

What is the Arctic to the Kingdom of Denmark and the Russian Federation?

Need and value of a common Danish/Faroese/Greenlandic and Russian view of the Arctic?

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This paper seeks to examine and discuss to what extent the Kingdom of Denmark (Denmark, Faroe Islands and Greenland) and the Russia Federation have different perceptions of the Arctic, and the needs and values of a common understanding of the Arctic between them.

The Kingdom of Denmark and Russia are both among the eight Arctic Council member states and the five Arctic coastal states. The Kingdom of Denmark and Russia do not share a common land or maritime border as Russia does with Finland, Norway and the USA (Bering Strait). But the Kingdom of Denmark and Russia are connected in the Arctic in different ways, which raises the question of their Arctic self-perception and mutual perception.

The paper will briefly outline the Arctic intersections of the Kingdom of Denmark and Russia, and how self- and mutual perceptions matter for these connections. The paper will outline what kind of Arctic states the Kingdom of Denmark and Russia are, and what the Arctic means to them.

The author is a Danish national, who lived in Iceland as a child, and is now Professor of Northern Studies and Barents Chair in Politics at UiT The Arctic University of Norway (Tromsø campus). Based on this background, I observe how the Nordic Arctic is divided into two Arctic regions with very distinct Arctic relations with Russia. These two Nordic Arctic regions have relatively little exchange and mutual knowledge.

The Barents Region of Northern Norway, Northern Sweden, Northern Finland and Northwest Russia is highly institutionalized with Barents Euro Arctic Council state and sub-state structures. Especially Norway invests significant resources in people-to-people relations with Russia in education, research, culture, environment, business, etc. The Barents Region is perhaps the highest developed Arctic region with about 1.6M citizens in Northern Norway, Sweden and Finland in modern Nordic societies. Northwest Russia is highly urbanized and industrialized with, e.g., the largest city north of the Arctic Circle, Murmansk with ca 300k inhabitants. The land and sea borders with Russia (USSR) shape the region politically and strategically (Bertelsen, Aronsen & Nyborg, 2016).

The other Nordic Arctic region is the West Nordic region of Greenland, Iceland and Faroe Islands (and by extension Denmark through the constitutional ties between Denmark, the Faroe Islands and Greenland). This is the Arctic for the Kingdom of Denmark and for Danish society. These are Nordic societies, but much smaller in population with 56k in Greenland, 333k in Iceland and 50k in the Faroe Islands. These are maritime societies. There are no land or sea borders with Russia (Bertelsen, Aronsen & Nyborg, 2016).

Arctic perceptions and knowledge in the Kingdom of Denmark reflects the West Nordic region, which means that the Kingdom of Denmark lacks the deep connections, experiences and knowledge of Russia as an Arctic state that is continuously built up in the Barents Region cooperation. Likewise, Russian public, private, academic and civil society Arctic actors do not have the familiarity and networks with the Kingdom of

Denmark (and Iceland) in the West Nordic regions as in the Barents Region. This lack of Arctic familiarity, experiences, network and knowledge between the Kingdom of Denmark and Russia is problematic in light of the Arctic – and Baltic and other connections – between the Kingdom of Denmark and Russia.

The Kingdom of Denmark and Russia are immediately both Arctic Council member states and Arctic coastal states. The Kingdom of Denmark and Russia also have overlapping continental shelf claims in the Arctic Ocean, which is pursued within the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

The Kingdom of Denmark and Russia (historically USSR) are also connected in the Arctic at the strategic level. The Arctic plays a key geo-strategic role in the strategic (nuclear) balance between the USA and Russia (historically USSR). The transpolar route is the shortest flight path for bombers and intercontinental missiles. Russia depends on SSBN based second strike capabilities in the Bastions around the Kara Sea and the Okhotsk Sea (Åtland, 2007). The USA has since 1953 operated Thule Air Base in North Greenland, which was strategically located for mutual deterrence with the USSR and distant early warning radar. Thule Air Base in today increasingly a key sensor for US national missile defense.

The Thule Air Base therefore ties the Kingdom of Denmark into the strategic balance between the USA and Russia with possible security dilemma dynamics with Russian high Arctic bases as Nagurskoye in Franz Josef Land. The recent debacle around President Donald Trump's idea to buy Greenland highlights the place of Greenland (and therefore the Kingdom of Denmark) in the US-Russian strategic balance.

In light of these Arctic connections between the Kingdom of Denmark and Russia, it is important that the two countries are familiar and knowledgeable about each other as Arctic states and have experience in Arctic cooperation and networks. This paper continues outlining what kind of Arctic states, the Kingdom of Denmark and Russia are and finishes with proposals for increasing the mutual level of familiarity, knowledge, networks and experience – based on Norwegian-Russian Arctic relations.

What is the Arctic – for Denmark, the Faroe Islands and Greenland, and Russia?

There are different geographic (Arctic circle), botanic, climatic and political definitions of the Circumpolar Arctic. What is important to keep in mind as a starting point is the Circumpolar nature of the Arctic centered on the geographic North Pole, the Arctic Ocean and the surrounding landmasses in Russian, Northern Fenno-Scandia, the North Atlantic, and North America. There are eight states in this area and who are the member states of the Arctic Council: the Russian Federation, the Kingdom of Denmark (Denmark, Faroe Islands and Greenland), Finland, Sweden, Norway, Iceland, Canada and the USA. There are about 4 million people living in the Arctic of whom about 10% are indigenous.

One way to think about the Circumpolar Arctic, which is useful for a Danish/Faroese/Greenlandic-Russia discussion of the Arctic is the image of the four Arctic-s: the Russian (post-Soviet) Arctic, the Nordic Arctic, the North American Arctic and the Indigenous Arctic.

The Russian Arctic

The Russian Arctic is clear cut, that is the enormous Russian air, land and sea space from the Bering Strait to the Barents Sea, which covers close half of the Arctic and about half of the Arctic population. The Russian Arctic includes the largest city north of the Arctic Circle, Murmansk with about 300,000 inhabitants. The Russian Arctic is the most industrialized and urbanized Arctic with significant urban centers as Murmansk and with industrialization around natural resources extractive industries.

What outsiders must always realize when considering Russia is its enormous territory and diverse population and society from the Far East, Central Asia, Caucasus, Europe and along the northern coastline. Russia connects geographically Northeast Asia and Northern Europe, which is geo-economically central as pointed out in a moment.

Russian Arctic and strategy

The Arctic is of central strategic and defense importance for Russia (and historically the USSR). The Kola Peninsula is Russia's only year-round ice-free access to the open sea (unlike through the Baltic or the Black Sea). Murmansk was founded by Imperial Russia in 1916 in an attempt to ensure communications to the West. During World War II (the Great Patriotic War), Murmansk was the port of call for the Allied Arctic convoys from the UK and North America often via Iceland. Both the USSR and Germany were fully aware of this, so the USSR was also invaded by Germany from occupied Finnmark (Norway) and allied Lapland (Finland) trying to conquer or cut off the Kola Peninsula. The battle fields at Litza between Kirkenes and Murmansk and Alakurtti between Lapland and the White Sea show this clearly.

In the Cold War with mutual nuclear deterrence between the USA and the USSR, the transpolar route was – and remains – the shortest flight path for long-range bombers and ICBMs. The Soviet and Russian second-strike nuclear capability is largely based on submarines, SSBNs, sailing from the Kola Peninsula and in the Far East taking up “Bastion” positions under ice-cover in the Kara Sea and Sea of Okhotsk in the Far East (Åtland, 2007). Today, as sea-ice along the Northern Sea Route (Northeast Passage) is shrinking and thinning because of climate change, this both gives Russian surface vessels greater freedom to navigate between the Kola Peninsula and the Far East, but also opens up a new vulnerable front from Russia along its north coast. Russia/USSR has historically faced different threats from the east, south and west, but never had to worry about the northern coast line. The Kola Peninsula is also today a strategic base for projecting air and sea power to, for instance, the Mediterranean and Syria.

The Russian Arctic and geo-economics, natural resources and shipping

Russia (and the USSR) has been and remain a resource-based economy, and the Russian Arctic plays a large role in the Russian natural resource-based economy. Russia is one of the world's largest producers of oil and gas as well as minerals, where large deposits are in the Russian Arctic. The Russian state is fiscally deeply dependent on natural resource rents, not least from the Arctic (Antonov, 2019).

Today, new natural resources extractive industries projects are developing in the Russia Arctic. Particularly noteworthy are natural gas exported as liquified natural gas (LNG) from Yamal and in the near future the nearby Arctic LNG2 and follow-on projects.

As mentioned above, for Danish/Faroese/Greenlandic readerships, it is important to keep the geographical extent of Russia in mind. Russian geo-economic thinking is therefore also Eurasian in thinking across the vast space from the European Arctic to the Far East and stretching North-South from the Arctic Ocean to Central Asia. Russia has traditionally thought in these geo-economic terms as evident from, for instance, the Trans-Siberian Railroad or the Trans-Siberian Telegraph Line from Europe to East Asia operated by the Great Northern Telegraph Company of Copenhagen.

Russia is in many ways between Europe and East Asia historically and today. Since the demise of the USSR, Russia first looked West to Western institutions for integration into Western-led governance, which did not work out for either side, with the breakdown with the Russian annexation of Crimea and covert interference in Ukraine from 2014. Russia has in parallel and increasingly sought to develop a Eurasian geo-economic framework, the Eurasian Economic Union (Mearsheimer, 2014). Western sanctions against Russia following

the 2014 Ukraine crisis de facto forced Russia to turn towards China as energy customer and funder (Farchy, Mazneva, 2017). China is pursuing its Belt-and-Road-Initiative building infrastructure across Eurasia, along the old sea lanes of the Malacca Strait and the Indian Ocean to the Middle East, East Africa and Europe. Russian and Chinese Eurasian geo-economic practices are aligned, where the Arctic is a clear example (Johnson, Standish, 2018).

The Northern Sea Route along the North coast of Russia is part of what is internationally known as the Northeast Passage. The geo-economic thinking around the Northern Sea Route has in principle not changed since the Dutch seafarer Willem Barents was searching for it and discovered Svalbard and Novaya Zemlya, where he died in 1597 (Armstrong, 1984, Braat, 1984, Saladin d'Anglure, 1984, Schilder, 1984). The Northern Sea Route is a major short cut in distance between the two economic power houses of the world, the North Atlantic with Western Europe and the East Coast of the USA and East Asia. For the USSR and Russia, the Northern Sea Route was and is important infrastructure to ensure transportation along the North coast of Russia and far into Eurasia via the major rivers that flow into the Arctic Ocean as Ob, Lena and Yenisei (Armstrong, 1952, Østreng, 1991).

International politics, globalization with the rise of East Asian economies and climate change is affecting this geo-economic reality. As mentioned, Russia is increasingly turning to China and East Asian rising economies for selling and financing large-scale energy projects in the Russian Arctic such as Yamal and Arctic LNG2 as well as large-scale infrastructure as the Power of Siberia pipeline system. Climate change with reduced sea ice is greatly facilitating using the Northern Sea Route for longer and longer periods of the year.

The Russian Arctic and the Indigenous Arctic

Russia is enormous and with great ethnic, linguistic and religious diversity. This is also the case in the Russian Arctic with indigenous and minority groups from Sami on the Kola Peninsula to Inuit in Chukotka. The Russian Arctic indigenous peoples are represented in the Arctic Council through the Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North, RAIPON. Russian Indigenous peoples' politics and status reflect the Russian polity, which is different from the seven other Arctic Council states as liberal democracies and rule of law.

The Kingdom of Denmark in the Nordic, North American and Indigenous Arctic

The Kingdom of Denmark is on many dimensions a very different state than the Russian Federation. The Kingdom of Denmark is a textbook small Nordic state, a liberal democracy and a social-democratic mixed economy. It consists of three constituent parts: Denmark, which is a geographically small, Continental European state at the entrance of the Baltic Sea composing about 98% of the population and economic activity of the Kingdom of Denmark; the Faroes Islands is an archipelago in the North Atlantic between Iceland, Scotland and Western Norway, the population is Scandinavian and totals about 50,000+ with home-rule within the Kingdom of Denmark; Greenland is the world's biggest island at 2M km² but with a population of about 56,000 of which close to 90% are Greenlandic-Inuit, Greenland has self-rule within the Kingdom of Denmark.

As such the Kingdom of Denmark spans three Arctics. It is the Nordic Arctic politically, economically, socially, culturally as the Faroe Islands and Greenland constitutionally are parts of the Kingdom of Denmark and its social-democratic welfare-state mixed economy. Geographically and strategically, Greenland is clearly a part of North America. The Greenlandic-Inuit majority in Greenland are part of the Indigenous Arctic. For various audiences in the Kingdom of Denmark, Greenland disproportionately represents the Arctic.

The Kingdom of Denmark is today an Arctic state due to historical circumstances beyond its own control. The North Atlantic communities of the Kingdom of Denmark, the Faroe Islands and Greenland (and historically Iceland) became associated with Denmark as parts of the medieval Norwegian Kingdom, which entered into union with Denmark in 1380. Norwegian Vikings had settled the Faroe Islands and Iceland – among other North Atlantic places – in the 800-900s and moved on to Greenland. These independent Viking commonwealths came under Norwegian rule between around 1000 (Faroe Islands and Greenland) to 1262 (Iceland). When Denmark was forced to cede Norway to Sweden at the 1814 Kiel Peace, Denmark surprisingly kept these old Norwegian North Atlantic possessions which make the Kingdom of Denmark an Arctic state (Bertelsen, 2014).

Since the 1830s, Denmark's political-constitutional relations with the North Atlantic have been marked by independence politics and ever-increasing self-government of the North Atlantic communities (and independence for Iceland). This process has been driven by national-liberalism, where increasingly conscious national identities demand sovereignty. First, Icelandic intellectuals in Copenhagen in the 1830s-1840s became part of this European intellectual current leading to Icelandic separate constitution in 1874, home-rule in 1904, sovereignty in a personal union of shared monarch in 1918 and declaring the Republic of Iceland in 1944. Faroese students in Copenhagen followed later in the 1800s, so the Faroe Islands got home-rule in 1948 and expanded foreign policy competences in 2005. Greenland was a Danish colony until 1953, when it became an overseas county. Greenlandic students in Denmark in the 1970s were also inspired by national-liberalism and Indigenous peoples' rights prompting home-rule in 1979, followed by self-government in 2009 recognizing Greenlanders as a people under international law with the right of self-determination (Bertelsen, 2014).

The Greenlandic people and political parties are determined to pursue full independence when Greenland becomes not-dependent on Danish fiscal support and human capital. In the Faroe Islands, independence is a less public issue because the Faroe Islands are much more independent from Denmark in terms of fiscal support and human capital, so the Faroese society de facto functions much more independently from Denmark than Greenlandic society does (Bertelsen, 2014, Bertelsen, Justinussen & Smits, 2015).

Greenlandic determination to achieve independence is widely dismissed and ridiculed in Danish society with calls for Greenlanders to accept a reality of never being able to achieve independence. This rejection is usually couched in terms as Greenland will never fiscally be self-sustaining; the Greenlandic people in absolute terms is too small to satisfy its human capital needs; and Greenland will inevitably fall under the sway of another larger protector as the USA or China, and Denmark is more benevolent to Greenland (Bertelsen, 2019).

These Danish views of Greenlandic independence are counter-productive and poorly founded. Historically, these Danish views closely mirror Danish views of Icelandic independence desires before 1918, where Icelandic independence was ridiculed as ridiculous as independence for Amager. Subsequent developments show the poor judgment behind these Danish sentiments (Hálfðánarson, 2019). Such offensive dismissal of independence desires is also likely to be politically highly counterproductive as they only alienate Greenland (and the Faroe Islands) from Denmark and strengthen the independence desire. Whether Greenland can become fiscally self-sustaining is a practical economic development policy question, where there are more positive assessments outside the Kingdom of Denmark.

It is easy to reject the argument that the Greenlandic population in absolute terms is too small to satisfy Greenland's human capital needs by comparison with the slightly smaller Faroese population which is largely self-sufficient in terms of human capital. The Faroe Islands (and Iceland before them) clearly show that it is the *relative* level of education that matters and not the *absolute* size of the population. The strong Faroese

(and Icelandic) human capital is based on quality domestic childcare and educational systems in the local language and culture combined with efficient brain circulation of travelling for education and professional experience and returning home. The key to Greenlandic human capital formation is quality childcare and education in Greenlandic language and culture combined with brain circulation. These conditions are – however – very challenging and will take decades to achieve (Bertelsen, Justinussen & Smits, 2015, Bertelsen, Justinussen & Smits, 2016).

The argument that Greenland cannot defend or represent itself internationally is misleading. Since the loss of the Danish-Norwegian navy in 1801 and 1807 to the Royal Navy, Denmark has not been able to ensure contact with the North Atlantic and has been dependent on the benevolence of first Britain and now the USA. So, it is wrong to claim that Denmark defends Greenland today, which is not rejecting the value of the coast guard work of the Royal Danish Navy in the North Atlantic.

The dynamics of national-liberalism have not slowed since the French Revolution that sparked them. Danish, Faroese and Greenlandic – as Icelandic before – identities are drifting further and further apart. There is very little if any common Kingdom of Denmark (Rigsfællesskabet) national identity. Denmark as a state is a strictly ethnic-linguistic state and has never wanted to form a multi-lingual or multi-national national identity or state form. This unwillingness and inability to form a multilingual or multinational state including large German-speaking populations exactly provoked the 1848-1850 and 1864 Schleswig wars causing the loss of the Duchies of Schleswig-Holstein (and Lauenburg) (Bertelsen, 2014, Bertelsen, 2019).

The constituent parts of the Kingdom of Denmark are therefore likely to continue to drift further and further apart with an unseizing demand for ever greater and eventually full independence in the Faroe Islands and Greenland. The scenarios for the Kingdom of Denmark are therefore the following. Greenland does not achieve fiscal and human capital self-sufficiency to reach full independence. This situation will lead to ever-increasing political friction between Denmark and Greenland, which will be vulnerable to external shocks as provoked by the Trump idea of buying Greenland.

Alternatively, Greenland manages to develop economically toward fiscal self-sufficiency, and Greenlandic social, health and educational situation improves to allow a significant strengthening of Greenlandic human capital. Then Greenland in a strategic dialogue and process with Denmark, but also other Nordic countries, the European Union, the USA, Canada and global partners in Asia can progress stepwise to full independence. The historical lesson from the Danish-Icelandic relationship is that independence was beneficial to Icelandic society as it allowed the political system to focus on socio-economic issues rather than be distracted by the question of the relationship with Denmark. Also, it was clear that independence solved the political disagreement between Denmark and Iceland, which are today close Nordic, European, NATO and UN allies and partners (Bertelsen, 2014, Bertelsen, 2019).

[The Arctic seen from Denmark](#)

Danish Arctic research is overwhelmingly focused on Greenland, and from experience, Denmark is less represented in the International Arctic Science Committee and its annual Arctic Science Summit Week than Finland, Norway and Sweden. The Royal Danish Navy has unparalleled operational experience around the Faroe Islands and Greenland, but Danish security policy discourse about the Arctic is usually focused on Greenland with little regard for a Circumpolar perspective. Even concerning the Thule Radar in Northwest Greenland, which is a corner stone of Danish-American national security relations, there is little regard for its broader context of strategic missile defense infrastructure from Alaska to Vardø in Northern Norway (Wormdal, 2011, Wormdal, 2015).

The Arctic seen from the Faroe Islands

The Faroe Islands are a Sub-Arctic community and with many socio-environmental and cultural similarities with Iceland and Coastal Norway. The marine environment has a strong socio-ecological effect shaping marine resource-based economy and society in the Faroe Islands – as Iceland and Coastal Norway. Denmark – with a completely different socio-ecological context – is often not very knowledgeable or aware of this marine socio-ecological nature of Faroese society – and the strong formal and informal ties to Iceland and Coastal Norway. The Faroe Islands have in recent years pursued the possibilities from a more Arctic identity and identification by others. These opportunities include access and representation in the Arctic Council with Denmark and Greenland. The Faroe Islands have published a (sub-) Arctic strategy. In light of the strong maritime competences in the Faroe Islands, the Faroes emphasize maritime opportunities from, for instance, new sea lanes that may pass the Faroe Islands.

The Faroe Islands have always remained outside the European Economic Community/European Union as the Common Fisheries Policy is unacceptable to the Faroe Islands (as to Greenland, Iceland and Coastal Norway). Historically, the Faroe Islands had a significant long-distance fishing fleet operating in the Barents Sea, around Iceland and Greenland, and on the Grand Banks of Canada. The United Nations Convention of the Law of the Sea and its provisions of 200 NM Economic Exclusion Zones excluded the Faroese long-distance fleet from many historic fishing grounds, making the Faroe Islands much more dependent on its own (much more limited) EEZ and quota agreements in the North Atlantic and Barents Sea with Iceland, Norway, Russia and the European Union.

Bio-economies can be highly dynamic, and, for instance, climate change is affecting the distribution of fish stocks moving across EEZ boundaries. This bio-economic dynamic caused severe conflict between Iceland, the Faroe Islands, Norway, Russia and the EU, where Iceland and the Faroe Islands did not accept the existing distribution of quotas in light of greater biomass in their EEZs. This conflict deteriorated to the extent of the EU closing its ports (including Danish ports) for disputed catches, and the Faroe Islands taking the EU to the WTO court system. This conflict is part of the background for the current Faroese-European-Russian relations in fish trade.

When the European Union imposed sanctions on Russia in response to the annexation of Crimea in 2014, Russia imposed counter-sanctions on European food exports to Russia, including, for instance, Norwegian aquaculture salmon. Russia exempted Faroese fish exports to Russia, which was a very lucrative opportunity for the Faroe Islands. Expansion in aquaculture and the export to Russia has contributed significantly to economic growth in the Faroe Islands, which allows many Faroese to move back to the Faroe Islands. An important contextual information here is that many Faroese moved away from the Faroe Islands after the bank crisis in the early 1990s (which by many Faroese rightly or wrongly is blamed on the Danish government sacrificing the Faroese society for Danske Bank interests) (Jónsson, 1994). The Faroe Islands have experienced net-emigration, especially of young educated women for years, so young Faroese families returning to the Faroe Islands is very important for Faroese society (Reistrup, Rógvi, 2012).

The Arctic seen from Greenland

Greenland is perhaps more than any other part of the Arctic at the intersection of more than one Arctic. Greenland is constitutionally and socio-economically part of the Nordic Arctic as part of the Kingdom of Denmark and a Nordic social-democratic welfare state.

Ethnically and culturally, Greenland is part of the Indigenous Arctic, as close to 90% of the population of Greenland is Inuit. Greenland is therefore also a rare case of a majority indigenous self-governing society. The Inuit identity of Greenland relative to a Nordic identity is illustrated by Erfalasorput, the Greenlandic flag,

which is *not* a cross-flag as the other Nordic flags. Greenlanders have also historically been key actors in Arctic indigenous peoples' organization since the late 1970s in Copenhagen and are central participants in the Inuit Circumpolar Council, that represent Inuit from Greenland via Canada and Alaska to Chukotka in Northeast Russia.

Geographically, Greenland is part of North America. Greenland is socio-infrastructurely closer to North America than the Nordic Arctic in Northern Fenno-Scandia, Iceland and the Faroe Islands, which all have highly developed and integrated national infrastructure. In contrast, Greenland has the enormous expanse like Arctic Canada and Alaska with isolated communities. All 70+ settlements in Greenland from Nuuk with close to 20,000 inhabitants to small settlements of less than 100 inhabitants are isolated from each other in terms of infrastructure. Each community has its own power, water, waste infrastructure and there are no road connections between any two settlements, which also characterizes many communities in Arctic Canada and Alaska – and some in Russian Arctic. This socio-technical phenomenon is called “island operations” (ødrift) and is technically and socially very demanding and imposes great cost and challenges on Greenlandic society (Hendriksen, 2019).

Greenland is also strategically a part of North America. It is central to North American national security geo-strategically as it commands air and sea lanes connecting North America with Western Europe as was very clear in World War Two and led to widespread US military presence in Greenland during WWII and the Cold War. Far Northern Greenland (Thule Air Base) is geo-strategically important for US national security. It is close to the USSR across the North Pole. During the early Cold War, Thule Air Base and surrounding areas were important nuclear launch pads for the USA. Later, the Thule Air Base was primarily important for the radar and distant early warning. Today, the Thule radar is important for US national missile defense.

Norwegian-Russian Arctic People-to-People Learning

The Kingdom of Denmark and Russia are both Arctic, but otherwise very different, states. The West Nordic region and the Barents Region together with the Russian Arctic have very limited mutual familiarity, knowledge, experience and networks, especially in comparison with Norwegian-Russian Arctic relations.

Norway and the Kingdom of Denmark are in many ways very similar countries and societies. They have about the same population size and are both social-democratic welfare states and mixed economies. Norway has in recent decades become relatively more affluent due to oil and gas rents. Linguistically, culturally and religiously, the Kingdom of Denmark and Norway are closer to each other than to any other country. The political systems and cultures are also very similar. Both the Kingdom of Denmark and Norway are founding members of NATO. Denmark (not the Faroe Islands and Greenland) is EU member, while Norway is EEA member. A significant difference here is that Norway shares land and maritime border with Russia unlike Denmark.

The Norwegian-Russian border is one of the historically most stable and peaceful borders in Europe and of Russia. There has been no Norwegian-Russian violent conflict since the middle ages. The land border set in 1826 is one of Europe's oldest existing borders. The border was open until 1917 with much so-called Pomor trade between Northern Norway and the White Sea. The border opened again at the end of the Cold War. Norway and Russia agreed on their maritime border in the Barents Sea in 2010 after decades of disagreement between Soviet and Western interpretation of the law of the sea (Nielsen, 2014, Holtsmark, 2015).

There are differences in perceptions of Russia (and the USSR) between Northern Norway and Southern Norway, where North Norwegian perceptions are much more positive towards Russians and Russian society. These North Norwegian positive views have WWII and recent roots. North Norway has a very different WWII

occupation history than Southern Norway. The Finnmark resistance were partisans trained, equipped and controlled from Murmansk, collecting intelligence on shipping and for the heavy fighting on the Kola Peninsula under extreme Arctic conditions. In contrast, the West and South Norwegian resistance was controlled from London. After the liberation, the South/West Norwegian resistance was highly celebrated, whereas the Finnmark partisans were harassed by the security services of the social-democratic NATO state.

Norway has through the Cold War and now pursued a two-legged policy towards USSR/Russia of deterrence through NATO-membership (although with reassuring self-imposed limitations on NATO exercises near the Norwegian/Soviet border, no permanent foreign bases or nuclear weapons in peace time) and very extensive bilateral Norwegian-US signal and electronic intelligence collection collaboration in Northern Norway and the Barents Sea. The other leg is engagement with the USSR through especially joint fisheries management of the Barents Sea since 1974 and lower level community engagement through sports.

Since the end of the Cold War, Norway invests substantial resources in people-to-people relations with Russia in the Barents cooperation in areas as education, research, environment, health, business, culture, sports. This engagement is designed to build people-to-people relationships and familiarity from kinder-garden level to PhD-students and further. These engagements are staggered where investments in kinder-garden children paper-drawing competitions is very long-term socialization. The investments in student exchange and joint PhD education have medium-term time horizons and, for instance, regional politicians' interaction has immediate effects.

I will briefly outline three examples of Norwegian-Russian-third party graduate student training, that I have personal experience with. It must be noted that these activities are fully funded from Norwegian side and bringing Russian and international graduate students to Tromsø and Northern Norway and housing and feeding them is naturally expensive.

[Arctic Frontiers PhD workshop \(previously known as Young Scientist Forum\)](#)

Every late January since 2007, Tromsø has hosted the Arctic Frontiers conference, which was the large continuously running Arctic political, scientific and business conference until Arctic Circle Assembly conferences started in Reykjavik every October since 2013. Arctic Frontiers and Arctic Circle are the two large annual Arctic conferences. Arctic Frontiers stands out in the West for its very high-level Russian political, scientific and commercial participation.

Arctic Frontiers together with UiT The Arctic University of Norway runs an interdisciplinary PhD course with about 25 international PhD candidates or postdocs, where ¼ or 1/3 are Russian with Norwegian Barents cooperation funding. The PhD candidates and few postdocs attend the Arctic Frontiers conference Sunday afternoon until Thursday evening late and then board the Hurtigruten coastal steamer for Svolvær in Lofoten arriving Friday evening. Here, they have intensive group work together with lectures and field visits before reboarding Hurtigruten Tuesday evening returning to Tromsø Wednesday afternoon. I attended this workshop as a postdoc in 2011 and have taught in the workshop 2013, 2015, 2016 and 2017. Arctic Frontiers PhD workshop is an excellent example of a PhD course bringing together Norwegian and Russian – and third-party PhD candidates in Arctic related studies (all disciplines) and solving intense group work challenges while discovering Northern Norway. For me personally, Arctic Frontiers in 2011 and the connected PhD workshop was my shock and awe introduction to the Barents region and Russia in the Arctic.

[Arctic Frontiers Arctic Student Forum Master's course](#)

The Arctic Frontiers conference runs an intensive international Master's course (Arctic Student Forum) in parallel to the PhD workshop, where the Arctic Student Forum is from Wednesday evening before the Arctic

Frontiers conference starting Sunday evening and until Wednesday night. I was the academic coordinator of Arctic Student Forum in 2017 and 2018. Each year, Arctic Student Forum included about 35 advanced bachelor and Master's students, of which about 1/3 are Russian. The students are pre-assigned to groups maximizing national, gender and disciplinary diversity and solve a problem during the forum. All participants have fully covered travel to and accommodation in Tromsø.

The Arctic Frontiers conference collaborates closely with the Russian Geographical Society on Arctic Student Forum. The Russian Geographical Society runs a Russia-wide student competition for participation with hundreds of Russian master's students competing for a dozen places to go to Arctic Student Forum in Tromsø. Senior representatives of the Russian Geographical Society attend Arctic Frontiers conference in Tromsø and meet the Arctic Student Forum participants. The Russian Geographical Society is one of the imperial Russian scientific societies, which play an active and interesting role for Russian's science and public diplomacy as well as soft power policy. The Russian Geographical Society is active in Arctic affairs, and, for instance, the Imperial Orthodox Palestine Society is active in Middle East affairs. President Vladimir Putin and Minister of Defense Sergey Shoygu are involved in the top-leadership of the Russian Geographical Society showing its political and strategic importance.

The Arctic Frontiers Arctic Student Forum for advanced bachelor's and master's students can often be the first time Western and Russian students of Arctic questions meet and work together intensively on joint projects. It is my personal observation, that it this encounter is a strong learning experience for both sides, perhaps especially Western students, who know less about Russia than Russian students know about the West. One year, a Danish student attended and at the end told me excitedly, that it was this student's first encounter with Russian students, "who were really nice and just like us [Western students]," which is of course the intended effect.

Norwegian-Russian PhD course SATA-Society and Advanced Technology in the Arctic

I hold a 2M NOK grant from DIKU (former SIU) to run a joint Norwegian PhD/Master's course on Society and Advanced Technology in the Arctic (SATA) with the Higher School of Economics (Moscow) and the Trapeznikov Institute of Control Sciences of the Russian Academy of Sciences. The course brings 10 Norwegian and 10 Russian PhD and Master's candidates together with 5 UiT and 5 HSE/RAS professors for one week in 2018 (Tromsø), 2019 (Svalbard) and 2020 (Moscow). The graduate students solve complex group assignments in mixed groups, which is an intensive way of training Arctic collaboration between Norway and Russia and across disciplines.

Recommendations for Arctic Learning between the Kingdom of Denmark and Russia

I have pointed out above, that the West Nordic societies (Kingdom of Denmark and Iceland) and Russia have far less connections and familiarity than the Barents Region and Russia. In light of the Arctic, Baltic and global significance of Russia for the Kingdom of Denmark, it is of great importance that there is greater familiarity with and knowledge of Russia as an Arctic state and actor (focus on the Arctic here). Russia will also benefit from greater familiarity with and knowledge about the Kingdom of Denmark (and Iceland) as Arctic actors. Here I will make some observations and recommendations about how the Kingdom of Denmark and Russia can build greater mutual Arctic familiarity and knowledge. I will include Iceland, although it is outside the mandate of this project, but because of the regional coherence of the West Nordic region.

Before continuing, it is necessary to keep in mind the substantial Norwegian investments in the people-to-people collaboration with Russia, which is dwarfed by Norwegian defense and intelligence spending in the

Arctic. Norway with its oil and gas rents have fiscal possibilities today, that the Kingdom of Denmark does not have and which requires hard priorities between expenditure and tax revenue. The Kingdom of Denmark has clearly not been willing in recent years to prioritize such Arctic science and people-to-people work. In a recent Danish state budget, 3-5M DKK was allocated to create an Arctic science hub in Greenland. These 3-5M DKK can be compared to the 2M NOK grant just for my Norwegian-Russian PhD course, one out of many such projects.

For the Kingdom of Denmark – and Iceland – to pursue the kind of Arctic people-to-people collaboration pursued by Norway will require unprecedented budgetary will. However, in Danish public debate today, there seems to be strong voices and political willingness to significantly increase Danish defense spending in the North Atlantic of a magnitude much greater than what is required for people-to-people collaboration. The effectiveness of increased defense spending by the small state of the Kingdom of Denmark in the North Atlantic in a US-Russian (-somewhat Chinese) standoff at the strategic level is questionable unless very well designed. In light of the strong voices in Danish debate calling for significantly increased Danish defense spending in the North Atlantic, it is important with critical and informed debate and decision-making.

In contrast, some of these funds could be diverted to a much greater Danish/Faroese/Greenlandic multilateral Arctic engagement – also with Russia. This engagement could strongly increase Danish/Faroese/Greenlandic-Russian mutual familiarity and knowledge and anchor the Kingdom of Denmark more firmly in Circumpolar Arctic affairs.

It is important that Danish/Faroese/Greenlandic Arctic people-to-people engagement of Russia is not bilateral, but anchored in multilateral or regional Arctic institutions and processes (Bertelsen, Rasch, 2016). For the Kingdom of Denmark to pursue bilateral Arctic people-to-people engagement of Russia would likely be relatively inefficient and ineffective because of lack of Danish/Faroese/Greenlandic experience and networks in Russia and possible relatively limited Russian interest. This is equally the case for Iceland.

Therefore, the Kingdom of Denmark (and Iceland) should pursue Arctic people-to-people engagement through regional and multilateral Arctic institutions and processes, which lend themselves to such engagement in cost-efficient ways. However, Danish actors, who are used to operating unilaterally or bilaterally in Greenland must accept settings with many other and some very experienced and well-connected actors. The regional and multilateral settings for Kingdom of Denmark (and Iceland) Arctic people-to-people engagement with Russia are:

[The Barents Euro Arctic Region](#)

The Kingdom of Denmark and Iceland are members of the Barents Euro Arctic Council, although passive. The Kingdom of Denmark and Iceland should pursue participating – and funding this participation – in the people-to-people activities of the Barents regional cooperation. Such participation would serve the primary purpose of rapidly and strongly increasing Danish/Faroese/Greenlandic and Icelandic familiarity with Russian Arctic actors in academia, business, culture, etc. A second, but also valuable, effect will be to integrate the two Nordic Arctic regions, the Barents Region and the West Nordic region, into one Nordic Arctic region, which has intra-Nordic benefits.

The Kingdom of Denmark and Iceland could in Barents regional setting actively pursue co-funding access to, for example, the extensive Norwegian-Russian graduate student training activities. Such West-Nordic participation could quickly build human capital among West-Nordic (including Danish) graduate students on Russia as an Arctic actor and build mutual West Nordic-Russian familiarity and knowledge.

Arctic Council Working Groups

All parts of the Kingdom of Denmark – and Iceland – as member-states have access to the Arctic Council and its Working Groups, where Russia is a major member-state. Active participation from West Nordic participants in Arctic Council Working Groups gives opportunity to work closely with Russian counterparts.

International Arctic Science Committee and International Arctic Social Sciences Association

IASC and IASSA were both founded in the last years of the Cold War, when it became possible for Western and Soviet Arctic scientists to work together. IASC is the international body for Arctic natural sciences (and a little social sciences and humanities). The annual Arctic Science Summit Week of IASC is the main annual Arctic science business and research meeting. It is my experience from participating several years, that Danish/Faroese/Greenlandic Arctic science researchers and authorities are less active and present than Finnish, Norwegian and Swedish, which reflects the Greenlandic and less Circumpolar focus of Danish Arctic research. Russia is very well represented and active in both IASC and IASSA. IASC and IASSA are therefore also avenues for closer Danish/Faroese/Greenlandic – and Icelandic – Arctic research and education engagement of Russia.

University of the Arctic

The University of the Arctic is a network of more than 150 higher education institutions in the Arctic or interested in the Arctic. There are 8 members in Denmark, one member in the Faroe Islands, and three member-institutions in Greenland. Iceland has 8 member-institutions. There are 54 Russian member institutions. University of the Arctic also gives ample opportunities for West Nordic institutions to engage Russian institutions.

Arctic Economic Council

Parts of Danish business has decades of experience operating in the North Atlantic. Sections of Danish business also have experience operating in Russia. Danish business has a strong historical legacy of operating in Russia, most prominently the Great Nordic Telegraph Company establishing and operating the telegraph link between European Russia and the Russian Far East and East Asia. However, it is my impression, that Danish business is not active in the Russian Arctic and the large energy and infrastructure happening there these years. Maersk has transited the Northeast Passage/Northern Sea Route with the first container vessel (Venta Maersk), many bulk carriers have transited. The Faroe Islands have different Arctic economic ties with Russia, both through fishing quota agreements in the Barents Sea and Northeast Atlantic, fish export to Russia and Russian vessels visiting Faroese ports. I visited Runavík in June 2018, and I was struck by a large Russian trawler and cargo vessel in the port. Greenland does not to my knowledge have any particular Arctic economic ties with Russia apart from exchanging fishing quotas. Iceland has long-standing economic ties with USSR and Russia. During the Cold War, Iceland engaged in barter trade with the East Block to save currency and because of the Cod Wars with the UK, so Iceland received Soviet oil among other products. Arctic business engagement is another venue for West-Nordic Arctic engagement with Russia. Today, economic interests in the Arctic are organized in the Arctic Economic Council, which is an avenue for West Nordic (and Danish) business interests to engage Russian Arctic business interests.

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