of the Faroe Islands on April, 2013.

### **The Faroe Islands:**

One of the main reasons the Government of the Faroe Islands decided to establish a working group with the purpose of issuing an Arctic Strategy paper, was that much of the area the joint Arctic Strategy of the Danish Kingdom covered, were areas where the Faroe Islands have exclusive competences, hence the need to outline these areas in more detail.

As a parallel to the Strategy of the Danish Kingdom, the Faroe Islands also acknowledges the importance of strengthening the existing cooperation, globally, regionally and bilaterally (The Faroe Islands – a nation in the Arctic, 2013: 5). The long tradition of Nordic Cooperation can

increase, with a future joint Arctic cooperation in the West North, as well as a more active role in the Arctic Council is recommended (ibid). In these first recommendations the Faroes working group and the Danish working group both identify the importance and relevance of enhancing regional cooperation.

The opening of the Northern Sea Route is also taken into account, as this has the potential to be economically beneficial if handled correctly. The Faroe Islands is strategically well placed in the Arctic, albeit small, and has: "... a unique opportunity to develop as a key maritime service and educational hub in the region" (ibid: 6). Therefore relevant education and training is also one of the recommendations. As mentioned, the Faroe Islands rely heavily on fisheries and have long experience in this industry. For the Faroe Islands to play an active role in international cooperation on the future management of fisheries is of high importance in general, and this is obviously one of the recommendations of the Arctic Strategy (ibid: 7).

As with the previous Arctic Strategy, climate change is acknowledged as resulting in various changes in the Arctic flora, marine biology and the environment in general, which requires continued knowledge-building and research cooperation in the Arctic region (ibid: 8). The environment is also included in this strategy paper, where oil spills and chemical pollutions are seen as a great threat to the marine environment of the Faroe Islands, hence a national contingency planning for oil spills should be adopted and given high priority (ibid: 10).

'Maritime Safety and Emergency Response in Faroese Waters' is the last area covered in the assessment. As the title indicates this deals with safety at sea and preemptive measures needed to be considered. One of the recommendations further states that: "Shipping lanes in the Faroese maritime jurisdiction should be assigned and managed as soon as possible (ibid: 11).

The strategical geopolitical position of the Faroe Islands in the Arctic is taken into consideration in the Arctic Assessment. So is the importance of the fisheries sector, stressing the importance of ensuring management and cooperation. Cooperation with relevant partners in general is highlighted in the strategy. Knowledge, research, science and training needs strengthening and developing. Lastly, climate change, environmental pollution and its consequences need to be addressed in a coherent and cooperative manner.

## **Iceland**

Already on 28 March 2011 the Government of Iceland approved a Parliamentary Resolution on Iceland's Arctic Policy:

“Icelandic authorities are becoming aware of the state's significant status within the Arctic and regional cooperation and have thus decided that a declared policy is needed for the Icelandic state to have impact on future developments in the area” (Arctic Portal, n/d).

As a means to prepare for the challenges and possibilities that might arise from the Arctic development, the Icelandic government developed an arctic strategy encompassing twelve principles outlined briefly below. (Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2011).

The first principle emphasizes the important and strong role of the Arctic Council and the wish to enhance its decision-making power in international relations regarding Arctic issues.

As already outlined in the section on the Arctic Five this is a cooperation between the five coastal states, Canada, Russia, The United States, Norway and Denmark on behalf of Greenland and the Faroe Islands. Further, Iceland is geographically positioned within the Arctic, their economy relies on natural resources, hence Iceland relies on the Arctic resources: “Therefore it is of vital importance that Iceland secures its position as a coastal State among other coastal States in the region...” (ibid). The importance of gaining status as a coastal state is outlined in principle two.

Another principle Althingi stresses in the resolution is that the Arctic shall not be defined in a narrow geographical area, but rather as an area defined by ecological, political, economic and security matters (ibid).

The fourth principle concerns the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea as it: “... must be ensured that the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea forms the basis for the settlement of possible disputes over jurisdiction and rights in the Arctic region” (ibid).

The fifth principle is the most relevant principle for this thesis. This principle states the importance of strengthening the cooperation with the Faroe Islands and Greenland as: “Increased cooperation between the West Nordic countries will strengthen their international and economic position as well as their politico-security dimension” (ibid). This statement further supports this



thesis as the purpose is to examine whether increased cooperation will in fact strengthen the position of the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland. One more indication this principle gives is the fact that all the West Nordic countries examined in this thesis agree on the importance of cooperation in the Arctic, as they – Greenland as part of Strategy of the Kingdom of Denmark – emphasize this in their Arctic strategies.

The sixth principle supports the rights of the indigenous people and their right to decision-making in matters relating to their region in the Arctic. For Iceland this is a principle of human rights.

The seventh principle deals with cooperation with countries and stakeholders dealing with matters of Icelandic interest in the Arctic region.

Principles eight and nine deal with climate change and the importance of sustainable utilization of resources to protect the biota, as well as environmental protection and preservation of the life of the indigenous people, which must continuously be ensured by international cooperation. The ninth principle further argues for enhanced security but against militarization of the Arctic.

The tenth principle stresses the importance of trade cooperation with other states in order to be able to compete fully in the Arctic.

Eleventh principle outlines the need for knowledge and education in Iceland, which should be done in cooperation with other countries and international organizations with similar field of interest.

The twelfth and last principle considers cooperation and consultation on domestic level in order to enhance knowledge about the Arctic when implementing the Government's Arctic policy.

To sum up, the Icelandic Arctic Strategy gives more room for the geographical factor. The need for Iceland to be recognized as a coastal state is important; the UNCLOS shall be respected; and the Arctic shall not be defined by geography, but rather by politics, ecology, economy and security. The protection of the environment and life of indigenous people is important.

Cooperation is important dealing with trade, stakeholders, climate change and indigenous people. Further, education and knowledge on national level is vital. Most importantly, as with the other

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two strategies outlined above, Iceland stresses the importance of cooperation with the West Nordic countries, the Faroe Island and Greenland – not mentioning the coast of Norway.

Greenland has not commissioned a national Arctic Strategy as of yet.

## **Enhanced Cooperation – Visions and Realities**

“It is likely that Canada, Norway, Denmark/Greenland[/the Faroe Islands], Finland, Sweden and Iceland will have less influence on the content of the future *informal operational regime* in the Arctic than the big Arctic insiders, Russia and the United State. Although the “small” States are in majority, they lack, even in combination, the power potential and projection ability of the big insider” (Arctis Knowledge Hub, 2010).

As highlighted several times in this thesis the purpose is to examine whether the small Nordic countries, the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland, will have more influence and power in a joint Arctic cooperation than as individual countries. Østreng is quoted above for arguing that the small states will lack influence against the bigger players, even if they would join a cooperation. This statement might be correct, however, this requires further examination. Hence, the cooperation and memberships looked at in the previous section in theory, will here be examined in practice.

### **Arctic Cooperation**

“[...] as Arctic affairs move further into the geo-economic foreground, these resource-rich West Nordic nations are strategically located as the only three Arctic island societies in the North Atlantic Ocean, at a crossroads between Europe, North America and Asia and the Arctic shipping lanes potentially linking them” (The West Nordic Council In The Global Arctic, 2014).

This statement by Nielsson (2014: 2-3) outlines the importance of the West Nordic countries, the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland in the Arctic, being rich in resources, being strategically well placed, as well as having access to the shipping lanes connecting the major continents. Nielsson further argues for enhanced cooperation between these three countries in order to promote the common interests and goals in the international arena (ibid).

The Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland cover a large area in the Arctic, especially Greenland, and Greenland and the Faroe Islands are also considered as coastal states in the Arctic, giving

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access to the Arctic Five cooperation. As mentioned, the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland are members of the Arctic Council (AC), the Faroe Islands and Greenland as autonomous regions under the Danish Kingdom.

Being member of the AC gives these three small Nordic countries an opportunity to be in cooperation with the other larger actors in the Arctic, such as the United States, Russia and Canada. The advocate for liberal institutionalism, Lamy (2008: 132), stated previously, argues that cooperation between countries is vital in the international arena, as well as association in institutions is beneficial, indicating the main objective of the member countries of the AC being beneficial gain. This further ensures the possibility of the Faroe Islands, Iceland and the Greenland to have a say in the decision-making concerning Arctic matters.

One example of being able to influence the decision-making is the matter of the EU wanting to gain observer status in the Arctic Council, as a means to be able to influence decision-making in the Council. This quest has proved to be challenging for the EU. At the ministerial meeting in Kiruna, Sweden, in 2013 six countries were given observer status, China, India, Italy, Japan, Singapore and South Korea, thus EU did not receive observer status (The New York Times, 2013). The main reason for being snubbed at gaining observer status was the dispute with Canada and Greenland over trade in seal products (ibid). The EU stated that there were concerns over the welfare of the seal and the measures utilized when killing the seal, resulting in a regulation, entering into force in 2009, banning seal products in the EU (European Commission, 2014). The EU is a big trading partner with the Inuit community, hence this regulation had a big impact on the seal production in Canada, especially the Inuit community. As mentioned above the dispute resulted in the EU not being granted observer status at the ministerial meeting in Kiruna, as Canada refused, but the Nunavut MP Leona Aglukkaq, Head of Canada's Arctic Chairmanship, stated at the meeting that she was going to try and resolve the issue for Canada, and EU should not expect to gain observer status until this issue had been resolved (Nunatsiaq online, 2013). This example concerns mostly Canada and Norway, however, Greenland and the indigenous people living there are also involved in the seal production, which therefore would consequently affect them (EBCD, 2012).

Being associated in an institution such as the AC and acting in accordance to liberal institutionalism proves the importance in cooperation and the member countries of the AC have agreed on cooperating when dealing with Arctic matters, such as sustainability, which is what Canada argues is the case with seal hunting. Iceland showed support in a liberal institutionalist manner when joining the complaint on the EU ban on seal trade, when Canada appealed the decision to the World Trade Organization (WTO) (Arctic Portal, n/d). The WTO rejected the appeal and therefore agreed with EU on banning seal production in Canada (WTO, 2014).

As Nunavut MP, Leona Aglukkaq, promised negotiations have been between Canada and the EU, resulting in an agreement on 10 October 2014 ensuring seal products from the indigenous people in Canada to the European market (Nunatsiaq online, 2014). This example arguably demonstrates how cooperating within an institution can solve issues, as Canada stood stronger in their protest against EU when protesting in a forum as the AC, and EU were arguably more willing to make a deal, considering a future observer status.

An example on how, as mentioned earlier, the status of the smaller countries might be less significant even as member of an influential institution, can be seen when looking at the procedural rights of the Faroe Islands and Greenland. During the Swedish Chairmanship in the Arctic Council, the presence of the Faroe Islands and Greenland was reduced from having a chair and flag each jointly with Denmark at meetings, to having one chair to share with Denmark. This caused the Premier of Greenland, Aleqa Hammond, to boycott the Arctic Council in protest (Nunatsiaq online, 2013). Aleqa Hammond neither attended the ministerial meeting in Kiruna, because she wanted to make a statement before the Chairmanship was handed over to Canada, as she feared the Canadian Chairmanship would follow the Swedish lead (ibid). As part of Denmark, the Canadian MP, Leona Aglukkaq urged the Danish foreign ministry to reason with Greenland, as it was important to have Greenland in the Council (Eye on the Arctic, 2013). The reason Aglukkaq addressed the Danish government in order to solve the issue was because this was considered a domestic issue, as Greenland is part of the Danish Kingdom, hence an issue for Denmark to solve. Premier Aleqa Hammond, did not receive much support at the home front either, as the public gathered she was making a mistake that could eventually create a backlash for Greenland in international relation (ibid). After negotiation between the Canadian

Chairmanship, Denmark, the Faroe Islands and Greenland, an agreement was made stating that when matters relevant for the Faroe Islands or Greenland are discussed at the AC, the respective country is to sit at the table (Nunatsiaq online, 2013). The boycott consequently ended and Aleqa Hammond argued that the boycott against the AC had resulted in a stronger position for Greenland in the AC. She further argues that the willingness of the chairmanship to cooperate proved the important role Greenland and the indigenous people had in the AC (ibid). As Aleqa Hammond states, the willingness to cooperate arguably indicates the role of Greenland, which arguably is correct considering e.g. the involvement of indigenous people from Canada, Russia and Greenland in the AC, but most importantly because of the vast resources and geopolitical position of Greenland. Denmark would arguably not have as much status in the AC if Greenland was not part of its realm, considering the landmass and prospects of the resources in underground (Javnaðarflokkurin á Fólkatingsið, 2014). However, the fact that two chairs were removed at the Kiruna ministerial meeting, does indicate the perception of the decision-making power the larger countries have of these two autonomous countries in the North.

The purpose of the Arctic Strategy of the Faroe Islands is meant to be the basis of a wider political preparation of the position of the Faroe Islands in the Arctic and how the participation in the Arctic cooperation shall be prioritized (Løgmansskrivstovan, 2015). One of the main purpose in the Strategy is to ensure the fishing industry and promoted itself as a place in the Arctic able to provide services in the fisheries sector. In this regard, a Faroese politician sitting in Folketinget, the Danish Parliament, Sjúrdur Skaale, argued that Denmark was part of the AC as the Faroe Islands and Greenland were under its realm, and it is these two countries that ultimately make Denmark an Arctic country. Therefore it would seem to be a matter of course that Denmark represents the Faroe Islands and Greenland and their matters. The reason for his argument about Denmark's responsibility towards its autonomous countries was that having in mind the fact that Canada made sure the EU did not gain observer status, because of the seal ban, Denmark should do the same concerning the fisheries boycott towards the Faroe Islands by EU in 2013 (ibid). One could argue that this would be a matter of course, as Sjúrdur Skaale also states, however, this does put Denmark in a somewhat difficult position, as Denmark is member of the EU which obligates some loyalty. Canada is not in the EU and is therefore not obliged to be loyal towards the institution. This further illustrates the peculiar situation of the Faroe Islands and Greenland

when acting in the international arena, as part of the Danish Kingdom. These two autonomous regions are required to follow the Danish regulations in some regards and not in others, as well as not being able to join international institutions as individual entities in some regards but being able to in others. Further it is questionable where the loyalty of Denmark lies, in issues where the EU is involved, as the fisheries dispute between the Faroe Islands and EU. The fisheries boycott towards the Faroe Islands did come to an end in 2014 (Fiskeritidenden, 2014).

As mentioned earlier Iceland was excluded from the meetings between the five Arctic coastal states, obviously very regrettable to the remaining three Arctic countries, Iceland, Finland and Sweden. This resulted in Iceland stressing the importance of being recognised as a coastal state in their Arctic Strategy from 2011, stating the vital importance to ensure this position (A Parliamentary Resolution on Iceland's Arctic Policy, 2011). The Strategy stresses that: “[e]mphasis should be placed on developing legal, ecological, economic and geographical arguments for Iceland's participation in international decision-making on Arctic issues, contingent to the fact that the exclusive economic zone is within the Arctic Circle to the north and extends to the Greenland Sea, which is an outlying portion of the Arctic Ocean” (ibid). Valur Ingimundarson, a Professor of History at the University of Iceland, further argues that Iceland has a stronger position than Finland and Sweden who have no coast in the Arctic, and this is a matter of high political importance (University of Iceland, n/d), which can also be perceived through the Strategy adopted by Althingi. Iceland has not been recognised as a coastal country yet.

In 2013 the President of Iceland, Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson, announced the establishment of an international forum, “Arctic Circle” for discussions of Arctic matters (The Reykjavík Grapevine, 2013). Ólafur Grímsson argues that with the international interest resulting from the Arctic development, such a forum is needed so all the actors are able to contribute to the development and not just the member countries of the Arctic Council. This does not just entail the countries showing an interest in the Arctic, such as China, South Korea and Singapore, but also corporations such as oil and gas companies (ibid). The Arctic Council has been held once a year since 2013 and has proved to be a great success. As Ólafur Grímsson argues there is arguably a demand for such an international forum not just reserved for the Arctic Council, when dealing

with Arctic matters. One might further argue that this is part of the Icelandic Arctic Strategy: “[...] promoting Iceland as a venue for meetings, conferences and discussions on the Arctic region” (A Parliamentary Resolution on Iceland's Arctic Policy, 2011). Furthermore, in a period where the Icelandic government might feel frustrated being left out of the Arctic Five consultations, this forum can further be perceived as a means to promote itself in the quest for Arctic influence.

As outlined above Iceland acting in a liberal institutionalist matter, does not necessarily give the influence expected, when joining an institution, as Iceland is not able to influence the decision-making of the Five Arctic coastal states. On the other hand, being a member of an institution such as AC does arguably give some status as an influential Arctic country resulting in a spill-over effect to the success of the Arctic Circle and hence the implementation of the Icelandic Arctic Strategy. Later in this section the geopolitical situation of Iceland in the Arctic will be outlined as not just creating cooperation between the fellow Arctic countries, but it is also sought after in the international arena, illustrated in the agreement with China.

### **Nordic Cooperation**

“The work of the Council and of the Council of Ministers revolved around a common understanding of democracy and shared social values” (norden, 2011). This was stated in a paper on Nordic cooperation in 2011 by the Nordic Council (NC) and the Nordic Council of Ministers (NCM). The paper further states that: “[t]he unique Nordic welfare model is based on cultural affinity and on a set of shared values, which it is our duty to uphold” (ibid). The notion of the Nordic model being based on cultural values is further combined to the notion of regionalism where Heywood (2011: 482), states that a basis for regionalism is: “[...] socio-cultural, reflecting similarities of religion, language, history or even ideological belief amongst a number of neighbouring states”. He further puts this in perspective of the Nordic Council, where this is important. As has been argued earlier these aspects, culture, history, geography and ideology are perceived as being the main reasons and similarities between the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland, hence the argument of relevance of enhanced cooperation.

Denmark has the presidency of the NCM in 2015, which of course involves the Faroe Islands



and Greenland. The focus areas of the Danish Presidency will be growth, welfare, values and the Arctic (Udenrigsministeriet, 2015). In 2014 the motto for the ministers for Nordic cooperation was “Together we are stronger”, which is a motto the Danish Presidency will keep during its Presidency. (norden, 2014). This is a very suitable motto for this thesis, and arguable stresses the perception that a regional cooperation between the Nordic countries sharing the same values and identity to some extent, will benefit from cooperation.

Annika Olsen, The Faroe Minister for Nordic cooperation is excited about the Danish Presidency in 2015, as this will provide the Faroe Islands with an ample opportunity to actively contribute to the Nordic cooperation (Udenrigsministeriet, 2015). The Faroe Islands will chair the Nordic cooperation for fisheries in 2015, as well as be responsible for the project “Growth in Blue Bio-economy”, a project aiming at identifying opportunities and threats in relation to economic growth potentials (ibid). These are areas the Faroe Islands will cover during the Danish Presidency in 2015, being a great opportunity for the Faroe Islands to influence and contribute to the Nordic cooperation.

Annika Olsen further states the Faroes concerns in the Nordic area, which is the freedom of movement, as even though the Faroe Islands has some more responsibilities in the Nordic cooperation this year it is important not to forget the issues on the national agenda. She further states that there are challenges ahead for the Nordic cooperation, but as long as the countries stand together, they stand stronger (Udenrigsministeriet, 2015).

Doris Jakobsen, Greenland Minister for Health and Nordic Cooperation, is also seeing the possibilities in the future Danish Presidency at the NCM, stating the importance of the Arctic. She states that due to Greenland presence many ministerial councils have dealt with the issue of the Arctic, such as environment, culture, and social issues. Culture is perceived as an important issue for Greenland and has been promoted for many years in Greenland (Udenrigsministeriet, 2015). The role of Greenland in the Danish Presidency is to lead a project concerning the mapping of biodiversity on the floor of the Arctic Ocean. Further funds have been gained through the Nordic co-operation Minister's Arctic funds in order to launch a project concerning the use of living resources and nature (ibid). These projects: [...] supports the goals, which were

set in the area in the new Naalakkersuisut's coalition agreement” (ibid).

This regional cooperation stemming from the NC and NCM can in this regard be perceived as very beneficial to the Faroe Islands and Greenland as these countries have received the responsibility of some important areas where they will have the ability to contribute in 2015.

In 2014 Iceland held the Presidency for Nordic cooperation. The vision of the Nordic cooperation at this time was a Nordic region without borders; innovation, where the countries face the same challenges; the Nordic countries to combine strengths in order to be influential internationally; and lastly to make the Nordic region visible in order to promote the region both outside and inside the Nordic region (Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2014). Again, emphasis is on the importance of standing together to be influential.

As mentioned the NCM drafts a programme entailing the political priorities for intergovernmental cooperation. The NCM has further issued a “Nordic Council of Ministers' Arctic Co-operation Programme 2015-2017 working as a support programme, where the policy objective is to promote sustainable development in the Arctic (norden, 2014). The NCM has observer status in the AC and stresses that all the Nordic countries acknowledge the importance of cooperation in the Arctic (ibid).

“The Programme provides backing for Nordic priorities in the Arctic Council and it is designed to enhance the Nordic countries' work and position in the Arctic and to generate Nordic synergies, e.g. by supporting operations and activities in the Arctic Council” (ibid).

This programme is therefore a tool to outline the Arctic interests of the Nordic countries combined in an effort to promote the Nordic region in the Arctic. The Programme has four themes: People; Sustainable economic development; Environment, nature and climate; and Education and skills enhancement (ibid). The main objectives is to promote the Nordic countries in a manner that does not interfere with the strategies of the NC and NCM, and also supporting the AC.

As mentioned earlier NORA is an institution under the NCM, covering the Faroe Islands, Iceland, Greenland and Norway. This is a platform where these countries in the high North are able to cooperate in order to create a dynamic Nordic region. OECD (2013) further states that: “[t]he NORA Region occupies a strategic position between Europe and North America, as an entryway to the Arctic” (NORA, 2013). NORA provides funding to projects involving the Nordic countries, such as Arctic marine resources, Arctic Agriculture and Arctic tourism. It holds regional conferences, as well as has established Nordic Think tanks (ibid). This illustrates the involvement of the NORA region in the Arctic development, which again provides a platform for the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland to cooperate, e.g. in different projects regarding the Arctic.

The West Nordic Council (WNC) is furthermore an institution consisting of the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland. When looking at the representation in the WNC, one might argue there is a great opportunity for these countries to create policies and agreements benefiting the individual countries and cooperation. This is cooperation between the Government of the Faroe Islands, Government of Iceland and Government of Greenland.

There are several important issues this institution deals with and one highly relevant issue, raised last year, was the desire to create a free trade zone in the North Atlantic (NORA Region Trends, 2014). The Chair of the WNC, Unnur Brá Konradsdóttir, stated that these three Nordic countries wished to enhance its economic cooperation in the Arctic, and therefore wished for a free trade zone between the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland (ibid). As will be examined later the Faroe Islands and Iceland already have a free trade agreement, the Hoyvík Agreement, where they are now considering to implement Greenland. The proposal of a free trade zone will be discussed on a parliamentary level in the individual countries (ibid). This initiative, if realised, will most likely benefit the enhanced cooperation between these three countries, hence creating a stronger region in the Arctic. To quote Heywood (2011: 481) one more time this sense of regionalism where a geographical region cooperates on the basis of politics, economy and identity, is perceived a quite beneficial for this region.

The WCN further states the importance of the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland in the Arctic region, both domestically, within the Arctic region, as well as with the international actors

(Arctic Portal, 2014). Therefore it is very important to develop a common Arctic strategy for these three countries. Egill Thor Nielsson (2013) published an analysis examining the growth of West Nordic cooperation and how the Arctic development is influencing increased cooperation. He agrees with the importance of developing a common Arctic Strategy as he states that the WCN has grown in its influence and is now a significant platform for cooperation, and with the stance to be involved in the Arctic development, the Council will most likely grow even stronger. This will not be easy for the Council and the three countries involved and requires intense and strong cooperation, where it will be vital with a West Nordic Arctic Strateg (The West Nordic Council in the Global Arctic, 2014). This indicates that the WCN is a very good platform for these three countries to act and react to the Arctic development. Their voice will also be stronger in this forum, where Iceland will be perceived as the biggest actor and the Faroe Islands and Greenland can act as sovereign countries.

### **International cooperation**

Regarding international cooperation and examining the European cooperation first, the first thing to outline is that the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland are not members of the EU, as stated earlier.

### **The Faroe Islands**

The Faroe Islands opted out of EU membership in 1973 because, as mentioned in the section above, the country was not ready to adapt the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) of the EU. Further, the other cooperation agreements between the Faroe Islands and EU, such as Horizon 2020 and the Free Trade Agreement outlined in the section above are perceived as highly beneficial for the Faroe Islands.

The years 2013-2014 saw the biggest dispute the Faroe Islands has had with the EU, namely the herring dispute. The Faroe Islands and EU could not reach an agreement in the management of the stock of mackerel and herring in the North Atlantic, which caused the Faroese government to unilaterally increase the catch for herring. This action affected the fishermen in the EU and there was a concern that the Faroe Islands was unilaterally endangering the stock (European

Commission, 2014). There was an agreement reached in 2014 and the sanctions were lifted (ibid). Something learnt from the dispute is arguably that one stands weaker when not part of an institution, in this case the EU. However, being a small country, such as the Faroe Islands, and able to cause a stir in the large influential European institution, indicates that these small countries might be underestimated with the bigger player. Something that arguably can be used to ones advantage. Another aspect to consider is if the Faroe Islands were members of EU, they would not be able to negotiate on fisheries quota, management etc., having to implement the CFP, which, as has been outlined earlier, the general opinion perceives will not be beneficial to the Faroe Islands.

The new Research Agreement, Horizon 2020, was signed shortly after, indicating that tensions have settled, and the Faroese Prime Minister stressed in a speech made in August that same year: “[n]ow that the disagreement is behind us, we can turn to rebuild meaningful cooperation and a forward-looking relationship between the Faroe Islands and the EU” (The Government of the Faroe Islands, 2014). The Faroese government is presently examining the possibility to enhance the cooperation with EU.

## **Iceland**

As mentioned in the previous section Iceland sought EU membership in 2008, mainly because the economic breakdown of the financial system, but the new government has decided to manage the issue on national level, with the intention to withdraw the application this year.

There are arguably many factors involved in the decision-making of the Icelandic government, and one that can be highlighted in order to examine the mutual interests of the West Nordic countries is the colonialism perspective. Having been under the Danish realm, the Faroe Islands and Greenland still dependent, brings up the question of sovereignty. As outlined in the first section, Iceland was first colonized by Norway where it stayed until end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century when it became part of the Danish Kingdom, where it remained until gaining complete independence from Denmark in 1944. This arguably manifested itself in the Icelandic identity and Bergmann is quoted for stating that: “Iceland's independence struggle stands apart from most because rather than resulting from warfare and bloodshed, Iceland won its independence entirely through legal

channels (Thrall, n/d: 107). Bergmann further argues that the this history of colonialism defines sovereignty as part of the Icelandic identity and the fact that they won this sovereignty in a legal manner making it somewhat invasive to give these legal rights to the EU (ibid), thus providing one explanation to the public resistance to join the EU. This can arguably be compared to the Faroe Islands when given the option to join the EU. As stated already, the main reason for not joining was the CFP, but in the 1970's when discussion were in the Faroese government about challenges and benefits in a possible EU membership, the Republican Party with Erlendur Patursson in the lead argued against a membership as part of Denmark, as this would surely further undermine the sovereignty of the Faroe Islands and ensure that the Faroe Islands would never gain its independence (Javnaðarflokkurin á Fólkatíngi, 2013: 54). When examining the mutual interests for enhanced cooperation, the common sense of identity and history is worth looking at, as these aspects arguably create a form of mutual respect and understanding and further create a basis for cooperation.

To bring an Arctic aspect into the discussion of Iceland and EU membership, there have been arguments about the motive for EU's willingness to accept Iceland in the institution. Bailes and Þórdísardóttir (2009) argue for the reasons why EU was willing to accept Iceland as future member country, in a period when the Balkan countries also sought EU membership. They argue that regarding the EU Arctic Strategy and EU's desire to gain observer status in the Arctic Council it would strategically be more effective: “[...] with Iceland as a full member, giving it an institutional and regulatory foothold right in the middle of the Atlantic approaches to the new development zone”. (ibid). This aspect is worth bringing up, as this proves the strategic geopolitical position of Iceland, as will further be proven when looking at the bilateral agreements. This important stand is worth considering when looking at how the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland stand stronger in a joint cooperation, especially with their vast natural resources and geopolitical position in the Arctic region.

Despite the current issue with Iceland and their withdrawal from EU membership, the Prime Minister of Iceland stresses that Iceland and EU have a history of strong relations that still persist, stating that: “[o]ur relations with Europe are based on the solid foundations that have always existed between us, especially in the last two decades where we have been a part of the

internal market. It is from that solid foundation that we want to venture into new areas and further build our relations” (Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2014). With the internal market, the Prime Minister refers to Iceland's membership in EEA EFTA.

Considering the three countries, the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland and enhanced cooperation, the EEA might prove to be a challenge, as this Association gives Iceland access to the European internal market, which is a considerably large market, arguably giving Iceland advantage. As Bergmann (2012) argues the EEA has facilitated: “[...] the transformation of the Icelandic economy, which has not only grown rapidly but has also become more diversified and internationalised”. Even though the EEA might to some extent be perceived as a beneficial cooperation for Iceland, Bergmann further argues that the Association also brings challenges to Iceland. Despite the equality of the EEA EFTA and EU in the EEA cooperation, the EU legislation is automatically implemented without any discussions in the Icelandic parliament (ibid). This causes a breach of democracy as well as touching upon the issue argued earlier, sovereignty. The EU implementations do have to go through the Icelandic parliament, however, it has become evident that the EEA EFTA member countries are not able to refuse the legislation without threatening the arrangement (ibid), hence illustrating a problem with liberal internationalism. Another challenge with EEA EFTA is that Norway, being the largest country in EEA EFTA, is somewhat reluctant to cooperate with the other smaller countries. Again, illustrating the difficulty of acting as a small player in international relations. As Norway tends to be more occupied in pleasing EU, the country seems to forget the principles of the EEA EFTA arrangement (ibid). The EEA EFTA membership of Iceland does arguably give Iceland some advantage in relations to the Faroe Island and Greenland and this agreement has been beneficial to the Icelandic economy, however, as Bergmann argues, the agreement does temper with the sovereignty of Iceland, which is important to the Icelandic identity. Furthermore, the lack of cooperation between the EEA EFTA members, especially from the biggest player, Norway, illustrates again, the difficulty operating in an institutional cooperation as a small player.

### **Greenland**

In May 2014 EU issued a “Council conclusion on developing a European Union Policy towards the Arctic Region” (Council of the European Union, 2014). In its conclusion the Council



supported the strengthening of the partnership between EU and Greenland and the Kingdom of Denmark with the aim at promoting the sustainable development of Greenland and the diversification of the economy. This further entailed enhanced cooperation and dialogue on global and Arctic issues (ibid). This statement by the Council states the desire from EU to cooperate with Greenland on e.g. Arctic matters, and it has made Gattolin and Degeorges (2014) question whether Greenland is on its way back to EU (Euractiv, 2014).

There are various indications of the close relationship between Greenland and EU. As previously outlined Greenland and EU have finalized the negotiations of a new Partnership Agreement period 2014-2020. This allocates 217 mio. Euros to Greenland from EU to be spent on implementation. Furthermore Greenland gets allocated 17.8 mio. Euros per year for fishing rights and quotas in Greenland Exclusive Economic Zone. Greenland and EU state that these agreements are beneficial for both parties. Regarding the Fisheries Partnership Agreement this is arguably beneficial for EU because, as the agreement states, EU gets fishing rights and quotas and Greenland gets 17.8 mio. Euros in return, beneficial for the fishermen in EU as well as Greenland. In this case, both parties are most likely satisfied with the outcome. Regarding the Partnership Agreement the focus is to strengthen the relations and cooperation between Greenland and EU, as also outlined earlier. As the Council decision states: “[...] the purpose of association is to promote the economic and social development of the OCTs and to establish close economic relations between them and the Union as a whole” (Official Journal of the European Union, 2014). Greenland being an OCT is covered in this Article. The Decision further states: “[...] and recognising the geostrategic importance of Greenland to the Union and the spirit of cooperation resulting from the Union's decision to grant the status of overseas territory to Greenland” (ibid). The Decision implies close relations and mutual wish to cooperate, Greenland an OCT and EU, as the Union granting them this status. There is arguably another aspect of relevance, which is, as also stated in the Decision, the geostrategic importance of Greenland. EU argues in its conclusion, as mentioned, that it wishes a closer cooperation and dialogue with Greenland on Arctic matters and Gattolin and Degeorges (2014) agree with this stating that in a period where Greenland is getting increasingly more attention from America, Europe and China it is: “[...] essential that the European Union doesn't “lose the North” and keeps strengthening its relationship with two strategic countries that are more or less linked to the EU, Greenland as one



of the Overseas Countries and Territories (OCT) and Iceland as a member of the European Economic Area (EEA)”. They further argue that considering the enhanced cooperation between Greenland and Iceland, it is arguably important for EU to look at the whole West Nordic Region, including the Faroe Islands (ibid). Again, EU's interest in the Arctic Region is evident, which arguably benefits the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland, and could arguably indicate that enhanced regional cooperation between these three West Nordic countries would prove beneficial as there seems to be an interest in the West Nordic Region.

## **Bilateral Agreements**

### **The Hoyvík Agreement**

The Faroe Islands and Iceland signed an agreement creating a common market in 2005, called the Hoyvík Agreement. There was a general opinion that this agreement was due to the good and close relationship between the Faroe Islands and Iceland. As is stated on the website of the Consulate General of Iceland (n/d): “No people is as closely related to the Icelanders as the people of the Faroe Islands. The culture, history and language of the two nations are intertwined and their friendship is firm and longstanding”.

The Agreement is beneficial for the Faroe Islands and Iceland as a common market is created, however, there has been some protest from the Faroe Islands, arguing that Iceland is gaining more from the Agreement than the Faroe Islands. The arguments are that Iceland has no problems exporting goods, services, capital and labour to the Faroese market, while there have been many problems for the Faroe Islands to export to Iceland (politikkur.fo, 2014). Jacob Vestergaard, Minister for Fisheries, argues that the Agreement is very important to the Faroe Islands and the problems regarding Faroese export have been solved. The Agreement has furthermore opened up for more cooperation e.g. in the health sector (Uttanríkisráðið, 2011). He further stresses the importance for the Faroe Islands to sign free trade agreements, as almost everything utilized in the Faroe Islands is imported and almost everything produced is exported. The fact that Iceland has a significant larger trade market than the Faroe Islands, highlighted above, is a matter of fact, but it is expected that the Hoyvík Agreement is as important to Iceland as the Faroe Islands (ibid). One might therefore argue that the different status that Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland have in the international arena, where e.g. has the possibility to act as a

sovereign country, might affect the process of enhanced cooperation.

Another example how international agreements might interfere with relations is the case when the Faroese ship, *Næraberg*, tried to enter the Icelandic harbour in 2014, and Iceland refused to give them permission to enter. The ship needed fuel as well as supplies but this was not granted them. The Faroese politicians and industry protested against this treatment arguing that this was a breach of the Hoyvík Agreement, however, the Icelandic Minister of fisheries, Sigurður Ingi Jóhansson, disagreed. Sigurður Ingi Jóhansson, on the other hand, argued that the fisheries agreement the Faroe Islands had just signed with EU and Norway resulted in more rights being given to the Faroe Islands than Iceland and he argued that this could also be perceived as a breach of the Hoyvík Agreement (Sandoyar Portalur, 2014). The ship did eventually receive fuel and supplies and could continue the fisheries.

This disagreement between the Faroe Islands and Iceland, both parties accusing the other of breaching the Agreement can arguably be put in perspective with the prisoner's dilemma theory.

The fisheries industry is important to both the Faroe Islands and Iceland, and both countries will act in the interest of the nation. The Faroe Islands were give the opportunity to gain more fisheries rights, more than Iceland, however, the Faroe Islands also recognises the importance of a close relationship with Iceland. Iceland, on the other hand, has to listen to the protests from the fisheries industry, realising that this might affect the national economy, as well as realising the importance of the relationship with the Faroe Islands. If Iceland in this case grants *Næraberg* permission to enter the harbour, the Faroe Islands will arguably gain the most, increased fisheries rights while still maintaining good relationship with Iceland. If the Faroe Islands, on the other hand, decides to refuse the fisheries rights, Iceland will be the main beneficiary, being a sovereign country with a considerable amount of FTA's as well as a good partner in the Faroe Islands. The optimal cooperative outcome of this situation would be if both countries act against their selfish interest and in this case preserve the good spirit of the Hoyvík Agreement. However, as argued earlier in liberal institutionalism a country, even when joining cooperation, such as institutions will always look after the national interest first and foremost.

At the annual meeting of the Hoyvík Council, held in Reykjavík in September 2014, the Premier of Greenland, Aleqa Hammond attended as observer with her delegation (Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2014). There was an interest in examining whether Greenland was to join the Hoyvík Agreement, so there would be a common market between these three countries. This indicates the mutual interest from the governments of the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland to enhance cooperation, as well as was stated when examining the WNC, wishing for a free trade zone. Aleqa Hammond decided after the meeting to wait until after the 10 years evaluation in 2015, to hear what the Faroe Islands and Iceland have learnt from this cooperation before taking a decision (KVF, 2014).

the next meeting will be held in the Faroe Islands in the summer of 2015, where the Faroes Prime Minister, Kaj Leo Holm Johannesen, has promised that indeed there will be an evaluation of the Hoyvík Agreement (24.fo, 2014).

The Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland have several bilateral agreements as outlined above, however, as some arguably lack relevance for this thesis, the last Agreement examined will be the Free Trade Agreement between Iceland and China, in order to stress the geostrategic Arctic position of Iceland.

### **Free Trade Agreement Between Iceland and China**

The FTA between Iceland and China was signed in March 2013, being the first FTA signed between China and a European country (Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2013).

The central aim of the Agreement is to promote: “[...] trade, by abolishing tariffs on import and to further enhance economic ties between the two countries” (ibid). Further it covers: “[...] trade in goods and services, rules of origin, trade facilitation, intellectual property rights, competition and investment” (ibid). This Agreement is arguably an important milestone for Icelandic international cooperation getting access to the biggest country in the Asian, arguably one of the biggest market in the world. Being a small European country, Iceland will arguably be an inherently small gain for China in regards to trade, having academics question the real motive behind China' s interest in Iceland.

## The Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland *Stronger Together?*

The common opinion is that the FTA between Iceland and China is China's effort to gain more influence in the Arctic, bearing in mind that the signing of the Agreement was in a period when China sought observer status in the AC. The FTA arguably ensured China observer status, as the Agreement illustrated the close relations China had with the Arctic countries such as Iceland. The Arctic development has created new shipping routes and evidence show that mineral and other raw resources are to be discovered in the Arctic, all factors relevant for the Chinese economy. In China's view: “[...] Iceland represents a key geographic foothold in the area”(International Policy Digest, 2013). This entails that the FTA is as important for China as it is for Iceland, as it gives China more strategic access to the Arctic region, again illustrating the geopolitical important position of Iceland.

Iceland is aware of their position in the Arctic region and the possibilities this can bring. Signing such a FTA enhances the free trade relations Iceland has in the international arena, as well as being very beneficial for e.g. Iceland's fishing industry, having free trade with China. Furthermore, Iceland: “[...] is hoping to become an important shipping hub between Asia and Europe if warming waters place the country on a geographical crossroads, far different from its current position of relative geographic isolation” (International Policy Digest, 2013). Enhancing relations with the second largest market in the world is therefore an important milestone in Iceland's strategy to become more influential in the Arctic region.

### **The Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland**

The previous section outlined the relationship between the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland such as the opening of the Icelandic consulate in Greenland in 2013 and the participation of all three countries in NAMMCO, NEAFC and NAFO. It will not be examined in more detail except highlighting that the mentioned relations illustrate the common interest of the three small countries to enhance cooperation, as well as emphasizing that these cooperation entities seem to show the goodwill and willingness of the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland to cooperate.

This section has examined the cooperation the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland have in the international arena and in this context emphasized the challenges, as well as benefits that come with this cooperation. This has been done while utilizing the theories of international liberalism

and regionalism in order to indicate the best possible way for the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland to enhance their cooperation.

## Conclusion

In this thesis the notions of liberal institutionalism and regionalism have been utilized when examining and analysing the three small countries in the West Nordic Region, the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland. Through this process it has been found that when cooperating in an institution it is easier, as a small country, to lack power and influence. The Faroe Islands and Greenland are mainly in cooperation with institutions as part of the Danish Kingdom, which already indicates the lack of influence these two countries can contribute with. Iceland, on the other hand, acts as a sovereign country, however, while examining the institutions Iceland is member of, Iceland tends to be left out, which is evident when looking at the Arctic Five and the European Economic Area.

In regards to regional cooperation, as members of an institution or bilateral agreements between neighbouring countries, there is an indication of more influence and benefits gained. Institution such the West Nordic Council and NAMMCO; bilateral cooperation such as the Hoyvík Agreement and the Icelandic Consulate in Iceland prove to be beneficial and furthermore are forums where the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland can act as equals, and make decisions as such. It further illustrates how willing these countries are to maintain good relations as well as enhancing cooperation.

The historical perspective of this thesis was furthermore important as the identity of a country is typically what defines it. When examining the history, the fact that the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland were all three colonized by Denmark, gives them a common history, as well as these countries have the same sense of wanting to belong and wish to preserve their country. They have all had the same struggle for independence, Iceland gaining independence, and the Faroe Islands and Greenland still having that national feeling to once be an independent country. This factor furthermore explains why the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland are so reluctant to join larger international institutions, such as EU, which requires them to implement EU legislation, thus giving away their sovereignty. In the case of Iceland, they fought for independence in a peaceful manner, which they are proud of and want to preserve. The Faroe Islands and Greenland recognise the difficulty in joining a large institution as EU, as this will not only require them to

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follow Danish legislation, but they will also have to follow EU legislation. Furthermore, the Faroe Islands and Greenland have negotiated several areas to be taken over by their government, hence not ruled by Denmark. This gives them some sense of sovereignty, especially when working with the issues taken over, and therefore not given away lightly.

The Arctic Development gives the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland the opportunity to make realistic strategic decisions resulting in beneficial outcome for these three countries, both economically and influentially. They have all legal rights to decide and rule over their underground as well as the sea territory surrounding them. The three countries are furthermore covered in the definition of the Arctic Region, and the Faroe Islands and Greenland are coastal states, thus in the Arctic Five, as well as members of the Arctic Council. It is Denmark that acts on behalf of the Faroe Islands and Greenland, but for most parts decisions are taken via consensus, so the Faroe Islands and Greenland can influence decision-making in most cases. Iceland is a sovereign country hence a full member of the Arctic Council, however, not of the Arctic Five, to much dismay for the Icelandic government that is working hard to gain status as a coastal Arctic state.

The geostrategic position of the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland creates attention and interest from the international arena. Iceland has signed a Free Trade Agreement with China, being the first European country to sign a free trade agreement with China, which not only gives Iceland access to the second largest market in the world, but it also gives China a foothold in the Arctic Region. China, America and other large countries further show an interest in Greenland, the country researchers state has a vast amount of undiscovered resources in its underground. The fact that the Kingdom of Denmark realises the potential in Greenland is evident in the Arctic Strategy by the Kingdom of Denmark on behalf of the Faroe Islands and Greenland, where most of the strategy deals with Greenland. The Faroe Islands, however, issued its own Arctic Strategy concerning explicit areas taken over from Denmark.

EU is another actor interested in the Arctic Region, which is evident in the agreements and negotiations between EU and the Arctic countries. EU's Arctic Strategy even stresses the importance to gain close relationship with Greenland and the Kingdom of Denmark. Again,

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Greenland is emphasized, illustrating the geostrategic position of the country.

The Arctic Strategies of the Faroe Islands and Iceland stress the importance to enhance the relationship with their Nordic neighbours. Cooperation between the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland is explicitly mentioned in their strategies, indicating a follow interest in enhancing their relations. Greenland has not issued a strategy of its own, but they have indicated an interest to enhance cooperation as well.

There will always be disputes between cooperating countries, when their national interests are at stake. Therefore the dispute between the Faroe Islands and Iceland shall not be taken too seriously. Iceland and the Faroe Islands have a long history of cooperation and friendship, which most certainly will maintain the same. Greenland showing an interest in joining this cooperation, being observers at the last Hoyvík meeting can prove to be beneficial for all partners. Having experienced colonialism, the difficulty in being heard among the larger states, and being actively involved in the Arctic development, can prove to be beneficial in an enhanced cooperation between these three countries, not as part of institutions but as neighbours.

A challenge can be that the Faroe Islands and Greenland are not sovereign countries, however, both countries have the full legal rights to their territory and underground. Iceland and the Faroe Islands both wishing to be a hub in the Arctic indicates at least one specific area these two countries can cooperate on.

As a conclusion I can state that cooperation between the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland can only benefit in the current and evolving Arctic development. They are strategically well situated in the Arctic region, giving them plenty of opportunities to get a beneficial outcome if dealt with correctly. There are signs that these three countries are interested in enhancing their cooperation and the end of 2014 saw the possibility of a free trade agreement between the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland, when Greenland joined the annual meeting on the Hoyvík Agreement. The Premier of Greenland decided not to join at the time, but left a door open for a possible joining in the future. Therefore, considering their position and the international attention these small countries in the West North/Arctic Region are getting as well as the positive dialogue



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between the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland, realising their strategic geopolitical position, enhanced cooperation is worth considering as this will only give them a stronger voice in the international arena.

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