PhD Thesis
Turið Nolsøe

Autonomy’s double bind
The rhetorical intersection of geopolitics and biopolitics in Danish media coverage of Faroese abortion rights

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# Table of contents

Acknowledgements 6

Introduction 7

Journalism at the intersection of biopolitics and geopolitics 11

A rhetorical take on advocacy and journalism 15
   Overview of Danish coverage before the analysed period 17
   The textual corpus 25

Abortion as critical prism 26
   Liberalisation and illegality: The legislative difference 26
   The spatiotemporal hierarchisation of biopolitical regimes 28
   Defining colonial discourse 33

The Faroese position in the Danish kingdom 37
   Historical basis 37
   An atypical colony 41

Overview of the thesis 46
   Notes on terminology 47

Analytical strategy: Deixis and the I/Here/Now 49

From physical setting to mediated text 51

“Now”: Pressing issues and temporal hierarchisation 52
   Kairos 53
   Chronos 55

“Here”: Words and images of place 56
   Place-based rhetoric 56
   Topoi: geopolitical spatialisation of place 59

“I”: Rhetorical authority and journalistic sources 61
   The implied point of orchestration 61
   Source authority and ethos as forum 62
**Time**

Kairotic events and the Faroese long-term  
Seizing the moment on Faroese autonomy  
Klaksvík Syndrome  

Chronos, civilisational advancement and the denial of coevality  
Comparing developments  
Illustrating age  
Faroese resistance to liberalisation  

Concluding discussion: temporal consequences and logics

**Place**

Classifying and imagining the Danish-Faroese community  
Proximity equals similarity: surprise and amnesia  
Spatialising the relationship: the backyard  

Affirming asymmetry

Naturalising culture  
Between exotification and nation-building

Concluding discussion: negating Faroese and human agency

**Authority**

Establishing authority: ethos and the first-person pronoun  
I, the journalist  
Performing objectivity as strategic ritual  
The ethos of including distinct voices

Source authority  
Representative, discursive and vernacular sources  
Can Faroese abortion narratives be heard?  
Landscapes as faces

Concluding discussion: ethnographic authority as journalistic ideal
Discussion: the rhetorical audience in Danish coverage of the Faroese abortion rights situation 192

Implying audience, constituting publics 192

A second double bind: upholding the asymmetry you try to dismantle 195

Ethnographic orientations towards interlocutors as audience 198

The final double bind 204

Conclusion 209

References 216

Summary: Autonomy’s double bind 232

Resumé: Selvbestemmelsens dilemma 233

Samandráttur: Sjálvræðistvístóður 234
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Introduction

In April 2023, I was invited to host a talk about Faroese abortion rights and activism at Ungdommens Folkemøde NORD, a democracy festival dedicated to Nordic youth held in Copenhagen. Because of my PhD project and knowledge about the Faroese abortion situation, one of the participants — a friend of mine — had recommended me, and I, of course, agreed.

A few days before the festival, I was contacted by journalists from the broadcaster TV2 who were making a documentary about Faroese abortion rights and the activist movement Frítt Val, because they wanted to film the talk and my presentation within it and use it for the documentary. As a researcher, I appreciated the legitimate question and receiving it beforehand, since public appearances do not automatically mean consent to them being documented for other use. I therefore asked whether my consent now would mean that the entire tape could be used without any further approval from me, or if I would be presented the parts they would use featuring me as a form of quote-check. The reply was that, “Normally we do not send quotes for approval. It is a time-consuming and costly practice, which our editing plan does not allow for”. I was nevertheless allowed to let the editors know after the filming if there was any part I did not want included. I spoke to the photographer the day before the talk, and was informed that she would be at my friend’s place, where we had agreed to meet before going to the Ungdommens Folkemøde NORD festival. She would film some material there, and I could expect to be part of that.

When I walked up the stairs to my friend’s place, she let me know that the camera was already rolling. More or less the entirety of the hour I was there was recorded and this included casual chats in both Faroese and Danish. The photographer mentioned some subjects we could touch upon, and it felt quite natural, only that I had no idea about what would be used and what it was to be used for. We then left for the festival, where the talk was recorded, and afterwards I was given a sign-off sheet, which I tried to read through quickly. As expected my signature would renounce any right to decide what the filmed
material would be used for, whether it was for promotional purposes or anything else related to the documentary. The editing rights were fully in the production company’s hands, and I did not keep a copy of the sign-off document. I could have asked for one, but I have not participated in this kind of coverage much.

I write this a couple of days after the festival and filming, while finishing the chapter on Authority and preparing the discussion chapter. At work, we were discussing ethics guidelines for humanities and social science researchers, and what requirements there are for informed consent when interviewing the wide category we can call “informants”. As a basic principle, consent can always be revoked, and some colleagues explained how they would always show the final articles or chapters to the informant, to make sure they were comfortable with their portrayal. The rules can be vague, but the demand for ethics is strong — especially since GDPR legislation was implemented — when dealing with people whose realities you use to make theoretical arguments.

When one colleague asked me if I was “cast” as Faroese or as a researcher in the documentary, that nagging feeling of something not quite right made sense. Although documentary makers might not explicitly cast people by their type, profession or ethnicity, the line-up of participating sources fits some sort of plan for representation, as I also discuss in my chapter on Authority. I was told that the film crew had considered interviewing me separately, but I was somehow too involved with abortion activism. This also replicates discussions of researchers’ investments in their subject matter, but what I wonder now is, did I participate as a Faroese abortion rights activist, a researcher or a regular Faroese person? What the difference is, is of course hard to define, but will in this thesis be a question of what role a given source plays in the conversation being created. It reminded me of when a journalist from DR called me to get a comment on the then recent dolphin killing in the Faroe Islands, which had outraged most of the world. I assumed that I was contacted because I know a bit about representations of controversial Faroese practices, but when I was asked about the atmosphere in the Faroe Islands and the general public opinion, I realised it was to get a local perspective.
I have lived in Denmark for 13 years at the time of this writing, but have never been as self-conscious about explaining my Faroese heritage, and the fact that I do not consider myself Danish, as much as in the last years while writing this thesis. It comes as no surprise, given the nature of its theme: how Danish media report on the Faroese abortion rights situation as a prism for analysing a rhetoric of the Danish kingdom. I began my project with a wider lens, but found that abortion rhetoric and colonial discourse narrowed the focus to what I consider essential when discussing the Danish kingdom; namely autonomy. Autonomy, as the right to self-rule, is a driving force in Faroese politics; national autonomy is a key issue for which Faroese has many words, but is best translated to sjálvraði. What happens when this concept intersects with a Danish key issue, the right to bodily autonomy epitomised by the legislative jewel in the crown, the “fri abort” law (En. liberal abortion law), which is not implemented in the Faroe Islands? Can Denmark, as constituted by Danish politicians or the Danish public, exert agency in a way that secures Faroese bodily autonomy without breeching Faroese national autonomy? The short answer is yes; the long answer is the rest of this thesis. I claim that journalists create autonomy’s double bind, by addressing the Danish public in a way that frames the Faroese-Danish relationship as colonial.

This is a consequence of Danish discourse about the Faroe Islands, which the Faroese abortion rights debate illustrates. A discourse that is not one monolithic thing, which has changed and is ever changing, with my thesis being one analytical cut through its contemporary formation. My move to Denmark and transition to becoming a Faroese researcher and becoming a source in journalism has informed my thesis, probably even more than I have realised, as I have travelled back and forth and witnessed the discussion about what Danish media do from both a Faroese and Danish perspective. I have struggled to use my own perspective in trying to live up to some internalised criteria of “objectivity” and “detached” scholarship. I guess this is very common for minorities, who do not want to be labelled as representing an “other” perspective. Mine is no more other than that of the next researcher whose prior experiences have formed their current cognition, and this thesis is written from my perspective as a Faroese researcher, abortion activist and regular person. This does not make it autoethnographic per se, but I have
chosen to include some of my own experiences to illustrate how they have informed my insights. Indeed I conclude my thesis by stating that perspicuity is a quality in journalism and is perhaps best performed by letting your own perspective be visible in the text. As a critic, I have tried to allow my own perspective and background knowledge to be visible in an attempt to perform perspicuity as an academic norm as well.
Journalism at the intersection of biopolitics and geopolitics

The Faroe Islands are a self-governing country in the Danish kingdom, located in the North Atlantic Ocean approximately 1,400 kilometres from Denmark. They consist of 18 islands covering an area of almost 1,400 square kilometres, and are populated by around 54,000 people, most of whom speak Faroese. The immediate context of my study therefore seems like a small one, even if we include the Danish kingdom as location, but the subject I address is a substantial and international issue.

Defined as home rule, the local Faroese government has control over most areas of jurisdiction, which since 2018 has included abortion legislation. The Faroese legislation on abortion limits the right to abortion, which is only permitted based on medical, criminal, genetic and eugenic indications. This means that if you want an abortion in the Faroe Islands, you have to get a general practitioner and a gynaecologist to approve your request and acknowledge that the pregnancy is a risk to your health or life; that you became pregnant by rape or under other illegal circumstances; that genetic or hereditary illness is a factor; or that your own aptitude for parenthood is lacking. These indications, which I have translated from the current abortion law in the Faroe Islands contrast with the Danish legislation which since 1973 has allowed abortion upon the pregnant person’s request until the 12th week of gestation (Abortlógin, 1956; Lov om fri abort, 1973). The Faroese home rule government chose in the 1970s not to follow Denmark’s legislative changes and implement what is colloquially called the “fri abort” (En. liberal abortion), and the originally Danish law from 1956 still defines when and why abortion can be performed in the Faroe Islands. The Faroese abortion rights situation has been criticised locally and internationally, amongst others by the UN’s Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and is not in general compliance with international policy on reproductive and sexual health and rights (UN, 2020).
The details of the above are unpacked through my analysis of Danish media coverage of the current abortion rights situation of the Faroe Islands, where I focus on how this situation represents an intersection of biopolitics and geopolitics in the Danish kingdom and thus addresses some of the central themes running through reproductive and sexual health and rights scholarship, activism and politics today. How can the individual right to bodily autonomy be secured when embedded within a conflicted site of national autonomy? How can reproductive and sexual rights within be affected by actors from outside, and what role do media and journalists play in this struggle and the representation of it? This thesis is a contribution to the discussion of these questions from a perspective of autonomy within the Danish-Faroese relationship. So why the double bind in the title?

A double bind is a dilemma in communication, defined as “a psychological predicament in which a person receives from a single source conflicting messages that allow no appropriate response to be made” (Merriam-Webster, n.d.); an uncomfortable situation, where the receiver is trapped by conflicting demands. The source in my case is the Danish media coverage of the Faroese abortion rights situation where, for example, it is stated: “Today’s dilemma, the ethical dilemma, well it is somehow whether the respect for Faroese autonomy and respect for the Danish realm should trump women’s rights” (Ingrisch & Jeppesen, 2017). The immediate response has for a long time been silence from politicians and activists outside of the Faroe Islands, as many of the artefacts I analyse point out. As I will shortly elaborate, this silence can be seen as strategic and as a consequence of the political tensions between the Faroe Islands and Denmark, which have been displayed in earlier examples of Danish coverage on Faroese abortion rights.

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1 Original: “Dilemmaet i dag, det etiske dilemma, det er jo på en eller anden måde om respekten for Færøernes selvbestemmelse og respekten for rigsfællesskabet skal stå over kvinders rettigheder.”
But as I will argue, it is a conflict of communication, an issue arising from the way this subject is reported: a problem of rhetorical strategy. A problem which arises when bodily autonomy and national autonomy are compared and discussed without an intersectional perspective on what norms should govern the debate. On an abstract level this marks an intersection of biopolitics and geopolitics, as the administration of life and populations in the form of abortion legislation meets the administration of land and places through imperial practice. This intersection does have a host of ethical and practical constraints, but I will primarily focus on how it is communicated as a predicament in the textual corpus. As one source says, “One could ask the question, what do we need a Danish realm for, if we are not able to go in and enforce the values and key issues that we as Danes think are important” (Ingrisch & Jeppesen, 2017). While a journalist elsewhere states and asks, “The Faroe Islands are in fact the last place in the Nordic region where access to abortion is limited and a majority of the population prefers it so. But why?” (Funch, 2018).

These widely different argumentative approaches to abortion rights in the Faroe Islands allude to some of the analytical focal points of my analysis, spanning from the direct encouragement of legislative intervention to rhetorical representations of why Faroese society is the way it is. To make sense of this form of argumentation, I claim that we should approach it as a form of colonial discourse, despite the fact that the Faroe Islands were never a “typical” colony. To state my theoretical inquiry briefly, how can the Danish-Faroese relationship so easily be perceived as colonial in nature, when by many theoretical definitions it is not? I explore this in more detail in the section on The Faroese position in the Danish kingdom, but have found myself searching for a theoretical and

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2 Original: “Man kan spørge, hvad vi har et rigsfælleskab til for, hvis vi ikke kan gå ind og håndhæve de kerneværdier som vi danskere synes er vigtige.”

3 Original: “Færøerne er altså det sidste sted i Norden, hvor abort reelt er begrænset, og hvor flertallet i befolkningen ønsker det sådan. Men hvorfor?”
analytical framework that can engage the rhetoric that presents the Faroe Islands as subordinate and other and considers what this discourse can do to the Faroese and Danish public respectively and together. A theory of colonial discourse should perhaps not require *material reality* and *cultural representations* to be mutually supportive (McLeod, 2010, p. 46), but can rather on the notion that the knowledge we make about the world can have no ground in the actual conditions of the world, but still do something as a form of rhetoric. Even though the Faroe Islands are not and have not been a colony, how can a rhetoric of the Danish kingdom still be colonial?

The structural logics of abortion rhetoric and professional norms of journalism play their part in representing the Faroe Islands as negatively different and necessarily subordinate and this is the crux of the matter, which I have developed into the following research questions:

*How does contemporary Danish journalism report on Faroese abortion rights and how is this rhetoric embedded within the asymmetry of the geopolitical relationship of the Danish kingdom?*

As sub-questions engaged and discussed throughout the analysis, I further ask:

*How is civilisational development in the Faroe Islands inferred and contrasted to Denmark and how can this convergence in the structural logics of abortion rhetoric and colonial discourse be productively approached by scholars and journalists?*

*How is autonomy regarding bodies and nations, as both the individual bodies of Faroese people and the national body politic of the Faroe Islands, represented in contemporary Danish journalism?*

*What position does the analysed coverage place journalists and sources in and offer its rhetorical audience(s), in terms of affecting the current situation and constituting the Danish kingdom?*
My goal is to address the political implications of the discussions I analyse, in order to expand the theoretical framework regarding abortion rhetoric in a cross-national context. Whilst the geopolitical interweaves the biopolitical on many levels and in many other contexts, the analysed case involves journalism on a complex subject, both regarding abortion rights and national context, and thereby offers a basis for exploring the rhetoric of journalism. Ultimately, this can point to advancements in the journalistic toolkit, but centrally it addresses a democratic institution which is vital for communication across national borders and contexts.

**A rhetorical take on advocacy and journalism**

If my goal was to study how abortion rights are discussed and their liberalisation pursued, I could have focused my study on different types of rhetoric: from activists, from politicians, from international agents and from local voices in the Faroe Islands. Journalism brings together all of these voices as sources in a forum organised by journalists. Journalism’s role and ideals in Denmark and the Nordic countries are often condensed to three central professional norms: Journalists are embodiments of the fourth estate, and express their professional ethos as being watchdogs holding those in power accountable, while managing objective coverage, defined as representing various viewpoints and basing stories on facts (Ahva et al., 2020; Bro, 2006; Kristensen & Blach-Ørsten, 2021; O. K. Pedersen et al., 2000). The purpose and ethos of journalism is a continuously relevant field to study, and especially so in this case, as journalism is one of the mediums which traverse the geographic divide between the Faroe Islands and Denmark. I argue that Danish journalism thus has the possibility of joining the two otherwise separate publics and generating a conversation on what the Danish kingdom is today. Journalism relays the world and its events to its readers in a way that positions them as part of that same world, and as John Hartley has pointed out:

*The most important textual feature of journalism is the fact that it counts as true.*

*The most important component of its system is the creation of readers as publics,*
and the connection of these readerships to other systems, such as those of politics, economics, and social control. (Hartley, 1996, p. 35)

A central focus throughout this thesis is therefore the positioning of audiences in the analysed artefacts as the positioning of a public in the Danish kingdom. As I will discuss, it is central to include more than the Danish public as potential audience for Danish journalism.

Danish journalism is in this thesis defined as journalism in Danish, published in Danish media, and due to language policy in the Danish kingdom, most Faroese people understand and speak Danish. Danish reports on media use rarely include the Faroese population, as for instance the Danish Ministry of Culture does not, and this makes it hard to determine exactly how Faroese people make use of Danish media (Kulturministeriet, 2021). Academic studies of the Faroese media system acknowledge the scarcity of data on this matter, which makes it difficult to state anything definitive about the Danish media’s role in Faroese society (Ohlsson et al., 2021; Ravn-Højgaard et al., 2021; Willig & Nord, 2021). Ida Willig and Lars Nord nevertheless argue that “both Greenland and the Faroe Islands, for obvious reasons, are still influenced by Danish media policy fundamentals”, and the Danish kingdom is thus assumed to be a factor in Faroese media practices (Willig & Nord, 2021, p. 6). But securing quantitative data on how Danish journalism has a Faroese audience is beside the point. Whilst perhaps not being an intended audience, the population of the Faroe Islands can be an actual audience of Danish journalism. Television packages offered to Faroese viewers are a simple way of proving this. As my third research sub-question points to, this invites a critique of what position these rhetorical audiences are offered — and to anticipate my analysis and discussion, what audience is implied and what consequences there are in offering the Danish kingdom’s public this view of the Danish kingdom.

While all journalism addresses its readers as publics and connects them to systems influencing civic life, as Hartley states, not all journalism has the explicit goal of wanting to change the systems of politics and social control they connect their readers to. Some
form of advocacy is still at stake. Though the creators of my artefacts do not necessarily explicate their transformative goals and the journalists I analyse do not explicitly frame themselves as advocates of a certain cause, I approach their coverage as bordering a form of advocacy journalism (Charles, 2019; Fisher, 2016; Thomas, 2018). Advocacy journalism has no singular definition, but can perhaps be distinguished “from (so-called) objective reporting by a willingness to offer a point of view on events, moving from a purely informational to an explicitly persuasive mode of address” (Thomas, 2018, p. 391). On the other hand, the analysed material provokes a relevant reflection on what amounts to being explicitly persuasive and what so-called objective reporting would be, since a view of advocacy as contrary to objectivity reflects a false dichotomy (Charles, 2019, p. 1). What advocacy journalism is and which forms of reporting count as advocacy is in any case dependent on context, but if we accept the positive definition of it being journalism that calls for and expects change, a rhetorical approach to advocacy and agency can offer a wider lens for approaching the matter, without getting lost in the oppositional binary between fact and opinion. Selecting the available means of presenting your argument might employ both elements of facts and opinion, and in this field, we find the rhetoric of Faroese abortion rights in the Danish media.

Overview of Danish coverage before the analysed period

Danish media saw a surge in coverage of the Faroese abortion situation in 2017-18 and again in 2022, and this period covers the material I analyse: it covers the period when abortion legislation is moved from joint to Faroese jurisdiction, and is the biggest group of contemporary artefacts. It was not the first time the issue had been addressed and presented to a Danish public, but my archive and database searches for relevant material have shown that earlier material has been quite sparse. To find relevant artefacts for analysis, I started out with a broad research strategy searching for all Danish media coverage of abortion in the Faroe Islands. Newspaper articles were primarily found using the online database Infomedia, while audio/visual material was primarily found via Larm.fm and MediaStream. Searches in both categories were followed up by searches on the websites of specific broadcasters or papers.
I used the same search words across platforms, namely “Færøerne+abort” (En. “Faroe Islands”+abortion), since these are specific enough to mainly present relevant material. Examples of irrelevant material found by this search method are articles relating to abortion and fecundity in the Danish realm or the Nordic region in general, where statistics about the Faroe Islands are listed without further exploration, and when search hits are pages with several articles, for instance letters to the editor, where one mentions the Faroe Islands and another mentions abortion. I excluded opinion pieces or letters to the editor not written by journalists to isolate my focus on the professional rhetors performing the art of journalism. Neither am I including every article which mentions abortion in the Faroe Islands, and my overall intention is not to analyse the totality of articles about abortion in the Faroe Islands. With the volume of mass media today, charting and tracing every mention would amount to a project very different from my chosen approach.

Initially I did not specify the type or size of newspaper or broadcasting channel I collected artefacts from, but as the following overview will show, it has predominantly been major national newspapers that have featured more than short news stubs referencing other media. For clarity and to loosely trace the diachronic development of the subject, I divided my search by decade, which the following chronology also reveals. The point in this section is to show examples of journalism about abortion in the Faroe Islands that precede the rhetoric my study is focused on, namely the current coverage from the 2010s and onwards.

**Newspaper articles from 1990 and onwards**

Dividing my search by decade shows that no coverage is archived in Infomedia until the 1990s, when 33 articles appear of which only three can be considered relevant according to the above-mentioned criteria.

The first is only a quote from Faroese politician Karin Kjølbro stating that “If you choose to live in this country, you must learn to accept the double standard. Rich women go to Denmark, while the clever ones accept subjection to psychiatric exams. The rest give birth
to the children” (“Citater,” 1990). Another Faroese voice on the matter is a Faroese journalist employed by DR, Karl Johan Mikkelsen, who in an article titled “My Faroe Islands” describes how the consequences of the Faroese financial collapse at the beginning of the 1990s are now made into an issue of being in favour of or against Danish influence. Here he makes poignant remarks about the Faroese aversion to what constitutes as Danish:

*Union or secession [from Denmark] is the basic frame of understanding in the Faroe Islands, I would claim. Even the EU, liberal abortion, refugees, gay rights (this law does not apply to the Faroe Islands) are all to be seen in this light.* (Mikkelsen, 1998)

The bracketed clause in the second sentence is a direct reference to the legal statement following all Danish laws not pertaining to the Faroe Islands and connotes a sort of legal mantra for separating what is Faroese from what is Danish. The reason I mention this paragraph is that anecdotal as it might seem, it pinpoints a relevant sentiment, perhaps not clear to a Danish reader: the fact that some Danish values are met with hostility by parts of the Faroese population, not even if, but because they are Danish.

The first actual piece I have been able to find on abortion rights in the Faroe Islands is an article by Pia Fris Jensen published in *Information* (P. F. Jensen, 1998). Under the title “*Ingen kæmper for fri abort på Færøerne*” (En. *No one fights for liberal abortion in the Faroe Islands*), Jensen interviews the leader of the women’s crisis centre in Tórshavn, Elin Reinert Planck. Though the title seems to promise a narrow focus on abortion rights, the article

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4 Original: “Hvis du vælger at bo i dette land, må du lære at acceptere dobbeltmoralen. Her tager de rige kvinder til Danmark, mens de kvikke lader sig underkaste psykiske undersøgelser. Resten føder barnene.” As a critical analysis of the Faroese abortion rights situation, Kjølbro’s quote is worth including, but is unfortunately from another newspaper which I have not been able to locate.

5 Original: “Samband eller løsrivelse er den grundlæggende forståelsesramme på Færøerne, vil jeg hævde. Selv EU, fri abort, flygtninge, bossernes retstilling (denne lov gælder ikke for Færøerne) skal ses i det lys.”
covers women’s rights issues in general, focusing on the crisis centre and its activities and extending this perspective to the lack of abortion rights and the increasing number of divorces.

The early 2000s
The turn of the millennium feature an increase in coverage of Faroese abortion rights. In 2003-04, the issue gained traction with politicians, who focused on how the Faroese legislation should be an issue for the Danish government to deal with or discuss, while the media covered the issue as a conflict in Danish politics.

In December 2003, an article in Politiken describes Faroese Minister of Health, Bill Justinussen, had circulated a letter to medical doctors, where he urged them to follow the restrictions of the current law and reminded them of the government’s wish to reduce the number of abortions (Prasz, 2003a). His letter, and plan to examine why abortions are being permitted, faced strong criticism for misuse of his political power from both medical doctors and other Faroese politicians, according to the article in Politiken.

On the 20th March 2004, Danish MP Naser Khader authored a feature article titled “Fogh’s feeling for fundamentalism” in which Khader criticises the Danish Prime Minister, Anders Fogh Rasmussen, for his so-called “hypocrisy” (Khader, 2004b). According to Khader, Faroese politics express clear tendencies of Christian fundamentalism without facing any Danish criticism, to which he asks, “Is this lack of any clear position an expression of silent acceptance?”(Khader, 2004b). Fogh Rasmussen had pointed out in his New Year’s speech the previous year, that in Denmark, politics and religion do not mix, and women’s and children’s rights should not be put aside by referring to the Quran or Bible. Khader’s charge is based on the hypocrisy of only reacting when the fundamentalism in question is Islamic, and not Christian, as it is when it comes

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6 Original: “Er den manglende stillingtagen en stiltiende accept?”

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to abortion in the Faroe Islands. Khader explains how he is both encouraged and discouraged by Faroese people to bring up this issue, and names Justinussen’s letter, the public funding of Faroese anti-abortion organisation Pro Vita and the general lack of tolerance for sexual minorities as reasons for why he must voice his critique of this clear confusion of religion and politics — something he expected the Prime Minister to echo. The alleged double standard can, according to Khader, be summed up as “When Muslims repress women, it is discrimination. When Christians do it, it calls for inclusivity” (Khader, 2004b)

The article can be considered an elaborated version of the implicit critique Khader had posed in his questions to the Danish Minister of Justice, Lene Espersen. This dialogue represents one of the few formal political debates on Faroese abortion rights in the Danish parliament, since the Faroe Islands broke from following Denmark’s example regarding abortion legislation (Khader, 2004a). By asking what mandate the Danish government has to interfere in Faroese legislation, and what distinguishes this situation from any other where human rights are in question, Khader draws attention to an apparent conflict between alleged Danish political power and the reluctance to use it.

Following Khader’s article informed by his questions to the Minister of Justice, more Danish politicians caught wind of this discrepancy in the Danish kingdom and Danish politics. Together with the women’s rights organisation Kvindeligt Selskab (En. Female Society), spokesperson for gender equality for Socialistisk Folkeparti (En. The Green Left), Kamal Qureshi, organised a fundraiser to financially aid Faroese women travelling to Denmark to seek abortion care (No Author, 2004).

Neither Khader’s nor Qureshi’s actions were welcomed in the Faroe Islands according to the coverage at the time. The critical response to the latter ranged from unease to

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7 Original: “Når muslimer undertrykker kvinder, er det diskrimination. Når kristne gør det, er der tale om rummelighed.”
outright discontent. The chair of the Faroese Women’s Organisation, Inga Ellingsgaard, said that “I don’t like that outsiders interfere in this. It is a question we have to be able to handle ourselves” (R. B. Johansen, 2004). She continues: “The possibility of an attitude change should have the Faroe Islands as its starting point, not Denmark”. Minister of Health and Social Issues, Hans Pauli Strøm, called the initiative “impertinent, almost rude”: “It is one thing to voice your opinion, it is something else to interfere actively. I don’t like the principle that Kamal Qureshi is actively interfering in political Faroese matters” (R. B. Johansen, 2004). The response to Khader’s commentary was similar, represented by the two Faroese MPs in the Danish parliament. Lisbeth L. Petersen from the Unionist party repeats Ellingsgaard’s point, and adds that “It is unfortunate that Danish politicians interfere, but it is probably not wholly unavoidable” (Hansen, 2003). Leader of the Faroese Republican party, Høgni Hoydal, argued that this was an occasion to transfer the subject to Faroese jurisdiction (Hoydal, 2004).

Chair of Kvindeligt Selskab, Hanne Bille, claimed that they had not received any positive feedback from the Faroe Islands and was surprised at the Faroese Women’s Organisation’s response, which she claimed to favour national consideration over human rights: “But by calling it imperialism, Faroese politicians avoid entering the debate about women’s equality in their self-rule” (Bille, 2004). Bille thus called out Faroese

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8 Original: “Jeg kan ikke lide at andre udefra blander sig i dette. Det er et spørgsmål, som vi må klare selv.”
9 Original: “Muligheden for at ændre holdningen skal have udgangspunkt i Færøerne og ikke Danmark.”
10 Original: “Dette er utrolig næsvist, nærmest frækt. Et er at sige sin mening, noget andet er at blande sig aktivt. Jeg bryder mig ikke om principippet i, at Kamal Qureshi blader sig aktivt i færøske politiske forhold.”
11 Original: “De burde have andet at tage sig til end at blande sig i færøske anliggender. Debatten fremtvinger kun nogle rabiate synspunkter, som ikke gavner nogen. Vi skal hurtigst muligt have lovgivningen på færøske hænder.”
12 Original: “At det nationale hensyn kommer før menneskerettighederne. Vi har ikke fået én eneste positiv reaktion fra færingerne og har kun mødt modstand over hele linjen. De fokuserer på metoden fremfor indholdet af diskussionen. For os drejer det sig om kvinders rettigheder. Vi kæmper også for blandt andet somaliske pigers rettigheder i Danmark, men vi må bare ikke tale om færingen, for så handler det pludselig om nationalisering og ikke ligestilling.”
representatives as using the asymmetry of the Danish kingdom in their favour, and as a foil for the rightful critique of Faroese politics on reproductive rights.

The day after the first article in Politiken ushered in the debate about who could present a critique of the Faroe Islands, another article by the same journalist was published. Compared to the other articles I have quoted up to this point, which were short stubs mainly based on quotes, Line Prasz’s article “Lukket land” (En. A closed off country) is structured around a visit to the Faroe Islands, where the situation is described through her own experience (Prasz, 2003b). Line Prasz writes about her attempt to find and interview Faroese people with experience of abortion (Prasz, 2003b). Describing her trip to the Faroe Islands, Prasz refers to her ethos as a journalist in having done her research:

_I have arrived in the Faroe Islands for the first time, and with my bag full of research from the desk back home. In three days, I will write the story on the Faroese abortion legislation, find someone willing to tell their personal story and feel the pulse of Faroese sexual morality. That should not be a problem. They speak Danish, have Danish television and Tórshavn is comparable to a medium-sized Danish provincial town._ (Prasz, 2003b)

The paragraph presents as a caricature of the investigative reporter, who in retrospective irony and realisation of the complexity of the situation, admits that the project was overly ambitious. Defining irony as intentionally stating the opposite of the apparent fact to an audience where at least one person recognises the rhetorical device, the contradiction between securing a sensitive story and an ambitious analysis during a short stay and

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23
casually claiming that it will not be a problem, would without intended irony seem naive (Fahnestock, 2011, pp. 114–116). Prasz afterwards admits to expecting that getting a personal story might be hard, since it is a sensitive subject, but elaborates that she has gotten the number of a woman who has had an abortion. Describing how the woman seems surprised when she calls, demanding to know where Prasz got her number, the irony fades, while for Prasz it becomes an occasion to describe the secrecy and fear that permeates the small, close-knit Faroese society, which she frames as the reason for not securing a proper interview.

_Fear sometimes results in the fact that sensitive issues like abortion are not being debated. The Equality Council has not taken a stance on the question yet. The Faroese Minister of Justice refers to this sensitivity when he does not wish to comment, and the Faroese woman who went to Denmark to have an abortion withdraws, and does not want to participate anyways._ (Prasz, 2003b)

From my interpretation of the article, I do not conclude that fear is the reason that no one spoke to the journalist: improper research and limited preparation for the short visit seems like a more immediate hurdle; one the audience was invited to laugh about earlier. It seems less like the woman Prasz calls withdraws than she never offered her story in the first place. The potential lack of irony also reflects a point I want to make through my further analysis: that this coverage is not intended for a Faroese reader, who might not share the common ground of comparing the Faroe Islands to a medium-sized provincial town, where they speak Danish anyways. Irony would border on provocation, if a Danish reporter presented the situation in this manner to a Faroese audience.

The article is reminiscent of the historical image of an anthropologist, who prepares from her own office chair at home, and expects the tribe she studies to go about their business as if she were not there. While getting anyone to speak about their abortion in the Faroe Islands can be difficult, it became possible for later journalists visiting the Faroe Islands, as my analysis shows. But the Faroese abortion rights movement Frítt Val has also criticised attention from Danish journalists as “sensationalist” and “tabloid” journalism, which assumes that the Faroese need to be saved (Frítt Val, n.d.). Prasz’s article is an example of how not to ignore your own position as a Danish journalist in the Faroe Islands and reflects the way the Faroese situation is conveyed to make sense to a journalist, who reads it from their own perspective, and with a blind eye to what is going on and what their presence does to the narrative. It is a most strikingly off interpretation of how to conduct journalism in other cultures than your own, and though the irony can seem like an acknowledgement of this, it is a stark illustration of how journalistic practice can conflict with a situation when the journalist does not approach their coverage as reflecting and embedded within its wider political setting.

The textual corpus

The artefacts comprising my textual corpus for analysis consist of material from 2013 to 2023, aired or published up to five years before or after 2018 when the Faroe Islands took over jurisdiction of abortion legislation. Since this political decision was announced already in 2015 its effects were discussed in the media before the actual transfer occurred. The media formats are radio and newspapers, in the form of radio programmes (Ingrisch & Jeppesen, 2017; Knudsen, 2018a, 2018b; Libak & Svejstrup, 2018, p. 24), podcasts (Gaardmand, 2013; Schmidt, 2021), features (Drivsholm, 2022; Munk, 2018; Winsløv & Helmann, 2021) and news articles (Astrup, 2021; Meesenburg & Maach, 2023; Tanholdt & Rosenkilde, 2022). Television has not been a central platform for discussing the issue, which is why no artefacts represent that medium. Representing a variety of genres and formats, the governing argument for constructing these as my textual corpus is that they are produced by professional journalists, who make use of sources and deal with the
contemporary Faroese abortion rights situation, and throughout my analysis I will present the artefacts individually.

**Abortion as critical prism**

In this thesis, I present abortion rhetoric as a theme which reflects its wider political setting, and thus I am approaching abortion as a prism for discourse about the Danish kingdom pertaining to the Faroe Islands. The etymology of the word *nation* addresses this link directly as it is derived from *nasci* meaning *to give birth*, which can serve as an abstract connection between reproduction and geography, with my study being a concrete exploration of it. My claim is that arguments about Faroese abortion rights illustrate an othering discourse of the Faroe Islands as a Danish contrast, through the shared structural logics of abortion rhetoric and colonial discourse, and is further emphasised by journalistic choices. This intersection of geopolitics and biopolitics is enacted through rhetoric, which I explore to interrogate how the abortion issue reflects an ideology of the Danish kingdom present within contemporary journalism and how it engages with an issue of conflict and criticism.

**Liberalisation and illegality: The legislative difference**

No matter how comparable or different the two nations are presented rhetorically, the fact of the matter is that their abortion legislations differ. This difference is testament to normative differences even between neighbouring countries, and while the Faroe Islands represent one end of the legislative spectrum, the gap between the Faroese situation and the principle of liberal abortion in Denmark is occupied by a multitude of differently organised abortion systems.

The World Health Organization’s (WHO) Global Abortion Policies Database is organised to show a comparison between nations based on several factors: national policies which allow abortion upon the request of the pregnant person; which legal grounds and gestational limits are required; additional requirements for access to safe abortion;
clinical and service delivery aspects; and the right to conscientious objection from medical personnel (World Health Organization, 2023). Another basic difference to legislations is whether they fall under a country’s criminal law, meaning that abortion is fundamentally illegal (except in certain cases), as in the Faroe Islands; or that abortion is legislated under medical laws, civil rights acts or other legislation, which presents abortion as a fundamental and legal right, as in Denmark. Other countries with legislations comparable to Denmark are Sweden and Norway, which permit abortion on request of the pregnant person, while countries comparable to the Faroe Islands are Finland, Great Britain and Italy, where abortion is covered by criminal law, but permitted on several indications or legal grounds. I mention these to underscore that even countries which are perceived to have liberalised abortion laws might technically have laws comparable to the Faroe Islands, which in practice however are enacted differently. Irish citizens have been able to travel to Great Britain for abortions, while Italian medical professionals can conscientiously object to performing abortion, thus severely limiting citizen’s access to abortion (De Zordo, 2023). In sum, to separate the world into countries who either have legal abortion or have a ban on abortion is simplistic and does not reflect the complex landscape people have to navigate.

The indications which make abortions legal in different countries, which technically ban abortion, differ from place to place.\textsuperscript{15} The Faroese law permits abortion when: the pregnant person’s health or life is at risk (including both physical and mental health), the pregnancy is caused by criminal conduct (rape or incest), when foetal impairment is present or a risk, or when the intellectual or cognitive disability of the pregnant person renders them as somehow unfit for parenting (Abortlógin, 1956). In addition to the legal framework providing or limiting the civil right to abortion, many factors play into the

\textsuperscript{15} The Global Abortion Policy Database provides the following list, which covers all indications presented on a global level: Economic or social reasons, foetal impairment, rape, incest, intellectual or cognitive disability of the person pregnant, mental health, physical health, health.
actual access an individual has to abortion care (Hermannsdóttir, 2022; Sethna et al., 2013). Legislations are interpreted differently, while geographic and cultural factors play a role, and actual abortion practices may differ drastically from policy. This is a narrative present in discourse on the Faroese abortion law: it is restrictive on paper but might be interpreted much more leniently in practice (Javnaðarflokkurin á Fólkatingið, 2017, 2022). The official data on abortion rates in the Faroe Islands have traditionally been based on abortions performed in the Faroe Islands, but the most recent report on Faroese abortions, featuring new data from the Danish Ministry of Health, triples that number by including Faroese women having abortions in Denmark: in 2016 the numbers would amount to approximately 39 abortions per 1000 births, when using only Faroese statistics, to 125 abortions per 1000 births, when Faroese people registered in Denmark are included (Javnaðarflokkurin á Fólkatingið, 2022). Compared to the neighbouring countries, these numbers are still lower, with Denmark reporting 230 abortions per 1000 births, and Finland having 177 abortions per 1000 births, but it needs to be mentioned that Faroese people do not only have abortions in the Faroe Islands or Denmark.

The spatiotemporal hierarchisation of biopolitical regimes

The study of abortion, sexual and reproductive rights rhetoric is a multifaceted and ever-expanding area. Milestones in European abortion rights research, such as the Europe Abortion Access Project, which includes perspectives on abortion migration in Central and Southern Europe, acknowledge the intra-national creation of abortion landscapes (De Zordo, 2023; Sethna et al., 2013). Analytical frameworks on abortion governance and protest logics are also contextualised in national policy, and emphasise the nationalist, political and civic consequences and possibilities which abortion rhetoric entails (Beynon-Jones, 2013; De Zordo et al., 2017; Smyth, 1998). The fact that abortion governance is deeply embedded within national governance should be a central premise when engaging rhetoric of the kind I analyse.

Scholarship on abortion discourse in Denmark takes this into account in different ways, and Sniff Andersen Nexø’s PhD thesis Det rette valg (En. The Right Choice) is a central
conceptualisation of the interplay of national governance of reproductive power and choice with how the Danish abortion legislation came to be, arguing that the Danish biopolitical discourse on abortion in the 20th century changed from being framed as a necessary evil to a necessary liberty (Nexø, 2005). Recent research on the Danish abortion situation has focused on late term abortion rights, where applicants are faced with conditions comparable to the Faroese situation, and must be granted permission after the 12th week of gestation — a practice without transparency and legal clarity for practitioners, involving conflicted and ambiguous moral labour for applicants and health care personnel (Heinsen, 2022; Petersen, 2022).

None of these take the Faroese situation into account, and my project is a contribution to the budding field of Faroese abortion rights and rhetoric research: a field which I claim both illuminates the concrete experiences and consequences of a localised practice and adds perspective to international scholarship. In the first academic study of Faroese abortion experiences, Turið Hermannsdóttir has analysed the local abortion landscape as a field for reproductive manoeuvring, where silence about abortion is presented as the main means for accessing both Faroese and reproductive citizenship (Hermannsdóttir, 2022). The Faroese abortion rights movement similarly exemplifies the restricted space for reproductive manoeuvring, but offers valuable insight into how the resistance rhetoric of social movements can be theoretically conceptualised (T. Nolsøe, 2023).

Whilst scholarship on Faroese and Danish abortion rights and rhetoric hitherto has explored the two contexts separately, I analyse their interplay. Defining the rhetorical situation as going beyond the national, and considering it a geopolitical intersection with the biopolitical, I emphasise the interrelational aspect of Faroese-Danish politics, and claim that Faroese abortion rights and especially its rhetoric is interwoven with the islands’ status as a self-governing territory in the Danish kingdom.

A central theoretical starting point for the elaboration of the biopolitical struggle over abortion rights in a geopolitical context is Nathan Stormer’s exploration of American medical discourse on abortion as a Sign of pathology (2015), or as a sign of civilisation
which I will engage and expand upon. Stormer’s scholarship on abortion rhetoric includes several poignant reflections on reproductive discourse and abortion rhetoric’s intersection with social and deliberative spaces (Stormer, 2000, 2010).

In *Sign of Pathology* Stormer’s analysis of medical rhetoric on abortion from the 1800s to 1960s emphasises how abortion rhetoric reflects ideological struggles far beyond the right to terminate pregnancies: “Certainly, the health and well-being of women is at stake in abortion’s regulation and the fate of unborn embryos as well, but more broadly so are relations between genders, classes, races, immigrants, citizens and religions” (Stormer, 2015, p. 2). How local practices, their legality and rhetoric reflect their ideological entanglements is very much at the core of my thesis. Stormer focuses on American medical rhetoric and how it evolved and became a medium for discussing other cultural and societal changes and developments, such as immigration and increasing presence of racialised populations, and he makes a point of delimiting his analysis, since national situations differ greatly. But the centrality of the themes addressed, and “the pivotal status of pregnancy, how prenatal space was governed became a heuristic for stratifying more or less advanced regimes of living on a timeline of civilization. This is especially apparent within biomedical rhetoric about abortion.” (Stormer, 2010, p. 10). While acknowledging the necessity of avoiding simplified comparisons, I find my case to be an argument for the further applicability of Stormer’s conclusions. For what happens when the central dynamics in abortion rhetoric intersect with the overarching dynamic of asymmetrical geopolitical relationships? How does the norm of civilisational evolution in reproductive and sexual rights discourses affect or become affected by transnational discourses of power? The norm of civilisational evolution, or the hierarchisation of competing biopolitical regimes, is reflected in Stormer’s point, about how physicians and later the general population employed abortion as a signifier of a society’s distress:

*Specifically, medical experts constituted the occurrence and possible harm of abortion as a sign of pathology, by which I mean a measure of an afflicted society, one that threatens itself by interfering with pregnancy because of cultural stresses, limitations, and negative influences. Physicians made the state of affairs regarding abortion into a*
Abortion is, when problematised, a symptom of societal illness, a marker of stunted growth or lack of development as it is normatively presented by its critics. Both by those opposing liberalisation and those in favour. Being in favour of reproductive freedom also entails the positioning of oneself as more healthy or advanced than the other “with some physicians contending abortion befitted savagery of the past, and others contending criminalized abortion was a relic of outmoded moralism” (Stormer, 2010, p. 8).

The rhetorical capacity of abortion rhetoric thus reveals its status as “(...) a diagnostic of the contemporary moment is a modality for exerting power” (Stormer, 2015, p. 5). Abortion becomes the symptom of a diseased society, and defining how bad the illness is, becomes a tool in drawing a civilisational timeline or hierarchy between different cultures — or in my case, countries. The power struggle regarding abortion employs arguments of sickness, regression and decline, when the arguing party asserts why their biopolitical regime should reign over that of the opposing party. What is interesting is, as mentioned, that this dynamic is not solely related to anti-abortion rhetoric, for “abortion as evidence of the nation’s trajectory permeates even the most run-of-the-mill statements about abortion today, whether those arguments come from pro-life or pro-choice advocates” (Stormer, 2015, p. 18).

A central theoretical argument in this thesis is thus that the overlap between the spatiotemporal hierarchisation of abortion rhetoric and colonial discourse demands scrutiny, since both encompass a capacity to arrange different paradigms on an evolutionary scale of civilisation. If the biopolitical argument in this theoretical dyad is represented by Nathan Stormer’s *Sign of Pathology*, the geopolitical pillar is represented by David Spurr’s *The Rhetoric of Empire* (Spurr, 1993). To exemplify the rhetorical intersection, Spurr describes American journalism about African societies:
The condescending tone, which lectures Africans on how they should govern themselves (...) sets forth a single standard of economic and political organization to which all nations must aspire (...) there is the classification of nations according to their relative failure or success in meeting this standard, providing a hierarchy of political configurations while plotting these “evolving” institutions in the temporal dimension along a single line of development. African societies are more or less distant from the desired model according to how far they have advanced along this line. (Spurr, 1993, p. 62)

The discourse of power relations between nations is shot through with development terminology: central to the classificatory logic of colonial discourse is this organisation of contrasting situations on a temporal timeline, where the coloniser is placed as more advanced than the colonised. Returning to Stormer, he analyses different contexts with different immediate needs for controlling abortion legislation, but the governing thought across the cases is:

[The relentless connection of abortion to world historical place-in-time, which leads me to question why abortion presented physicians with a problem of emplacement, or rather displacement from a better future we should already be occupying, and how fundamental struggles about power and order were refracted through the practice. (Stormer, 2015, p. 3)]

This quote epitomises my research: as my analytical strategy will elaborate, the Faroe Islands are constructed as historical place-in-time, which allows journalists and sources to discuss the Faroese displacement from a better future, already occupied by Denmark. Which underscores how abortion rhetoric refracts the Danish and Faroese struggle about power and order in the Danish kingdom. Abortion is thus to be considered a discursive tool for defining a society as out of place or out of time, and deciding who has the power to amend this displacement. As my readings will show, Danish journalists reporting on Faroese abortion rights address and create this displacement more or less explicitly and use the Danish model as a more or less explicit ideal for the Faroese future. Above all, it
becomes a venue for conflicting ideologies of whether the Danish kingdom qualifies as a joint political sphere engendering a common public sphere for its countries, and who is admitted in and ascribed agency.

This macro political level is of course not the only relevant approach to abortion rhetoric. Nathan Stormer differentiates between the fight over abortion rights, meaning the immediate control over the right to end a pregnancy or not and what this means for reproductive agency; and the fight through abortion rights and how the control associated with reproduction becomes a medium for societal power (Stormer, 2015, p. 1). We can consider abortion to be a localised practice, where rights affect particular people, perhaps also engaged in a rhetorical struggle with others about how this localised practice should be. And we can consider abortion to be an arena for the wider governing of society, where norms and ideals are enacted through legislation and its discursive effects reflect a more general view of populations and politics. It is in this latter sense that abortion becomes the prism in which we can view and analyse the Danish kingdom. Abortion thus offers itself as a frame for analysing how the rhetoric of Danish journalists forms a Faroese place-in-time in contrast to a Danish place-in-time, and how the Danish past and present is compared to an imagination of a potential Faroese future. Or put differently, how the Danish abortion law is prescribed as an ideal which the Faroese abortion rights situation is compared to, and how the analysed rhetoric both tries to create a future in which these become similar, while expressing the perceived differences between the Faroe Islands and Denmark as places-in-time.

Defining colonial discourse

My approach to colonial discourse is informed by David Spurr’s theories in Rhetoric of Empire, but also draws on the arguments in Edward Said’s seminal Orientalism (Said, 1978; Spurr, 1993). Edward Said’s work and his critique of orientalism is often considered
the foundation of postcolonial studies as an academic discipline. In the book and his further research, Said focuses on the cultural politics of academic knowledge instead of the institutional and material consequences of imperial rule, and states the claim bolstering most postcolonial theory today; that colonisation involves not only physical but also epistemic violence (Said 1978; Young 2001, 383). The control exerted over the peripheries of an empire is not only based on military and economic intervention, but is also founded in a discourse of domination. The importance of Orientalism can be found in this argument, as it circumvents the diversity of economies, policies, and geographies in the postcolonial field and offers another schematic lens for understanding colonialism; through its language. Said’s argument resonates with rhetorical theory, and similar to Edwin Black’s argument that it is through discourse we can discern the ideology that functions epistemically and determines how someone views the world, the beliefs that structure colonialism are “encoded in the language which the colonisers speak and to which the colonised peoples are subjected” (Black 1970; McLeod, 2010, 44). Just like any other discourse of national stereotypes, this produces and reproduces assumptions of inherent difference between people of allegedly dissimilar cultures.

Said’s case example, illustrated through the title of his book, is how discourse has shaped the Western understanding of the so-called Orient and what defines this discourse — not all colonial discourses. A colonial discourse of the Faroe Islands will necessarily be different from what Said has studied, as the context and material conditions differ. It is thereby necessary to underscore that colonial discourse is not one single form, genre, or body of texts;

\[\text{\textsuperscript{16}}\text{ Apart from Said, postcolonial theory is often defined by the works of for instance Francois Fanon, Aimé Cesaire, Homi Bhabha and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. The themes represented in their scholarships is vast, but focuses much on the subjectivity of the colonised, their literature and negotiation of their marginalised status, the role of academia in representation and much focus is thus on the voice of the repressed. My focus is on the institutional rhetoric of much more vaguely imperial union and I study how the imperial centre depicts its agency and the status of its periphery.}\]
it may more accurately be described as the name for a series of colonising discourses, each adapted to a specific historical situation, yet having in common certain elements with the others. This series is marked by internal repetition but not by all-encompassing totality; it is a series that continues, in some forms, through what we call the postcolonial world of today (Spurr 1993, 1-2).

What I find necessary as well, is to define my focus on a specific aspect of discourse, to differentiate between persuasive language and subjectifying discourse — even if these are closely entangled and can be one and the same. While discourse, for instance in the form of constitutive rhetoric, simultaneously creates the subject positions it addresses, “not all constitutive rhetorics succeed” (Charland, 1987, 141). Not all forms of rhetoric manage to constitute their audience as always already enacting the second persona of their texts, but they still qualify as rhetorics — as modes of persuasion employing argumentative logics trying to create effects. When discourse on the other hand is approached through postcolonial theory indebted to a Foucauldian notion of subjectivity, I claim this is at the pre-suasive level, which Charland also analyses, but this level is not always the most relevant approach. Not all rhetorics succeed, and not all discourses have the capacity to describe and prescribe future action. In the Faroese case, as my analysis shows, the rhetoric at hand is often informed by a colonial logic of Danish supremacy over the Faroe Islands, but as will underscore it is not being universally acknowledged and it does not necessarily turn Faroese inhabitants into “subjects” (Foucault, 1982).

This distinction between persuasive language and subjectifying discourse, if I may simplistically distinguish in this way, is also a way of circumventing the epistemological paradox, which is expressed in critiques of Said’s works. Robert Nichols sums Said’s argument about the consequences of Orientalism as productions of knowledge and representations, which have served to:

(a) remove representational authority from non-Western peoples, (b) distort the images and forms of knowledge about them, (c) justify the ongoing physical-military colonization of their lands and resources, and, finally, (d) actually contribute to the
production of a new object of study—in this specific case, the ‘Orient’ (Nichols, 2010, pp. 119–120).

The paradox arises between argument (b) and (d) as the apparent claim is that colonial discourse distorts an image and creates it at the same time. In Nichols’ words: “How can discourse be said to both ‘create’ its object of study and, at the same time, be a ‘misrepresentation’ or ‘distortion’ of the original object, thus serving to enable governance over the original?” (Nichols, 2010, p. 127). While this paradox reflects an ontological dissonance, the conflict between the two arguments reflects different discursive levels, and as a rhetorician, I could choose to either analyse the focused representation of a country and its people or see how they are constituted into being by discourse. Calling it focused representation instead of distortion is a way for me to address this discourse as rhetorical, meaning it is intentional or with an argumentative function, rather than discounting its rhetor’s objective as problematic misrepresentation. Exploring how the Faroese are constituted by discourse in the Danish kingdom would be a different project. As Said himself also asks,

(...) how can we treat the cultural, historical phenomenon of Orientalism as a kind of willed human work — not of mere unconditioned ratiocination — in all its historical complexity, detail, and worth without at the same time losing sight of the alliance between cultural work, political tendencies, the state, and the specific realities of domination?” (Said, 1978, p. 15)(original emphasis).

By emphasising willed human work, I claim that Said departs from parts of Foucault’s lines of argumentation and moves towards a common understanding of rhetoric as a form of intentional action. Not intentional in the sense that the rhetors whose language I analyse have set out to create a colonial image of the Faroe Islands, but that they are trying to advocate for a view of the Faroese abortion rights situation and to this end employ the available means of persuasion.
The Faroese position in the Danish kingdom

For Danish-speaking audiences tuning into podcasts or reading newspaper articles covering the Faroese abortion situation, prior knowledge about the politics and history of the Danish kingdom pertaining to the Faroe Islands might be slim or virtually non-existent. There has been an increased focus on the lack of knowledge in Denmark about the Faroe Islands and Greenland, leading to political prioritisations and funding opportunities for projects which can increase mutual knowledge and cultural exchange (Dansk Ungdoms Fællesråd, 2022; Statsministeriet, 2018). If there is public acknowledgement of the lack of basic knowledge, it is fair to assume that the particularities of the legal agreement and political history of the Danish kingdom are not common knowledge either. The Faroese relationship towards Denmark can, on the other hand, be hard to define, since the legal and political system is currently and historically difficult to compare to other transnational relationships, and I will in the following give a short historical account of the legal status and political agency of the Faroe Islands in relation to Denmark up to the present day.

Historical basis

The Faroe Islands were inhabited by Norwegian settlers around the year 800, and while some scholars consider this a period of independence (Sølvará, 1997, 2003; Thorsteinsson, 1990, 1994), others underscore that the Faroe Islands were wholly integrated into the Norwegian kingdom from the dawn of their settlement (Wang, 1994). The Faroese Althing, called Løgting, was established around the year 900 and permitted all free men to gather and decide on societal and legal issues, and specifically Faroese laws are mentioned in written sources from the period (Sølvá, 2003, p. 149; Sørlie, 1965). As the Norwegian monarchy developed its institutional organisation and centralisation this also affected the Faroe Islands to some degree, even though the islands kept their own laws. Eventually the Norwegian King Magnus Lagabøter compiled the varying jurisdictions and laws into one, Landsloven, which was implemented in the Faroe Islands in 1274. Historian Hans Andrias Sølvará points out how the Faroe Islands and the other North Atlantic dependencies were still not fully incorporated into the Norwegian monarchy, but any
comparison to modern concepts of state legislation and organisation would be amiss, since medieval government is incomparable to today’s concepts following for instance the Peace of Westphalia (Sølvará, 2003, p. 151). The description most commonly used is that referring to the Faroe Islands as a Norwegian tributary country (skatland), with “obligations to pay taxes to the Norwegian king, but in other matters were more loosely tied to the kingdom” (Sølvará, 2003, p. 152) (my translation).

With the establishment of the Danish-Norwegian empire in 1380, the transition towards becoming a Danish dependency slowly began. Administration of the Faroe Islands was moved alongside all other matters from Bergen to Copenhagen in 1620, but “the exceptional Faroese position” continued, and Sølvará continues to imply that the Faroe Islands were not considered an assimilated part of the Danish-Norwegian kingdom (Sølvará, 2003, p. 153). After the Napoleonic wars, and Denmark’s substantial losses and subsequent bankruptcy, Norway was conceded to Sweden, while the North Atlantic dependencies continued to be governed under Danish rule. The Faroe Islands thus became part of Denmark via Norway and the numerous events in Europe leading to the nation state formations we see today. The subsequent period and the constitutional changes in the 19th century were central in the development of the Danish kingdom, and as with the entire history of the Faroese-Danish relationship, the concepts used can be contested. Sølvará explains the consequences of the Danish-Norwegian segregation:

From a Danish perspective, these territories [the North Atlantic dependencies] were not considered by all as an integrated part of the Norwegian kingdom, but rather as Norwegian colonies, over which there was disagreement on whether to integrate fully into the Danish kingdom. In the beginning of the 1800s it was thus for colonial reasons decided that there was to be established separate legislative and administrative

Sølvará explains this as based on England’s political interest in the North Atlantic region, which would be more accessible via the weakened Danish state, than the powerful Swedish one (Sølvará, 2003, p. 154).
arrangements regarding the North Atlantic territories. (Sólvará, 2003, p. 155) (my translation)

What the so-called colonial reasons were, Sólvará does not explain in detail. In 1816, the Løgting was abolished by the Danish king, but historian Jákup Thorsteinsson warns against understanding the events of the period as “direct injustice performed by the Danish only towards the Faroese” (my translation), as all local or rural governments in Denmark, Norway and Iceland had been discontinued in the previous years (Thorsteinsson, 1994, p. 26). Instead, these were all small acts leading to the establishment of a new and updated form of rule, manifest through the Danish Constitution established in 1849. Thorsteinsson points out how the legal position of the North Atlantic parts of the Danish kingdom had been comparable to the African, West- and East Indian colonies.\(^{18}\) Still, the literature on the colonial history of Denmark does not unanimously consider the Faroe Islands a (previous) colony, which I elaborate on in the next section.

From 1816, the Faroese Løgting was dissolved and the Faroe Islands were administered as a Danish county without local government, but several instances underscore the continued exceptional position: it was stated already in 1813, that Danish laws could not be implemented in the Faroe Islands without individual registration (Da. tinglysning) in the six Faroese districts, and a Royal decree of 1821 stated that the Faroe Islands were considered a separate legal domain and awarded the Danish county governor (Da. amtmand) the opportunity to comment on legislature before it was implemented. In 1852, the Løgting was reinstated as an advisory body to the Danish government concerning Faroese matters. The county governor’s office was still in operation, he was still Danish and continued to be so until the establishment of the Home Rule Act of 1948, when his

\[^{18}\] Thorsteinsson’s only example of this is how the Protestant reformation was implemented in Iceland, and thus does not relay any consequences in the Faroe Islands.
position was discontinued and replaced with the function of the High Commissioner of the Faroe Islands (Da. rigsombud), which still exists, though with far less agency than any previous Danish official.

The Second World War brought on the central changes to the legal organisation of the Danish kingdom and implemented the political principles still in function today. While Denmark was occupied by Nazi-Germany during the war, the Faroe Islands were occupied by Great Britain (under Operation Valentine), which separated the two nations politically. The Løgting was therefore the chief government of the Faroe Islands between 1940 and 1945 meaning that the Faroe Islands experienced a brief period of total autonomy. This period of actual sovereignty, and the fact that Iceland had seceded from its personal union under the Danish king in 1944, led to a referendum in the Faroe Islands on the union with Denmark in 1946. On the 14\textsuperscript{th} September, 66.4 percent of the electors participated in the referendum on Faroese separation from Denmark, with a majority of 48.7 percent in favour versus 47.2 percent against (Østergaard, 2017, p. 49). The result was subsequently disqualified because of the low participation and very slim majority and the Løgting was dissolved by the Danish government, which issued an election and the new Løgting’s ensuing negotiations resulted in the Home Rule Act of 1948. An act which reflects the exceptional position of the Faroe Islands and the conflicted nature of the Danish realm; the act is sometimes referred to as unconstitutional, since the rights awarded the Faroese government are in contrast with the principles of the Danish Constitution defining the Danish state as uniform across regions, rather than a federative union (Justinussen, 2019; Østergaard, 2017, p. 35).

A central sentiment echoed in the preamble to the Home Rule Act is that it is a result of the negotiation between equal parties, and its central principle is the separation of the Danish and Faroese political domains (Heimastýrislógin (En. the Faroese Home Rule Act), 1948). The Faroe Islands had been governed by Denmark to a varying degree in the preceding period, but in 1948 the political subject matters of the islands were separated into a positively defined list of those transferable to the Faroese government, while the Transfer of Jurisdiction Act of 2005 presents a negatively defined list of those not
transferable without renegotiations of the principles governing the Danish kingdom (Yvirkokulógin (En. The Transfer of Jurisdiction Act, 2005))19. At the time of writing, all subject matters transferable to the Faroese government without negotiation have been transferred — including abortion legislation.

An atypical colony

The period from 1816 until 1948 (including some incidents before and after) is probably the most conflicted era of the Danish kingdom regarding the Faroe Islands, where several events can be referred to as colonial in nature. It marks the period when the Faroe Islands were subjected to the most direct influence of the Danish king and government, which coincides with the zenith of imperialism globally and ends around the same time as the decolonisation of former colonies globally begins. Compared to other countries (such as Greenland, India et cetera), the Faroe Islands were never officially defined as a colony as Sølvará’s comment about the islands’ “exceptional position” points to (Sølvará, 2003, p. 153). From 1816 to 1948, the Faroe Islands were officially defined as a county while having a local government, as the Løgting was reinstated with advisory agency from 1852. The events, statements and legislature of the period can be defined as distinctly dissimilar to those of official colonies since the exploitation of local resources and population was virtually non-existent. What complicates things further, however, is the polysemic nature and academic disagreement on what the terms colonialism, imperialism and related terms mean.

Colonialism as a term is sometimes used interchangeably with imperialism, and though the two are entwined and hard to disentangle, colonialism can be considered a practice within imperialism as the overarching concept (Gallaher et al., 2009). Imperialism has a long

19 These are: currency, the Supreme Court, citizenship, foreign affairs and defence, safety and military matters. Foreign affairs are subject to interpretation as the Faroe Islands represent themselves internationally to a larger extent than the act indicates.
history, covering several systems of government and organisation depending on the ruling nation, and takes its name from being a conglomerate of areas connected via trade to make up an empire. Colonisation is an economic practice on the periphery of this empire, while imperialism is the policy of its central state: an ideology of national power (Young, 2001).

Thus, the term imperialism draws attention to the way that one country exercises power over another, whether through settlement, sovereignty, or indirect mechanisms of control. (Kohn & Reddy, 2017)

There should not be any doubt about the fact that the Faroe Islands have been under Danish imperial rule — even if some scholars claim that “[i]mperialism seems to be a less relevant concept for Denmark than colonialism” (Østergaard, 2017, p. 60). Rather, the imperial practices of the Danish kingdom involved directly colonial enterprises in some territories, but not others. Denmark’s imperial past and present have received increased attention in recent years, marked for instance by the focus on the centennial of the sale of the Danish West Indies to the USA in 1917 through the five-volume publication of a colonial history of Denmark, *Danmark og kolonierne* (M. V. Pedersen et al., 2017). In its preface, its editors acknowledge the fact that Danish colonial history has in large parts been neglected and the lack of scrutiny in part stems from a self-image of being a small nation focused inwards (M. V. Pedersen et al., 2017).

In his historical introduction to postcolonialism, Robert Young lists the remaining colonial powers of 1945, where Denmark is regarded as one of the remaining 11 empires (Young, 2001, p. 3). Beginning with the independence of India in 1947, the process of decolonisation was swiftly effected throughout a large part of the world, and in 1953 Greenland’s status in the empire went from being a colony to becoming a Danish county.

20 Robert Young notes that the words “empire”, “imperial” and “imperialism” signify different things and have different histories; they still share etymology and stem from the Latin word *imperium* related to *imperare*: “to command” (Young, 2001).
Thus, resolving Denmark from being a colonial power, though it remains an empire. Young nonetheless operates with a list of terms signifying colonial status, including “dependent, trust and unincorporated territories, overseas departments”, where Greenland is still included, even though they obtained self-rule in 1979 (Young, 2001, p. 3). Though he does not mention the Faroe Islands, the purported colonial status of Greenland at the time of publishing, demonstrates that the definition of colonialism can be quite broad. Or rather, that there are numerous definitions.

In the simplest of definitions, colonialism is a form of domination, “the control by individuals or groups over the territory and/or behaviour of other individuals or groups”, where these groups can be considered heterogeneous (Horvath, 1972, p. 46). Another and more ideologically explicit definition of colonialism is of it as “the domination imposed by

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21 The majority of definitions almost all include a disclaimer and an acknowledgement of the complexity of the concepts. The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy points out that defining both colonialism and imperialism is confusing and difficult, but reflects the mentioned distinction between local exploitation by colonisers representing a foreign nation and the more indirect control of the empire’s centre (Kohn & Reddy, 2017). Norrie McQueen divides colonialism into its formal and informal kind, where informal colonialism was imposed on nominally independent nations such as Thailand and Ethiopia, while many of their neighbours were formal colonies; thus, reflecting another way of describing the difference between more and less direct control (McQueen, 2014, pp. xiv–xv). Ronald Horvath also separates the formal rule of others into the colonial presence of settlers, the imperial effect of distant rulers and different middle grounds (Horvath, 1972, p. 50).

22 Ronald J. Horvath, in his attempt to present “A Definition of Colonialism”, acknowledges the disagreement on a definition, and argues that the lack of a definition is due to 1) an insufficient cross-cultural perspective, where the tendency has been to stereotype certain models and not acknowledge that colonialism exists in all sorts of societies; 2) a lack of theoretical perspective, since a large part of colonial research has been within the humanities that has focused on idiographic perspectives; 3) a lack of flexibility in definitions to accommodate new findings; and 4) an ultraconservative attitude towards words and their meanings (Horvath, 1972, p. 46). According to Horvath, this domination can be divided into intergroup and intragroup domination, where the former refers to heterogenous groups, and is characteristic of imperialism and colonialism, and the other refers to homogenous groups, divided into societal stratas (as for instance the traditional feudal society), which is not relevant to the definition he wishes to make. The reason I mention this is that defining whether the Faroese have been and are a different nation to the Danish or whether they form a Danish region has been central in the discussion of the Faroese position in the kingdom, warranting either a centre-periphery, postcolonial or cryptocolonial understanding of the relationship (Simonsen, 2012).
a foreign minority, ‘racially’ and culturally different, over a materially weaker indigenous majority in the name of a racial (or ethnic) and cultural superiority” (George Branding, quoted in Spurr, 1993, p. 5). Colonisation can refer to two different activities: one is the transfer of communities or the settlement of a foreign land by colonisers that hold some sort of allegiance to their original culture; the other is a foreign power’s rule over an indigenous population and extraction of its resources. The Faroe Islands were inhabited by Norwegian settler colonialists, whose descendants have been the Faroese population for the last 1000+ years, who do not qualify as an indigenous people, even if we can discern between native Faroese and foreign Danish inhabitants.

Colonialism can also be defined by its consequences and the ideology legitimising them. Jurgen Osterhammel defines colonialism as occurring when “an entire society is robbed of its historical line of development, externally manipulated and transformed according to the needs and interests of the colonial rulers” and also refers to colonial rule as illegitimate foreign domination (2010, p. 15) (original emphasis). The legitimacy on the other hand rests on the notion that the subjugated others need this domination, which is the burden the coloniser has the privilege of carrying. The traditional defence of imperialism and colonisation, which became necessary as their zenith in the 19th century coincided with the development of principles of equality and universalism, was that it qualified as a civilising mission, “which suggested that a temporary period of political dependence or tutelage was necessary in order for ‘uncivilized’ societies to advance to the point where they were capable of sustaining liberal institutions and self-government” (Kohn & Reddy, 2017). This hierarchisation or spatiotemporal rhetorical organisation of nations is, as already mentioned, central to my theoretical approach to Danish journalism about Faroese abortion rights.

The mentioned series on Danish colonial history in five volumes, Danmark og Kolonierne, includes the Faroe Islands in the first volume titled Danmark, while the other four are devoted to separate colonies. This division serves as an example of how the Faroe Islands are not classified with Denmark’s other former colonies (M. V. Pedersen et al., 2017). The authors’ argument for this is the fact that the territory was colonised long before the
period usually considered the era of colonisation and that the population was not treated as “ethnically or culturally” different from the Danish (M. V. Pedersen, 2017, p. 6). This excludes the Faroe Islands from fitting the category, despite them fitting the criteria of being overseas and administered differently than the territory and population of Denmark. Historian Uffe Østergaard points to a traditional indicator of whether a country was a Danish colony or not being whether its people’s “ethnicity, heritage, and well, skin colour” was different from the colonisers’ and thus emphasises the racist presumptions informing Denmark’s colonial past which might be uncomfortable to mention today (Østergaard, 2017, pp. 33–34). The Faroe Islands are still regarded as somewhat in the middle, by not being defined as a colony but being treated as one for long periods of time — and “will serve as a mirror for considering what the word colony means” according to the anthology’s authors (ibid.).

This is a principle reflected in my analysis, but unlike Østergaard, Pedersen et al. and others (e.g Simonsen, 2012), I do not find it necessary to claim that the Faroe Islands have not been a colony. The central aspect defining colonialism is the heterogeneity of asymmetrically organised geopolitical relationships, or the perceived difference between two populations as legitimisation of either’s superiority over the other. Though very few of the traditional consequences of colonial rule appear to have occurred in the Faroe Islands, I still find the dynamic described relevant; for no matter how the imperial past is interpreted, postcolonial insights into how asymmetrical geopolitical relationships have been maintained and challenged, both materially and discursively, are relevant for understanding the rhetoric of Faroese abortion rights in the Danish media.

My central point nonetheless is that no matter what the Faroe Islands historically have been or politically are now, rhetoric about the Faroe Islands, as exemplified in my analysis, presents Denmark as a superior power with ideal politics obliged to aid the Faroe Islands in overcoming issues. And uses language which distances the Faroe Islands in time and place in order to make sense of cultural difference, resulting in an othering, which might contribute to a Danish self-image of being morally superior. This form of action reflects the internal logics of colonial discourse, in that it bolsters and is based on the internal
image of Denmark, while attempting to affect the situation regarding abortion rights in the Faroe Islands.

But, and this is my central rhetorical argument regarding the potential of journalism, the main pitfall of this form of reporting is not only its problematic depictions and their consequences for the respective national images of the Faroe Islands and Denmark; it fails to realise its potential as advocacy by misreading the situation and which audience has the means to mediate change.

**Overview of the thesis**

The political history of the Faroese position in the Danish kingdom, previous instances of Danish media coverage of abortion rights and the structural logics of abortion rhetoric and colonial discourse compose my theoretical exploration of this case. In the next chapter I define my analytical strategy, based on the deictic field comprised by markers of references to *when*, *where* and *who* in the artefacts, which will concurrently be analysed as journalistic tools and topoi.

The three chapter of analysis which follow emphasise each deictic marker as analytical concept addressing their individual research subquestion. Reformulated in to *Time*, where I analyse temporal discourse and discuss the overlapping notions of development in colonial discourse and abortion rhetoric; *Place*, where I analyse the spatial imagination of the Faroe Islands as a place and discuss how national and bodily autonomy is represented; and *Authority*, where I analyse the positioning of journalists and sources and discuss what position an audience is offered. My analyses are then condensed into a discussion of the rhetorical audience in the textual corpus, where I include ethnographic perspectives on practices of representation and positionality.
Notes on terminology

As all translations in this thesis are mine, I will elaborate on some choices regarding terminology and idioms, as these reflect both the ideology of their rhetors and my own. I have no education as a translator and sparse professional experience, but as a bilingual writing in my third language, I am used to transporting semantics and rhetoric between Faroese, Danish and English, and hopefully the following accounts properly for how:

“Fri abort”: liberal abortion

Danish rhetoric on abortion is epitomised by the idiom *fri abort*, an abbreviation of the term *den frie abortret* (literally: the free abortion right) and the phrase *at sætte aborten fri i* (literally: *to set abortion free*). Though *fri* in Danish and *free* in English are etymologically related, the Danish word only denotes “with little or no restrictions” as in *libre*, in contrast to the English adverbial meaning of “with no monetary cost” or *gratis*. This distinction makes it hard to translate the term, which functions as both slogan, legal term and vernacular definition of the Danish practice, and ultimately qualifies as an ideograph in Danish (McGee, 1980). To emphasise the denotation of freedom, I have chosen to translate *fri abort* to *liberal abortion* to provide a concise phrase which hopefully emphasises the central tenet of the Danish term: that agency and responsibility is awarded the patient not the doctor. Abortion on demand or by choice connotes different aspects of the idiom, which I claim would be misrepresenting the rhetor’s choice of word.

“Rigsfællesskabet”: the Danish realm

The most ubiquitous term for the national organisation between Denmark and the Faroe Islands in Danish is the term *rigsfællesskabet*; or *ríkisfelagsskapurin* in Faroese. A paradoxical combination of terms, best translated to the *imperial community* or *imperial union*, which thus combines the vertical hierarchy of empires with the horizontal organisation of a community. In *Danmark og kolonierne*, Uffe Østergaard alludes to the term’s paradoxical nature, and the fact that it was originally disqualified by lawyer Alf Ross, who drafted the Home Rule Act of 1948, favouring the term *rigsenhed* (En. *unity of empire*). When Greenland was drafting what was to become the country’s Home Rule Act
of 1979, rigsfællesskab was preferred (and had already been used by the Prime Minister’s Office in 1975), despite fællesskab (as community) usually denoting a community of equals (Østergaard, 2017, p. 34). These conflicts stretch back to the principles already mentioned informing the Danish Constitution as an equal union between separates implies a federation, which the Danish state is not. Østergaard still underscores how the Danish realm in no instance can be considered a unity, since the three countries are “fundamentally different regarding language, culture, climate and lifestyle” (Østergaard, 2017, p. 35). We will see this notion of contrast versus union echoed throughout the coverage I analyse.

“Det danske kongerige”/ “Kongeriget Danmark”: the Danish kingdom

My choice to use the term the Danish kingdom throughout the thesis reflects the fact that rigsfællesskabet is not an official term, and is translated in many different ways. While the Danish Prime Minister’s Office uses unity of the Realm, the Danish realm is a common phrase, while some translations propose it as commonwealth. The technical differences between these terms are relevant when trying to define the legal formation between Denmark, Greenland and the Faroe Islands, but for the sake of brevity and practicality, I will use the official term, the Danish kingdom. Even if it might sound more imperial than the common vernacular of the realm, this thesis addresses just that, and it serves as a reminder that the Danish-Faroese relationship is hard to translate.
Analytical strategy: Deixis and the I/Here/Now

Abortion, as stated above, is used discursively for defining a society as out of place or out of time, and deciding who should have the power to amend this displacement and how it has come about are the central conflict and issue I explore. Stormer points out, in reference to American physicians, that:

[T]hey made it possible to use abortion as a means of inhabiting time. We know “where” and “when” we are, based on how common and dangerous the practice is. Are we civilised or not? Are we advancing or sliding backwards? (Stormer, 2015, p. 5)

My analytical focus is this general capacity of abortion rhetoric and how it involves the spatial and temporal placement of society, a “where” and a “when”, employed to laud and condemn abortion practices as an indicator of a society’s health or lack thereof. With the geographical location of the Faroe Islands as distant and apart from Denmark, journalistic descriptions of the Faroe Islands in general rest heavily on descriptions of geographical factors, as placement, environment and landscapes both act as background and are being foregrounded in reporting on Faroese issues and politics. Together with authority (established by journalists and sources), time and place make up a triad of interacting themes, which my thesis’ structure reflects in the form of a concept-oriented criticism (Jasinski, 2001). As critical and theoretical concepts, these “do not provide a process but furnish a language for analysis” (K. H. Wilson, 2020, p. 284). Or as James Jasinski pointed out in his seminal text about conceptual criticism, they are intermediary concepts which function “as a way for the critic to organise her or his thinking about the relationship between power and discursive practice” (Jasinski, 2001, p. 256). As sub themes to the overall prism of abortion, the rhetorical figurations of time, place and authority are the central organising principle of my analysis, both because they reflect a basic linguistic structure and interrogate central theoretical discussions.

I have found Allison Prasch’s employment of deixis productive in exploring how notions of place intersect with rhetors’ authority and the temporal aspects of their rhetoric (2016).
In her development of a rhetorical theory of deixis, Prasch presents Karl Bühler’s definition of the “concrete speech situation” as consisting of an “I” or person doing the speaking; a “here” or location of the event; and a “now” which addresses a point in time. Though the concept of the deictic field, comprised by this intersection of the “I/here/now”, stems from linguistics, Prasch highlights the particular ability of rhetorical studies in exploring how these relational, spatial and temporal axes implicate each other, and importantly, that “[a] rhetorical approach to deixis does not simply identify these coordinates; it asks why they are there, what they symbolize, and how this symbolization constitutes specific audiences, geopolitical realities, ideologies, and ways of being in the world” (Prasch, 2016, p. 167). As Nathan Stormer also identifies, “[w]e know ‘where’ and ‘when’ we are, based on how common and dangerous the practice is”, and also uses the first-person plural pronoun to express the self-examination represented in questions about local reproductive practices and if they are signified to express civilisational advancement or decline (Stormer, 2015, p. 5). The discussion about reproductive rights seemingly necessarily elevates beyond the individual, whose life-situation is affected by government policy, to a principal discussion about what this policy means for an us or them as a people, society or nation.

Deixis relates directly to rhetoric, and while it is expressed etymologically in the genre of epideictics, functions in a broader sense of argumentation as well, as its literal Greek meaning is “to show” and relates to the display of what a rhetor has found to be her available means of persuasion (Prelli, 2021). In my case, where this rhetoric of display is set in the context of political journalism, the use of place, time and sources are particularly relevant, as “[t]his approach allows the critic to identify where and how the speaker uses language to activate the scenic or situational elements of the immediate historical and sociopolitical context for his/her persuasive purposes” (Prasch, 2016, p. 169). This persuasive purpose might not be explicated in journalism, but as I argued in my introductory chapter, persuasion and advocacy can be elements in journalism even if they are not foregrounded. To elaborate on this governing idea of journalism as a form of rhetoric, and to quote the American Press Institute, “the foremost value of news is as a utility to empower the informed” (American Press Institute, 2023). Honing in on the
explicit purpose, extracted from Bill Kovach and Tom Rosenstiel's *The Elements of Journalism* (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2001), the API states:

>The purpose of journalism is thus to provide citizens with the information they need to make the best possible decisions about their lives, their communities, their societies, and their governments. (American Press Institute, 2023)

This emancipatory purpose supports the rhetorical take on advocacy in journalism that I began this thesis by outlining. To make the conjunction clear, journalism can be persuasive in the sense that it can urge audiences to act, be it as internal reflection or outwards deliberation and constituting civic life is very much a rhetorical discipline (as explored by, for example, Asen, 2004; Villadsen & Kock, 2014, 2017).

**From physical setting to mediated text**

The focal points of my analysis reflect the conceptual triad of deixis, which Prasch in her analysis elaborates into a focus on authority and ethos, spatial and place-based rhetoric and temporal discourse (Prasch, 2016). As a guiding structure, this organisation is also relevant in cases dissimilar to Prasch’s own analysis, in which the immediate audience of a verbal situation, and the material aspects of attending at a physical location affect the situation. Since the emphasis on materiality is relevant and engages with contemporary discussions of discursive versus material agency, which I return to, I wish to underscore that a rhetorical theory of deixis also supports analysis of mediated and written rhetoric as a productive tool in criticism of discourse.

Jeanne Fahnestock’s definition of deixis relates to the linguistic approach to the notion of *actual physical and temporal setting*, “[b]ut in rhetorical discourse, the actual setting can be less important than a scene created for persuasive purposes” (Fahnestock, 2011, p. 334). These definitions and uses of deixis invite a discussion of how the material matters versus how it is made to matter, which I return to when describing my analytical strategy of *Place*. But in contrast to Prasch’s elaboration of how deictic indicators help critics
pinpoint how speakers activate physical elements of the speech situation as a material means of persuasion, I do not consider the physical elements represented in the artefacts to be material means, since they are mediated to an audience. The scholarly moves towards and beyond new materialism(s) are necessary and beneficial to the rhetorical field's discussions of what rhetoric is and does, while creating a space for discussing what this movement does to rhetorical notions of agency. Though it can seem like a regressive step for the theory which Prasch advocates rhetorician’s move towards, the interweaving of matter and discourse and the critic’s position towards these is an essential and continued aspect of rhetorical studies.

“Now”: Pressing issues and temporal hierarchisation

Timeliness and relevance merge foundational components of rhetoric and journalism: “Deixis (...) encourages the critic to read a text within its particular historical moment while also accounting for how the meaning of a ‘moment’ can shift over time, in and through rhetorical action” (Prasch, 2016, p. 173). As news criteria, timeliness and relevance are qualifiers of journalistic production, a central component of what news is (Galtung & Ruge, 1965; Harcup & O’Neill, 2017; Schultz, 2007). Scholarship on time in journalism addresses these multilayered concepts of what time does to journalism and journalism does to the audience’s understanding of time (Bødker & Sonnevend, 2018).

Time is, of course, a practical constraint in journalistic practice, while my focus is on how time is constructed rhetorically, spoken of or written:

*On the one hand, [writing time] can refer to the practical, urgent fact of the deadline: it is time to write, to get your stuff ready for delivery. On the other hand, there is the sometimes more, sometimes less obvious understanding that something about temporality is said, or implied, or assumed, in just about anything you offer to your audience.* (Hannerz, 2012, p. 209)
While time pressure and similar temporal constraints for the work of journalists is part of the final result, my focus is on how time is represented rather than regimented (Hannerz, 2012, p. 209; Hermann, 2020). Ulf Hannerz defines three different types of writing or representing time: journalism which focuses on the short-term history of individual events; the medium term history or “conjunctural history”; and the long-term history or *longue durée* (Hannerz, 2012, p. 214). This organisation reflects the narrative time period the reporter includes as events can take minutes, decades can create paradigmatic periods, while news stories can reflect on centuries of development. Though this taxonomy is just as constructed as the subject matter it organises, it offers a relevant perspective on the use of temporality in my study: Danish reporting on Faroese abortion rights might compartmentalise individual political events, reflect on years of abortion debates in the Faroe Islands as symptomatic of change, or construct a narrative which takes centuries of Faroese history and culture into the reflections of what the current time expresses. Or none of these. As Hannerz points out, the limited time (and space) for reporting still forces journalists “to make effective instant claims on audience memories, hoping to find the contexts for new items already available there” (Hannerz, 2012, p. 217). With the sparse knowledge about the Faroe Islands in Denmark, the ability to activate expansive memories in the general public might be limited, reflected in the forms of historical awareness found in the coverage.

Returning to Prasch’s operationalisation of rhetorical time as *kairos* or *chronos*, my analysis of time focuses on both the creation of momentum demanding action and the construction of historical trajectories which it takes place in. The two appear individually and in tandem, as historical narratives often make up the argument for why *now is the time*.

**Kairos**

Time in its actual manifestations, or lack thereof, is simultaneously plastic and determined, and even conceptual fixtures such as the rhetorical notion of kairos have a mercurial meaning:

53
The term has indexed diverse notions such as ‘symmetry,’ ‘propriety,’ ‘occasion,’ ‘due measure,’ ‘fitness,’ ‘tact,’ ‘decorum,’ ‘convenience,’ ‘proportion,’ ‘fruit,’ ‘profit,’ and ‘wise moderation’ (Sipiora 1), just as it has enabled granular distinctions between closely related notions like the “opportune,” the “appropriate,” and the “possible” (Poulakos). (Trapani & Maldonado, 2018, p. 278)

These synonyms and comparable terms narrow some understandings of kairos, and my analysis unfolds within an understanding of kairotic rhetoric as creating occasion, expressing fitness, and mediating between the appropriate and the possible. The kairotic element is, as my analysis shows, both present in the news stories as exigence for the encouragement of action, and in the descriptions of why others (such as local agents supporting or opposing abortion rights liberalisation) have found the current time right to mobilise. While the concepts of momentum, timeliness and kairos can seem to reflect Lloyd F. Bitzer’s argument that rhetorical situations occur discretely and offer or demand a rhetor’s response, journalism features a constitutive element of creating issues and events, rather than merely reporting on incidents occurring before or at the time of reporting, as “[j]ournalism is inextricably linked to social constructions of time” (Carlson & Lewis, 2019, p. 643). In their historical and conceptual analysis of the establishment of political journalism as a separate genre in Denmark, Ove K. Pedersen and Maja Horst define a shift from a focus on occurring events to reporting being a result of professional ingenuity, where events are created rather than found (Pedersen et al., 2000). This shift in the rhetorical agency of reporting reflects the dialectic between Lloyd F. Bitzer and Richard Vatz (1968; 1973), and I find it sufficient to underscore that kairos is thus just as much a rhetorical invention as it is an external constraint to the rhetoric at hand (Crosby, 2013). In my analysis of Time, I focus on this dialectic as the use of kairotic events, which emphasises how journalists situate their coverage of the Faroese abortion rights issue as fit for the occasion and advocate for the appropriate or possible means of action.
**Chronos**

Time also functions discursively in a *chronological* sense, where descriptions of civilisational development, progress or regression constitute arguments about the state of a society. Returning to Nathan Stormer’s point about how abortion rhetoric creates a civilisational timeline, the placement of one biopolitical regime as more advanced or more behind than another is an expected aspect of the artefacts I have analysed (Stormer, 2015). As it intersects with arguments about how power and agency is divided between countries in an asymmetrical geopolitical relationship such as the Danish kingdom, temporal discourse in a chronological sense shares this trait with colonial discourse and its positioning of “evolving” societies on a single line of development (Spurr, 1993, p. 62). A central argument undergirding my analysis is that no single line of development towards an ultimate ideal exists, especially not relating to reproductive rights, and that discourse informed by arguments which adhere to this singular development ideal reveals more about the speaker than the object of their discourse:

*Spatio-temporal distance of the kind we encounter is not to be read at face value, as an “actual” difference, but as an ideologically driven construction of the colonial subject as different, serving to buttress the Europeans’ understanding of themselves as modern and advanced.* (Helgesson, 2014, p. 553)

So while the rhetorical constructions of a rhetor’s antagonist and their norms for reproductive rights rely on illustrating them as old-fashioned, behind or otherwise lagging, the political context of my analysis highlights how Danish journalism presents Danish society as modern and advanced in contrast to the Faroe Islands. My analysis thus explores how time, in addition to bolstering the argument for why exactly *now is the time*, is used as an indicator for civilisational development and creates biopolitical hierarchies between those having the appropriate norms for reproductive freedom and those who do not. Ultimately as an argument for what should be done about this difference.
“Here”: Words and images of place

With what some have called the *material turn* in communication, or the acknowledgement that matter matters, discussing place, space and the situatedness of rhetoric has become a complex balancing of at times conflicting ontologies (Barad, 2007; Ratcliffe et al., 2002; Stormer, 2016), which I touched upon earlier since I relocate Prasch’s theory of deixis from analysing physical settings to mediated text. In contrast to the discursive acknowledgement, that what we call things affects what they do, the emergence of (new) materialist discussions of non-human agency demands a clear vocabulary on how I as a critic position myself in the landscape of analysing spaces and places (Endres & Senda-Cook, 2011; Middleton et al., 2011; Ott & Dickinson, 2019).

Place-based rhetoric

When I refer to autonomy in my thesis’ title, it is both in allusion to the rights-based versions granted to nations and bodies, in the form of discursive action that ascribes political and legal agency. For instance, when journalists and sources explicitly discuss how the Danish government can affect Faroese abortion legislation or not. But it also refers to the ways in which human autonomy is eclipsed by natural forces — or described as such –in the textual corpus. For instance, when the Faroe Islands are described as a geographically isolated country where wind and water have formed a culture which today hosts one of the most restrictive abortion legislations in Europe. To deny that matters such as natural environment and geography matters or creates meaning is impossible and not my point: I acknowledge rhetoric as an intertwined sensory and cognitive process, where thing-symbols generate both affect and discourse intra-actively (Barad, 2007; Ott & Dickinson, 2019, p. 54). But my reasoning for an agential cut focusing on the discursive aspect of these entanglements, rather than taking a new materialist perspective, is two-fold: Matter, in the form of majestic mountains, fjords and geographic isolation, is present for journalists visiting and sources in the Faroe Islands, but represented for audiences. Greg Dickinson and Brian L. Ott define the consequence of this important difference between presence and representation: “Whereas meaning entails representation and, thus, the cognitive ‘interpretation’ of the thing-symbol, presence
entails presentation and, therefore, the sensate ‘immediacy’ of the thing-symbol” (Ott & Dickinson, 2019, p. 76) The mere lack in presence effects is an argument to conceptualise my artefacts as mediated rhetoric — which can be equally as agential, considering the materiality of screens, newspapers and voices, but demands another study than mine.

Unlike presence, which demands immediacy, meaning eschews it. Representation works, after all, by gesturing precisely to that which is absent from the senses. The word “tree” does not expose the listener to an actual tree, but conjures a sense (understanding) of the thing to which it refers. Hearing the word “tree” and touching an actual tree, then, produce quantifiably different types of experience. This is not to say that spoken language is devoid of materiality. But in this example, matter-energy is present in the sound (aesthetic qualities) of the human voice speaking the word “tree.” What is immediately present to the senses is a voice, not a tree. (Ott & Dickinson, 2019, p. 77)

What is immediately present for the audience is journalism, not the Faroe Islands. Thus, my focus is not on how the material matters to Faroese culture, but how this relationship is rendered to an audience.

The materiality of Faroese geography is relevantly discussed in studies of Faroese cultural becoming. A recent analysis of religious concentration in the Faroe Islands discusses potential reasons for why Christianity has such a strong hold; one of these being the “economic, industrial and material upheavals” which changed Faroese society while Free Church movements arrived at the beginning of the 20th century (í Skorini et al, 2022, p. 104). Becoming a fishing nation meant greater losses of life at sea, where a shipwreck could mean a generation of men were lost in a village: “It is possible to imagine that this tragic reality has increased the demand for religion in general and a more personal and radical Christianity in particular” (í Skorini et al, 2022, pp. 104–105). When notable figures in Faroese society converted from Lutheran-Protestantism to, for instance, Brethren-Baptism, it can be expected to have supported this development (í Skorini et al, 2022, p. 105).
Faroese geography can thereby have mattered in Faroese religious history. As the authors of the article point out, this nevertheless does not account for the geographical polarisation of religious intensity in the Faroe Islands; and I will add, that it does not in itself account for why many Faroese are opposed to liberalising the abortion legislation. Recent surveys trace an increasing part of the Faroese population in favour of liberalising the abortion legislation; a change which might be related to the increase in public deliberation on the matter, which previous periods have not had.

The second reason for organising my focus on discourse, is an explicit consideration of the histories of romantic nationalist discourses, which arose by linking human identities to their geographic locations. This aspect will be elaborated in the analysis of Place, which is partially based on imagology as the study of national stereotyping, which acknowledges the essentialism inherent in describing national character (Leersen, 2007; 2016). To anticipate the themes, I explore through analytical concepts from both imagology and postcolonial theory, I will be questioning the propriety of making human meaning a derivative of material agency, when it is enmeshed with a discourse of Othering. While I do not discredit the ways majestic environments form humans, my focus is on the mediated form of relaying this acknowledgement, in order to address the essentialist-deterministic risk of discourses of materiality. Meaning that I analyse how descriptions of place are used to make sense of why some people are the way they are and why that is a problem. I draw on David Spurr’s rhetorical modes as presented in The Rhetoric of Empire, and focus on how Denmark and the Faroe Islands are classified as a union and separated, how their asymmetry is affirmed and the cultural difference of the Faroe Islands is naturalised in the textual corpus (Spurr, 1993).

This form of place-based rhetoric (Endres & Senda-Cook, 2011, p. 258) is present through visual images or verbal illustrations of how the Faroe Islands look or seem, and how the geography of the Faroe Islands plays a part in the journalist’s discovery of the place they report on. As evidentia or demonstratio deictically bringing the places and events verbally before the audiences’ eyes (Fahnestock, 2011, p. 335; Jørgensen, 2015, p. 31). The place-based rhetoric of the Faroe Islands is found in the use of landscape, the descriptions of
climate and other ways in which journalists and sources spatially make sense of the culture of the place.

Topoi: geopolitical spatialisation of place

My analysis of Place is of spatial discourse in place-based rhetoric. Though the notions of space and place are decidedly different (as discussed in e.g. Mitchell, 2002), I explore the geopolitical spatialisation of the Danish kingdom in discourses of the Faroe Islands as a place, and analyse how the Danish kingdom is represented spatially as geographically close, unified and asymmetrical and how the Faroe Islands as a place is defined by its environment of majestic nature, isolation and old-fashioned aesthetics.

To operationalise this exploration of place-based rhetoric, I focus on a classic location in rhetoric, namely the recurrent rhetorical figures in the textual corpus. Central for a theory of place in this sense, is the concept of rhetorical topoi, the Aristotelian term for commonplaces or points of invention, organisation, argumentation or thinking. Topics (the study of topoi) have been central to rhetorical study throughout its history as strategy for invention, which in reverse can be used for the critical mapping and analysis of content (Gabrielsen, 2008, 2014). Despite the long history and taxonomical approach often related to topics, the concept is still abstract and describes a plurality of rhetorical functions when either developing or analysing communication. A unifying understanding of the concept is that though rhetoric deals with the fact that any given case can be presented or understood in a myriad of ways, some perspectives or topoi are more recurrent or effective than others, and topical analysis is a way of tracing or discovering those. The potentially powerful function of topoi lies in their form, as they replicate and establish a preliminary common ground by (re)using discursive commonplaces.

Jonas Gabrielsen defines four primary perspectives on topoi, while underscoring that there is no one homogenous theory of rhetorical topoi (Gabrielsen, 2008, p. 19). In my case, I will focus on recurrent themes as collective topoi and recurrent structures as inferential topoi, in an attempt to understand what characterises content (such as
“nature”, “culture”, etc.) versus form (such as dichotomy, contrast and asymmetry), though this dichotomy in itself can be problematic. In my analysis I specify which thematic common places are prevalent in the analysed material and how they are organised and used to infer something about the Faroe Islands as a whole.

The collective topoi characterising coverage of the Faroe Islands can, for instance, be the focus on nature, further emphasised by visual components, which in many cases can seem to be added for an immediate aesthetic effect. Fjords and mountains are, of course, material staples in Faroese nature, but their employment in abortion journalism is characteristic and consistent enough to address its special significance. Collective topoi can also be characteristically Faroese objects such as buildings and specific locations, which visually and verbally assist in highlighting what is Faroese, while other features emphasise the Faroese-Danish relationship via discussions of the Danish realm or focus on its legal aspects. My analysis of recurrent themes is to underscore the repetition of words and images in a broad sense.

Inferential topoi on the other hand refer to the argumentative structures characterising the coverage of the Faroe Islands. My analysis of these as recurrent structures is of how the rhetorical structure of easily repeated images makes arguments, and what an audience is invited to infer from their relation. The Faroe Islands’ geographical isolation but spatial proximity to Denmark are examples of collective topoi, which are recurrent, and the latter is an inferential topos, when it bolsters arguments that the Faroe Islands ought to be similar to Denmark due to this proximity.

23 The separation of content and form is usually irrelevant in rhetorical studies, as neither is approachable without considering the other, but I find Gabrielsen’s definition fruitful when describing the difference between the two different phenomena. This is thus not to emphasise the difference between signifier and signified.
Thus, my intent is to specify which thematic common places are prevalent in the analysed material and how they are organised and used to infer something about the Faroe Islands as a whole.

“I”: Rhetorical authority and journalistic sources

The discursive status and positions of rhetors and how they reflect the I of the rhetoric analysed, will be explored through the concept of authority. The analysed material includes a host of different voices, with different roles, nationalities and functions in their given situations, ranging from medical doctors, politicians, activists and NGO-representatives to ordinary people with different experiences and opinions about abortion in the Faroe Islands. They all contribute to the way the Faroese abortion rights situation is discussed, and all are in some way invited to comment by the journalist(s) in charge.

The implied point of orchestration

My approach to the journalist as authority is informed by what Kathryn Kohrs Campbell describes as being “a point of articulation” (Campbell, 2005), and though the term authority might allude to problematic notions of the journalist as author, I by no means wish to reduce this position to a simple understanding of journalistic agency. A fitting conceptualisation, which anticipates my discussion of the implied audience, is Wayne Booth’s definition of the implied author as a discursive character who might share characteristics with its author, but remains a textual creation, serving the rhetorical intention inferred by audiences (Booth, 1983). Journalistic authority is analysed as ethos in the artefacts, for instance through uses of first personal singular and plural, explicit mentions of the journalists in the artefacts and how distinct voices versus omniscient narrators are different ways in which the journalists position themselves and offer their perspective to the audience.

While I analyse journalism, and Wayne Booth’s work relates to fiction, I find that a variety of theories of textual authority are relevant to access the forms and issues of the material at
hand. What James Clifford in regard to ethnographic authority calls the “virtuoso orchestration by a single author of all discourse in his or her text”, is another relevant understanding of the journalist’s position relating to sources and one I find complements Campbell’s argument about the rhetor as point of articulation (Clifford, 1988, p. 50).

Ethnography is another discipline, where rhetors orchestrate a host of voices, discourses and narratives, which are not their own, but are held accountable for the presentation of. Like in ethnography, certain forms and genres of journalism feature journalists as more or less immersed in a field which they report on, using either their own responses or those of a selection of representatives (Cramer & McDevitt, 2014; C. P. Wilson, 2019). By comparing journalism to ethnography, I also wish to emphasise the ethical dimension of interviewing and making the foreign legible to a domestic reader, whom the author shares some common ground with (Clifford, 1983, 2010; Hermann, 2016). It involves obligations to perform professional norms and transparency in order to present the collected knowledge as valid, which I will return to in my analysis and in the final discussion of which journalistic, rhetorical and ethical norms should undergird coverage of this sort.

Source authority and ethos as forum

As I will elaborate in my analytical chapter, I organise the sources in three groups as political representatives, expert sources and consequence experts (i.e. ordinary people)(Berkowitz, 2019; Fisher, 2018; Laursen & Trapp, 2021; Manning, 2001; Nørgaard Kristensen, 2004). This gives me a chance to chart the dynamic of political, discursive or vernacular agency and thereby ask, who is considered part of the deliberation on Faroese abortion rights. Approaching the individual artefacts as microcosms reflecting the political sphere of the Danish kingdom allows for a discussion of how journalism creates political fora or spaces for public deliberation across the Danish kingdom.

With my tripartite organisation of sources as a guiding tool, I will continue to ask what characterises the different participants and their position to speak. To link back to Alison Prasch’s development of a rhetorical theory of deixis, I ask how “rhetorical authority is linked to and perhaps even established in that place or location” (2016, p. 170). While
speaking as an expert or representative gives authority, speaking as a Faroese person lends your ethos a certain authenticity. But I will critique the position Faroese sources are offered, through the difference between representation, as speaking for versus depicting, using Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak’s discussion of this binary and the risks it entails (Spivak, 1988). By analysing the use of first-person pronouns and its associated arguments and narratives, I am asking, who are the we present in the discussion.

These positions in the discussion are reflected in my third research sub-question on what position journalists, sources and audiences are offered. A governing concept of positioning oneself rhetorically is ethos, which can be understood as a text-internal resource for establishing character, the audience’s view of the rhetor’s credibility, or the general notion of establishing or losing authority as speaker at a given time at a given place (Haskins, 2004; McCroskey, 2006). When defining ethos of the epideictic encounter, Dale L. Sullivan expands the instrumental use of ethos further, and conceptualises it as more than the character or credibility of the rhetor in the eyes of the audience:

*Ethos is not primarily an attribute of the speaker, nor even an audience perception: It is, instead, the common dwelling place of both, the timeless, consubstantial space that enfolds participants in epideictic exchange.* (Sullivan, 1993, p. 127)

As my theoretical choices and analytical strategy this far points to, time and place make up relevant markers for how journalists position the Faroe Islands and Denmark as spatiotemporally different and distant from each other. The timeless, consubstantial space Sullivan describes might then seem like a contrast, but rather it underscores how participants are embedded within and without the rhetorical forum they participate in as an abstraction of the context it evaluates and deliberates on.

This perspective on ethos as a place and a spatial orientation of rhetors and audiences towards each other is inspired by an older or primordial meaning of the word ethos, as “habitual gathering place” alongside the now traditional meaning of “character” (Hyde,
In Greek, ethos encompasses two kindred words separated by their spelling: ethos/εθος versus eethos/ηθος. Ethos is commonly translated as habit or being wont, whereas eethos gives rhetoric the concept of character, though this is only part of its original meaning. Arthur B. Miller states the basic denotation of eethos as being “an accustomed place” and in plural (eetha) as referring to the “abode or haunts of animals” or even humans (Miller, 1974, p. 310). Nedra Reynolds describes Aristotle’s definition of the function of the polis: “society is the haunt where a person’s character is formed” and showing good character should be based in habits and disposition (Reynolds, 1993, p. 328). Which links to Michael J. Hyde’s encouragement of studies of the rhetorical “dwelling place”, or the “grounds, the abodes or habitats, where a person’s ethics and moral character take form and develop” (Hyde, 2004, p. xiii). Hyde alludes to the architectural function of rhetoric, how it creates living room, marks boundaries and domains, which are designed and arranged, invoking the materiality of speech as it creates a forum for reorganising viewpoints and action: this rhetorically constructed space enables “collaborative and moral deliberation” (Hyde, 2004, p. xviii).

My application of this spatial abstraction of the term ethos is concretely used in this study to discuss the journalistic spaces created in the analysed discourse, which orient participants and audiences towards each other in the artefacts. These spaces or forums are not a given or apparent structure, independent of discourse, but rather the result of the rhetorical positioning, where journalists and sources are ascribed or exert rhetorical authority and establish agency towards audiences. This relationship between journalism and audiences reflects John Hartley’s argument, which I quoted previously, that the most important component of journalism as a system is its creation of readers as publics, connecting the audience to other political, economic and social systems (Hartley, 1996, p. 35). How do journalists covering the Faroese abortion rights situation present themselves as facilitators and their sources as representatives of the Faroe Islands and Denmark, and what connection to the Danish kingdom does this offer audiences?

The conceptual imagining of ethos as creating rhetorical spaces thus allows for a multi-layered understanding of my case: As separate units Denmark and the Faroe Islands are
two national spaces, represented as having separate societal norms and culture, which are legally and politically joined via the construct of the Danish kingdom. Political discussions about the Danish kingdom partially take place in the Danish (and the Faroese) parliament, but are expanded to the public by media coverage, which has taken over many of the traditional forums and channels for political communication (Kristensen & Blach-Ørsten, 2021, p. 41). Journalists thus create forums where different participants and different opinions meet, and this space mirrors the political location it represents, as it positions an audience as a public in the Danish realm. Political journalism of this kind is thus political practice. It is within these journalistic forums that the Faroe Islands are represented in ways that can influence participants and audiences, while the material aspects of the Faroe Islands are presented as influencing those living in and visiting the Faroese society. At this rhetorical level, the hierarchisation of competing biopolitical paradigms unfolds, in the intersection of the structural logic of abortion rhetoric and colonial discourse which isolates and compares the Faroe Islands and Denmark.

Having presented my strategy, I now turn to the analysis of Danish media coverage of the Faroese abortion rights situation.
Time

In this chapter I analyse the rhetorical uses and constructions of time in the textual corpus of Danish media coverage of the Faroese abortion rights situation. I will refer to *temporal discourse* as an overarching concept, which refers to topoi which draw on a multitude of concepts such as time, momentum, history and development, which reflect journalistic uses of the present and the past when reporting and their explicit or implicit advocacy on the future of abortion rights in the Faroe Islands.

The first part focuses on the establishment of kairos, and explores how Danish journalism creates occasions, expresses the fitness of their response and engages the boundaries between what is appropriate and what is possible. Acknowledging that kairos mediates between objectively occurring events and the journalist’s rhetorical invention of them, I focus on kairotic events to emphasise how global and local events are situated and interpreted in relation to historical events or not. This part thus emphasises the construction of timeliness and relevance in journalism on abortion in the Faroe Islands, and how a historical perspective can be necessary, but often is left out.

The second part focuses on the construction of chronology, and analyses how the artefacts create civilisational timelines, where Danish and Faroese developments, progress or regressions become arguments for the state of the given society. Both for how the Faroe Islands are construed as historically behind, but also how Denmark is constituted as advanced and thus a model society for development regarding reproductive rights. In contrast to the kairotic perspective, the chronological perspective in the artefacts makes use of the past, inferring from old age and conservatism to account for the Faroese present.

**Kairotic events and the Faroese long-term**

As reproductive rights globally improve or worsen, the reverberations of change reach the Danish kingdom and call for renewed interest in a reproductive and sexual rights issue
close to home. Examples of international events that have reminded journalists of the Faroese situation have been the reinstatement of the so-called global gag rule by US president Donald Trump in 2017, the Irish referendum liberalising abortion legislation in 2018, and the US Supreme Court overturning the principle of Roe v. Wade with the Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization verdict in 2022. While the comparison between the Faroese situation and these cases might not be directly relevant, as I will point out, these moments function as news hooks and occasion a number of the following artefacts. They thus emphasise the rhetorical nature of journalism and exigence in the form of kairotic events and exemplify how Faroese abortion rights are contextualised in global developments.

_The global gag rule_

When the radio station Radio24syv began their reporting on the Faroese abortion situation in 2017, it was in reference to US president Donald Trump’s decision to prohibit development aid if it in any way supported abortion related care. Dubbed _the global gag rule_, this policy was first enforced by the Reagan administration in 1985, and has subsequently been enforced by all Republican administrations and rescinded by Democrat administrations in government. Trump’s decision was met with outcries across the globe, which included Danish politicians explicitly voicing their critique and promising to increase their aid to the affected organisations by 75 million kroner. On the 9th February 2017, _Reporterne_ (En. _The Reporters_), defined as a “bold and curious news programme, which every day sets out to investigate if the world in fact is as those in power claim”, aired the first episode focusing on this theme (_Reporterne_, n.d.). The programme began with a quote from Ulla Tørnæs, Minister of Development Aid, stating: “It is a Danish key issue that the right to decide over your own body also includes women in the developing

24 The global gag rule prohibits foreign NGOs who receive US global health assistance from providing legal abortion services or referrals, while also barring advocacy for abortion law reform — even if it’s done with the NGO’s own, non-US funds. The policy allows access to abortion only in cases of rape, incest or when a pregnant person’s life is at risk.
countries” (Ingrisch & Jeppesen, 2017). A comment representing the government’s stance on the global gag rule.

From this quote the radio show zooms in on the Faroe Islands, with hosting journalist Anna Ingrisch stating that “here at home, here at home in Denmark, the same politicians [who criticise Trump, ed.] accept that women in our own realm in the Faroe Islands still do not have the right to liberal abortion” (Ingrisch & Jeppesen, 2017). This statement is credited to Dansk Kvindesamfund (En. Danish Women’s Society) whose chair, Lisa Holmfjord, is in the studio to comment on the issue.

At first glance the link between the US decision and the Faroese case might seem evident; both refer to how Danish politicians position themselves and exert the agency they have in supporting abortion care improvements outside of Denmark. Abortion is a specific issue which warrants abstract comparisons, meaning that it is not surprising per se that the global situation is used to focus on the Faroese issue. Both journalists and the first source Lisa Holmfjord consider it an appropriate moment to critique the Faroese situation, and it unfolds as a kairotic event, since criticising Donald Trump while staying silent about Faroese politics amounts to hypocrisy in Holmfjord’s opinion (Ingrisch & Jeppesen, 2017).

Within minutes, the focus on bodily autonomy shifts to the question of Faroese national autonomy. The introductory mention of the global gag rule is replaced by a focus on the impending takeover of the abortion legislation, which could have served as a reason to cover the issue on its own. On the 29th July 2018, abortion legislation would officially

25 Original: “Det er en dansk mærkesag at retten til at bestemme over egen krop også gælder i kvinder i udviklingslandene.” Though this quote directly translates to the right to decide over your own body, this reflects the phrase as a Danish idiom, which is why I find bodily autonomy a preferable translation.

26 Original: “Men herhjemme, herhjemme i Danmark, der accepterer selvsamme danske politiker at kvinder i vores eget rigsfællesskab på Færøerne, de stadigvæk ikke har ret til fri abort.”
transfer to Faroese jurisdiction, which is presented as an urgent reason to act promptly by Holmfjord:

*Journalist Anna Ingrisch: And you would like, as an organisation, as Dansk Kvindesamfund, that the Danish politicians simply forced through — Holmfjord: Yes. Ingrisch: — which they are entitled to, that liberal abortion is introduced in the Faroe Islands? Holmfjord: Yes. They still have the chance. A takeover law is underway, so in a year’s time we do not have the opportunity, because the right to liberal abortion is exactly one of the areas which we return to the Faroe Islands. So right now they have the opportunity to say, this, we cannot stand for this, as a part of the Danish realm, you have to change that legislation.* *(Ingrisch & Jeppesen, 2017)*

27

The impending takeover is interpreted as a window closing on the means of affecting the Faroese abortion rights situation, the means being direct legal intervention. Holmfjord does not reject the explicit term *force through* (Da. *trumfe igennem*) and speaks of the takeover of laws as “areas” *which we return to the Faroe Islands*. This spatial metaphor refers to the organisation of political matters or jurisdictions, called *areas* (Da. *områder*) in Danish, and not physical lands. Holmfjord thus admits that force is not an issue in matters like this or relating to the Faroe Islands, and that these areas were once taken from the Faroe Islands by an *us* which she identifies with. Crossing political borders and the use of power is encouraged and considered legitimate.

"Al: Og ville I ønske, som organisation, som Dansk Kvindesamfund, at de danske politikere simpelthen trumfe i gennem -

LH: Ja.

Al: - som de har retten til, at der indføres fri abort på Færøerne.

LH: Ja. De har stadigvæk muligheden. Nu er der jo en overtagelseslov i gang, så om et års tid har vi ikke muligheden længere, fordi at retten til fri abort er netop en af de områder, som vi giver tilbage til Færøerne, så lige nu har de faktisk mulighed for at sige, det her, det kan vi faktisk ikke stå model til, som en del af Rigsfællesskabet, så er I nødt til at ændre den lovgivning.”
But as the radio show progresses and the interviews elaborate the context, the analogy with American politics disintegrates, while the right to interfere is rejected by other sources — the main objection being that the Faroe Islands are not a so-called developing country, and legal intervention is an inappropriate measure. As the hosting journalists interview spokespersons and other political sources, they one by one refute the premise of using American politics as an occasion to call out Danish political hypocrisy and reject the focus on legal intervention as the means of affecting Faroese politics. I will return to these conversations later in this section and in the analytical chapter on Authority, as their organisation reflects the positions of participating sources, but in sum no invited source except Lisa Holmfjord accepts the introductory premise of the programme.

My argument is that instead of seizing a moment to open up a discussion about the Danish reluctance to engage with Faroese politics, the framing of the story ends up hindering a fruitful discussion. The ethos of the programme, of being “bold” and questioning the authority of those in power offers a forum for asking tough questions, but the Faroese abortion rights situation has developed from other political and national contexts than the American stance on the global gag rule. The journalistic framing and orchestration of the conversation does not change that, and instead points to temporal blinders of journalism, which focus on immediate events instead of the conjunctural or long-term context it is situated within (Hannerz, 2012).

The Irish referendum

In 2018, international events again offered Radio24syv an opportunity to revisit the Faroese situation, as the Irish population voted in favour of liberalising the restrictive Catholic law on abortion in Ireland, which gave foetuses equal rights to pregnant people. In an episode of 55 Minutter (En. 55 Minutes), journalist Tinne Hjersing Knudsen had the chance to interview the Danish Minister of Equality, Eva Kjer Hansen, and directly interrogate why Danish politicians are unwilling to act regarding the Faroe Islands, when they are eager to react to reproductive rights changes elsewhere.
Over a year has passed since the first show on Radio24syv about the Faroese abortion situation, and though Radio24syv has covered the issue in this period, the focus on the impending takeover and legal means of enforcing liberal abortion has disappeared. Instead, the explicit focus has become the comparable aspect of Danish politicians voicing critique of countries which restrict abortion rights, and applauding those who liberalise them, but never commenting on the Faroese situation. The focus is thus on how international events occasion rhetorical rather than legal action. Knudsen still repeats the claims stated throughout all Radio24syv shows focusing on the subject (Ingrisch & Jeppesen, 2017; Knudsen, 2018a, 2018b): that abortion is an apparent key issue for the Danish government; that politicians have criticised Donald Trump’s so-called gag rule; and that politicians from Hansen’s own party have been very vocal about the necessity to critique nations without liberal abortion (Knudsen, 2018b)28. This time it is the Irish referendum and legalisation of abortion which occasions the coverage, which Knudsen addresses before shifting the focus to the Faroe Islands and asking Hansen:

“None of these women [i.e. Hansen’s politician colleagues] have been very keen on criticising the Faroe Islands for not having liberal abortion, so my question to you is, whether you are willing to criticise Faroese politicians for not giving women access to liberal abortion?” (Knudsen, 2018b)29

28 Original: “På den internationale scene, så er det jo en mærkesag for jer i regeringen, især venstre-kvinderne, at alle kvinder i verden skal have adgang til fri abort. Udviklingsminister Ulla Tørnæs har sagt ‘sådan her er retten at bestemme over egen krop en dansk mærkesag i vores udviklingssamarbejde. Hun har kritiserer Donald Trump for at gennemføre den såkaldte global gag-rule, og hun har skrevet et brev sammen med syv andre EU-lande til Trump. Din forgænger Karen Ellemann, hun sagde sådan her sidste år: ‘internationalalt er det en dansk mærkesag, at kvinder skal kunne bestemme hvem de vil giftes med, hvor mange børn de vil have og hvornår’ osv. Osv. Osv. Jeg har et par eksempler mere, vi kan tage.”

29 Original: “İngen af de her kvinder her har været meget for at skulle kritisere Færøerne, fordi de ikke har fri abort, så mit spørgsmål til dig, det er om du vil kritisere de færøske politikere for ikke at give kvinderne adgang til fri abort.”
Knudsen clearly mentions *criticism* as the method in question, i.e. a rhetorical strategy not immediately based on any legal agency. Hansen’s reply presents her central argument, that the Danish government’s policy is clear and is a sufficient signal to the Faroese government, which oversees their own set of rules:

“I do not think that prevents us from saying what our opinion is on abortion, but it is the Faroese themselves who have to make the decision” (Knudsen, 2018b)\(^{30}\).

Hansen thereby technically creates a strawman argument by refuting the argument from the first show that Danish politicians should and can legislate in the Faroe Islands, instead of responding to Knudsen’s actual question. Knudsen has not quoted Holmfjord or referred to Danish politicians as having the agency to make decisions on behalf of the Faroese government.

Knudsen then attempts a franker style of questioning, and the following dialogue ensues:

Knudsen: “Hmm, but can’t you just criticise the Faroe Islands for not having liberal abortion?”

Hansen: “Well eh, just as I am a supporter of liberal abortion, and indeed a woman’s chance to choose, I am happy to say that to those from Malta, and those from Northern Ireland, and those from the Faroe Islands. But we cannot just go in and decide. It is the Faroe Islands who must make this decision, and I actually think that we are quite clear in saying that we think it is a right that women should have.”

Knudsen: “I do not think I have heard anyone from the government say that it is problematic, or in any way criticise the Faroe Islands for not having liberal abortion?”

\(^{30}\) Original: “Det synes jeg, det hindrer os ikke i at fortælle hvad vores synspunkter er omkring abort, men det er altså færingerne selv der skal træffe afgørelsen.”
Hansen: “Yeah well, I am not really sure what you are angling for, because, eh, because I think we are clearly saying what our opinions on abortion are, but at the same time that it is a decision you have to make in the Faroe Islands, and I think exactly that in comparison to Ireland and by commending the result they have got, and being happy about it, I am indirectly expressing that they should have that discussion in the Faroe Islands —”

Knudsen: “But why can’t you do it directly then?”

Hansen: “Well, it does not change the fact that I cannot decide the rules, not in Poland, nor Malta, but I can appeal to the politicians to have the discussion, and see what rules are in effect and encourage the Faroese politicians to reevaluate whether or not they think it would be good for the women to have that opportunity.” (Knudsen, 2018b)31

Hansen here avoids Knudsen’s clearly formulated question by misinterpreting her motive as implying that Danish politicians should intervene legally or “go in and decide”, even though the question is about why Hansen does not act rhetorically. Hansen reframes her passivity as an act of respecting Faroese democracy, despite there not being any immediate encouragement of anything else, as she and Knudsen technically agree that verbal criticism

31 Original: “EKH: Jamen øh, ligesom jeg er tilhænger af fri abort, og netop kvindens mulighed for at vælge, det siger jeg gerne overfor både polakker og de der kommer fra Malta, og de der kommer fra Nordirland, og de der kommer fra Færøerne. Men vi kan bare ikke gå ind og bestemme, altså det er Færøerne der skal træffe den her beslutningen. Og jeg synes faktisk at vi siger rimeligt skarpt at vi synes at det er en ret som kvinder de skal have.
THK: Jeg synes ikke jeg har hørt nogen fra regeringen sige, at det er kritisabelt eller på nogen måde kritiserer Færøerne for ikke at have fri abort?
EKH: Jamen, jeg ved ikke helt hvad det er du fisker efter, fordi, øh, fordi jeg synes vi meget klart siger hvad vores holdninger er omkring abort, men at det samtidig er en beslutning man skal tage på Færøerne, og jeg synes jo at netop i forhold til Irland og rose det resultat der er kommet, og være glad over det, jo tilkendegiver indirekte at jeg gerne ser at man tager den diskussion på Færøerne —
THK: Men hvorfor kan du ikke gøre det direkte så?
EKH: Jamen, det ændrer jo ikke ved at jeg ikke kan bestemme de regler der skal være gældende, det kan jeg heller ikke i Polen, og Malta, men jeg kan appellere til politikerne om at tage den diskussion, og se på hvad er det for nogle regler der gør sig gældende herunder og så opfordre de færøske politiker til nu at revurdere om de ikke mener at det ville være godt at kvinderne de fik den mulighed.”

73
or advocacy is due. Knudsen then mentions a Faroese source, interviewed previously on the show and representative of the abortion movement in the Faroe Islands, Barbara Gaardlykke Apol, and her appeal to Danish politicians to speak up “and criticise the Faroese politicians because they [the pro-choice movement, ed.] simply are missing some support. Are you going to do that?” (Knudsen, 2018b)32. Again, Hansen skew Knudsen’s motive, and claims that:

“What I think you are looking for is for me to go in directly and approach it — something which is an internal Faroese affair and where the Faroese are to make this decision, and you are not getting me to do that, because I want to show respect towards the self-rule in the Faroe Islands. That does not affect the fact that my opinions on the right to abortion, they are pretty clear and that I am happy to encourage the politicians to have that conversation, maybe even now in the light of the discussion in Ireland, and it ending with a very clear result. And I hope that there is a change around abortion in the Faroese set of rules, but it is they themselves who have to make that decision.” (Knudsen, 2018b)33

Hansen thus explicitly accuses Knudsen of wanting her to interfere with Faroese politics directly under the cover of something else, which supports her self-presentation as being the respectful party. She also acknowledges the timeliness of bringing up the subject in

32 Original: “Hmm. Nu hørte vi lige en ung kvinde fra denne folkebevægelse, Fritt Val, og hun efterlyser altså at I, de danske politikere, kommer mere på banen og altså kritiserer de færøske politikere fordi de simpelthen savner noget opbakning. Vil du gøre det?”

33 Original: “Det jeg tror du efterlyser, det er at jeg jo direkte skulle gå ind og forholde mig til det - noget der er et internt færøsk anliggende og hvor det er færingerne der skal tage den her beslutning, og det får du mig ikke til, for der vil jeg gerne udvide respekt for det selvstyre der er på Færøerne. Det ændrer ikke ved at mine holdninger omkring retten til abort de er rimelig skarpe og at jeg gerne opfordrer politikerne til at tage den drøftelse, måske endda gøre det nu i lyset af at man har haft diskussionen i Irland, og det er endt med et meget klart resultat. Og jeg håber på at der kommer en ændring omkring abort i regelsættet på Færøerne, men det er altså dem selv der skal tage den beslutning.”
relation to the Irish referendum but does not acknowledge that she and her colleagues do not publicly discuss the Faroese abortion law.

While listening to their conversation, I initially felt inclined to accept Hansen's propositions and criticism of Knudsen's “actual” aims, since Radio24syv's coverage of this issue began with the clear assumption that legal intervention was a necessary and fair course of action. But a closer reading of her arguments shows that they are not replies to actual questions. As I have demonstrated above, Knudsen talks about verbal criticism, but Hansen creates a strawman by claiming that Knudsen has other “actual” aims, which can also be seen an attempt to elevate the argumentative level to qualitative evaluation (showing respect) even though Knudsen tries to establish a fact (that Hansen has kept silent).

Knudsen never manages to lay the ghost of the strawman Hansen continuously addresses, but this form of talking past one another can relevantly be understood as a conflict between what audience they are addressing. While Knudsen is most likely addressing the immediate audience limited to the listeners of the day, Hansen's answers evoke the conversations that have preceded her interview — both in Radio24syv's previous programmes (Ingrisch & Jeppesen, 2017; Libak & Svejstrup, 2018) and previous coverage in other media that I discussed in the section on Overview of Danish coverage. By firmly stating that she will not use her apparent power as a Danish politician to intervene in the Faroese situation, she addresses any expectation of legal actions as wrong: something the immediate audience might not be aware of, but a Faroese audience invested in the overall discourse of the Danish kingdom is. Knudsen's interrogation becomes an occasion for Hansen to underscore her interpretation of the Danish kingdom's legal constellation, and answering questions is bypassed in a proverbial nod to a Faroese audience as a form of fourth persona (Morris, 2002). Different from Charles E. Morris III’s definition of the term, since I am not focused on a form of secretive passing, but comparable since the fourth persona is similar to the second persona, in that it implies a certain ideology, and comparable to the third persona, in that it is silenced (Black, 1970; Wander, 1984; Morris, 2002, p. 230). The Faroese audience is interpellated, not to be acknowledged as present,
but to refute its critique of Danish intervention and keep it silent, by Hansen’s explicitation that she has no authority to act.

Hansen’s response reflects her reading of the occasion as a chance to acknowledge certain conventions around the Danish kingdom, in contrast to how the journalist who interviews her understands them, acknowledging the mid-term if not long-term history of this kairotic event.

The overturning of Roe v. Wade

American politics occasioned a return to the Faroese abortion situation with the Supreme Court Justice verdict in the 2022 Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization trial, which overturned the precedence of the seminal Roe v. Wade trial from 1973 (US Supreme Court, 2022). In a manner similar to when the global gag rule was reinstated in 2017, reactions from Danish politicians expressed grief over the verdict and its consequences for American women. Again, critique of the statement in the form of call-outs on hypocrisy shortly followed.

The television broadcaster TV2’s daily morning talk show, Go’ Morgen Danmark, featured a segment on the critique. Journalist Louise Wolff discussed the Danish Prime Minister’s social media reaction to the Dobbs verdict with two Faroese women living in Denmark, Katrin Sigurpálsdóttir Kamban and Ann Leivsgarð (Tanholdt & Rosenkilde, 2022). Prime Minister Frederiksen had on the 24th June 2022 posted the following on Facebook:

My heart cries for girls and women in the US. A major step back. The right to liberal abortion is one of the most fundamental rights in existence. We must never
compromise with women's unrestricted right to bodily autonomy and controlling their own futures. (Frederiksen, 2022)

Frederiksen’s statement stands in contrast to Ulla Tørnæs’ remark since it refers to the universal duty to “not compromise” on access to abortion; not only regarding so-called developing countries. The online article accompanying the morning talk show and recapping the interview with Kamban and Leivsgard nonetheless questions the notion of Faroese autonomy (Tanholdt & Rosenkilde, 2022).

Under the article’s title Faroese women criticise Mette Frederiksen’s post on abortion: - It is shallow, the subheading declares that: “[a]ccording to a professor of law, Denmark can legally introduce liberal abortion in the Faroe Islands” (Tanholdt & Rosenkilde, 2022). This professor was not featured in the studio or the interviews in the talk show. The reproductive rights framework thus occasions a return to the discussion of whether the Faroe Islands are politically and legislatively autonomous, even if the political subject has been under Faroese jurisdiction for four years by this time. The argument which Kamban and Leivsgard present is not related to affecting Faroese law, but how the Danish should help Faroese women by letting them access the Danish public health system without charge (since the Faroe Islands and Denmark have separate health systems even if they share citizenship).

The article is thus where the question of Faroese autonomy is featured and becomes a central topic (Tanholdt & Rosenkilde, 2022). It features quotes from Professor Emeritus at the University of Copenhagen’s Faculty of Law, Ditlev Tamm, who comments after having analysed the Faroese Home Rule Act of 1948, as it is stated in the article. By pointing out that abortion is not mentioned in the Home Rule Act, even if health, medicine, midwifery,

34 Original: “Mit hjerte græder for piger og kvinder i USA. Et kæmpe tilbageskridt. Retten til fri abort er en af de mest fundamentale rettigheder, der findes. Vi må aldrig gå på kompromis med kvinders uindskrænkede ret til at bestemme over egen krop og fremtid.”
hospitals and pharmacy are, Tamm seemingly claims that abortion legislation has not been taken over by the Faroese authorities. The article continues:

So, if Denmark really pushed it to its logical conclusion, as he puts it, you could legally introduce liberal abortion in the Faroe Islands. (Tanholdt & Rosenkilde, 2022) 

Tamm’s understanding seems to be that the Danish parliament could enforce legislation in the Faroe Islands by majority vote, which is surprising. It is unlikely that a professor emeritus of law would be unaware of equally relevant laws for Faroese home rule, such as the Transfer of Jurisdiction Act of 2005, where abortion is organised under family, personhood and inheritance legislation. The right to introduce legislation in the Faroe Islands is irrelevant to whose jurisdiction a law would fall under, since it would be a breach of common conduct and demand an overturn of the Home Rule Act, which Jørgen Albæk Jensen had pointed out in the first show on Radio24syv and I will analyse in the next section.

Why this paragraph is featured in an article about a television segment, which did not address the question of Faroese autonomy, is perplexing. It might reflect its authors’ expectation that discussing abortion demands discussing Faroese autonomy and reflects a choice by the journalists to approach expert sources to qualify this discussion — even if the result is misleading. Above all it reflects how Danish coverage of the Faroese abortion rights situation is occasioned by international events, while resulting in presentations and discussions of Faroese autonomy which do not take the long-term perspective into account.

35 Original: “Så hvis Danmark virkelig satte det på spidsen, som han udtrykker det, kunne man juridisk set godt indføre fri abort på Færøerne.”
Seizing the moment on Faroese autonomy

What the first examples show is that no matter the actual occasion, the media coverage of the Faroese abortion situation creates a discussion of what political power the Danish government holds over Faroese legislation. The first show on Radio24syv, Reporterne, featured a detailed discussion of how and when Denmark could enforce legislative change in the Faroe Islands partially based on comments given by Professor of Law, Jørgen Albæk Jensen.

When Lisa Holmfjord, chair of Dansk Kvindesamfund, and the journalist, Anna Ingrisch, discuss the need for swift action, since the transfer of legislative powers will prevent further intervention from the Danish government, co-host Morten Jeppesen interjects by saying that a legal expert says otherwise. In a prerecorded clip, Professor of Law Jørgen Albæk Jensen points out that:

You could make a law which said that there now is also liberal abortion in the Faroe Islands, but the more you sort of meddle with something they at least themselves would obviously consider internal affairs, the bigger the risk or the likelihood of those sovereignty ideas getting wind in their sails. (Ingrisch & Jeppesen, 2017)36

This is interpreted by Jeppesen, Ingrisch and Holmfjord, as confirmation that Denmark controls legislation in the Faroe Islands if the Danish government wants to, and their ensuing comments express a sense of relief that time is not running out. Jensen has, however, published extensively on constitutional law and the legal constitution of the Danish realm, where a nuancing of his perspective can be found (e.g. J. A. Jensen, 2003; J. A. Jensen et al., 2020). Usually, the option to intervene is considered out of the question, and in his article on the Position of Greenland and the Faroe Islands within the Danish

36 Original: “Man kunne godt lave en lov der sagde, at nu var der også fri abort på Færøerne, men jo mere man ligesom blander sig i noget de i hvertfald helt oplagt selv ville betragte som interne forhold, jo større er jo også risikoen eller sandsynlighed blive for at de der selvstændighedstanker for alvor vil få vind i sejlene.”
realm, Jensen writes that it is “impossible for political reasons” to change the Home Rule Act, which is a prerequisite if the separation of Faroese and Danish jurisdictions is to be contravened (J. A. Jensen, 2003, p. 177).

Jensen's first quote in *Reporterne* is thus a condensed and reduced perspective on the Danish realm, which he himself elaborates later in the show and in academic publications. The fact that it is a recorded quote also limits potential nuancing and favours the interpretation that a professor of law says that Danish politicians “easily can introduce abortion in the Faroe Islands, but they choose not to”, as Ingrisch rephrases Jensen's quote. In a longer version of the quote, featured near the end of the programme, Jensen elaborates on his interpretation of the situation: “Yes, it is possible, because all legislative power in Denmark is shared by the Folketinget and the government, and that makes it possible to legislate on Faroese matters” (Ingrisch & Jeppesen, 2017)\(^\text{37}\). This technical definition is based on the fact that the Danish Constitution defines the Danish kingdom as one entity and not a federation of individual countries. Still, and as Jensen himself also points out, “a part of it [legislative power] is in practice delegated to the Faroe Islands via self-rule acts and that is in reality also the case in this area” (Ingrisch & Jeppesen, 2017)\(^\text{38}\).

Jensen sums up his point by saying:

“So, in principle, yeah, you could make a law which said that now there is also liberal abortion in the Faroe Islands, but regarding the political aspect, you can say that the entire relationship between Denmark and the Faroe Islands, and Greenland for that matter, is regulated in a manner where a very large part of the legislative power has been handed to the self-governing authorities, which normally would reside with the

\(^{37}\) Original: “Ja, det er muligt, fordi al lovgivningsmagt i Danmark ligger jo hos Folketinget og hos regeringen i fællesskab, og det giver altså også muligheden for at lovgive om ting der foregår på Færøerne.”

\(^{38}\) Original: “En del af det, har man så i praksis overladt til Færøerne via selvstyrelse og det gælder i hvertfald også i realiteten på det her område, fordi man ikke har ladet den være omfattet af loven om fri abort, men har ladet den gamle lov om svangerskabsafbrydelse være gældende.”
Jensen makes his point even clearer and says that “In practice, it is not doable, but purely theoretically-legally, then it could be” (Ingrisch & Jeppesen, 2017). Morten Jeppesen who interviews Jensen in this clip asks whether this means that the practical hindrance reflects the Danish principle of wanting to “keep a good atmosphere”, which Jensen hesitantly agrees with, before elaborating that not only is it an expression of wanting to keep a good atmosphere, but wanting to keep the Danish kingdom together (Ingrisch & Jeppesen, 2017). Jensen here points to the Faroese movements for independence and how interfering with self-rule would run the risk of them “getting the wind in their sails”, as he was quoted earlier in the show (Ingrisch & Jeppesen, 2017). Morten Jeppesen then asks about the forthcoming transfer of jurisdiction and what it
means, where Jensen points out that it does not affect the principle he is talking about, since all laws pertaining to Faroese autonomy are mandated by the Danish government, meaning they could all in theory be revoked — but result in expected outrage. Jeppesen then asks:

“I know that you are in your own right a legal expert here and so on, but can I ask you nonetheless, what you think about this thing, where you can do something but choose not to because it can have political consequences?” (Ingrisch & Jeppesen, 2017)

Jensen is thereby offered a new role, where he can shed his expert status and take up another. His response includes political reflections:

“Well, I actually think it is reasonable enough, because you could say that it is a general goal in Southern Denmark to keep the Danish realm, and there has been a broad political consensus that if that is to happen, then you have to accept these extensive self-rule arrangements (…) So to me it seems reasonable enough, because well, the alternative is that these territories at some point gain full independence, and then we have no means of interfering with anything at all.” (Ingrisch & Jeppesen, 2017)

What I wish to emphasise by featuring the longer version of the quote at length is to point out that succinct definitions of the Danish kingdom’s political and legal complexities can

43 Original: “Hvad hedder det, nu ved jeg godt at du er i din gode ret til bare at være juridisk ekspert her også videre, men må jeg alligevel spørge dig, hvad du synes om det her med at når man kan gøre noget, og man så lader være med det, fordi det kan have nogle politiske konsekvenser?”

44 “Mjeh, men jeg synes egentlig at det er vel fornuftigt nok, fordi man kan sige, at man har jo en helt overordnet målsætning fra Syddanmarks side om at bevare Rigsfællesskabet, og der har man jo ligesom vel været meget bredt politisk enig om, at hvis det skal kunne lade sig gøre, så er man nødt til at acceptere de der vidtgående selvstyreordninger. Så man kan sige, det kan godt være at man på nogle enkelte punkter kunne have lyst til at blande sig i nogle større eller mindre spørgsmål i det der foregår på Færøerne og Grønland, men det lader man altså være med i den større sags tjeneste, kan man sige. Så for mig forekommer det at være meget fornuftigt, altså alternativet er at de to områder på et eller andet tidspunkt, bliver fuldt selvstændige, og så har vi overhovedet ingen mulighed for at blande os i noget som helst.”
be included by the use of expert sources, though the full quote contains points that undermine the argument Jensen’s quote is initially used by the journalists to make. Editorial choices frame the conversation, and the resulting arguments seem to haunt the subsequent coverage on Radio24syv, as I argued, with the interview between Tinne Hjersing Knudsen and Eva Kjer Hansen (Knudsen, 2018b).

It becomes evident that the kairotic argument about acting before it is too late is misunderstood, and that the resulting arguments about exercising power are based on a faulty understanding of this same power. The disagreement on popular but misinformed interpretations is evident in the interviews with politicians, who in different ways emphasise that the political decision lies with the Faroese government or with the Faroese people.

In *Reporterne*, journalist Anna Ingrisch asks the spokesperson on Faroese issues for the Social Democratic Party, Karin Gaardsted:

> Why is it more important for you not to offend the Faroese regarding enforcing legislation, which — just to underscore it again — you have the legal right to do in the Danish parliament, why does that trump women’s rights?

To which Gaardsted replies: “Because we are not a master race which should decide over the Faroe Islands” (Ingrisch & Jeppesen, 2017)⁴⁵. Gaardsted uses the Danish term *herrefolk*, which directly translates to *master race* or the German term *Herrenvolk*, which was used by Nazi Germany to justify alleged German superiority over other countries and ethnicities. In Danish, the term might seem to be a more neutral designation for

⁴⁵ Original: “AI: Hvorfor er det vigtigere for dig, ikke at træde færingerne over tæerne i forhold til at gennemføre lovgivningen, som — bare for at understrege det igen — I har den juridiske ret til at gennemføre i det danske parlament, hvorfor står det højere end kvinderettigheder?
KG: Fordi vi ikke er et herrefolk, der skal bestemme over Færøerne.”
domination or a group of individuals who deem other individuals as subordinate, and Gaardsted might use it as a rephrasing of the Danish word herredømme meaning rule, or mistook the word for herskab meaning master, without intending to use terminology used in Nazi Germany in this context. The word nonetheless relates to a problematic form of superiority which Gaardsted makes a point of distancing herself from.

A comparable comment was made by Karen Melchior, member of the EU Parliament for the Danish Social Liberal Party (Da. Radikale Venstre) in 2021, when Danish politicians expressed condemnation of the Polish restriction on abortion and a wish to aid Polish citizens. Journalist Peter Astrup for the newspaper BT asked Melchior:

> But when we put pressure Poland, shouldn’t we also put pressure on the Faroe Islands? They are more or less a part of ourselves.
> “Yes, I think we should help the Faroese women. But maybe we should do it in a way where it is not the old colonial power dictating to the Faroe Islands on how they should organise themselves,” Karen Melchior replies. (Astrup, 2021)

Here, another international event regarding abortion rights has occasioned a focus on the Faroese situation, where the journalist’s pretext is Danish superiority over the Faroese government, which the interviewed politician brushes off in reference to a problematic form of superiority. Leading up to the above quote, Melchior comments on the reluctance to even comment on the Faroese situation, which echoes the discussions between journalists and politicians in Radio24syv’s coverage. Melchior states that:

> „Men når vi presser Polen, så bør vi vel også presse på hos Færøerne? De er jo mere eller mindre en del af os selv. 
> ’Ja, jeg synes vi skal hjælpe de færøske kvinner. Men måske skal det gøres på en måde, så det ikke bliver sådan, at den gamle kolonialmagt kommer og dikterer Færøerne, hvordan de skal indrette sig,’ siger Karen Melchior.

46
“We have probably not been good enough at putting pressure on the Faroe Islands. The thing is, that it is a very delicate discussion within the Danish realm, where Denmark risks a backlash from the Faroe Islands.” (Astrup, 2021)\textsuperscript{47}

This backlash is not exemplified further by Melchior. It could be compared to the response which Danish politicians and reproductive rights activists received in 2003 and 2004, but to take an even longer historical perspective, I will claim that the concept of Klaksvik Syndrome can illustrate the general reluctance to engage in Faroese matters, as exemplified by Melchior, Hansen and other Danish politicians.

\textbf{Klaksvik Syndrome}

\textit{Klaksvik Syndrome} is described by former bank director Jørn Astrup Hansen\textsuperscript{48} in the podcast of the same name by the Faroese paper \textit{Frihedsbrevet.fo}, where he claims that it is the unofficial term amongst Danish officials for reluctance to engage with Faroese affairs out of fear of what the consequences might escalate to (Lamhauge, 2022).

The name refers to a conflict in 1955 in the second largest town in the Faroe Islands, Klaksvik, regarding the dismissal of local general practitioner Olaf Halvorsen. Halvorsen, who was born in Denmark, had been a member of the Danish Nationalist Socialist Party, which prevented him from getting permanent positions in Denmark, and in 1951 he started a temporary position in Klaksvik. When the Danish and Faroese authorities in Tórshavn chose to let him go him, it was considered an untimely intervention into Faroese matters amongst locals in Klaksvik, many of whom wanted to keep Halvorsen as

\textsuperscript{47} Original: “Vi har nok været for dårlige til at lægge pres på Færøerne. Sagen er, at det bliver en meget delikat diskussion inden for rigsfællesskabet, hvor Danmark risikerer en modreaktion fra Færøerne,’ siger hun.”

\textsuperscript{48} Hansen is Msc in Advance Economics and Finance (Da. cand.o econ) and was constituted director of a Faroese bank in order to administer its bankruptcy, which in 1992-1994 caused a collapse of the Faroese national economy.
their doctor. Locals in Klaksvík refused the replacement doctor access to the town, and the situation reached a boiling point with civilians barricading areas and taking up arms. The attempts by Danish officials to enter Klaksvík to negotiate the situation resulted in riots, including armed resistance, and Danish authorities chose to send the frigate Rolf Krake manned with 30 armed police officers to the scene. The situation resulted in a conflict far beyond what anyone could have expected, as the dismissal of a local doctor became a local uprising, including bombings and non-lethal shootings, when Danish authorities were considered to meddle in Faroese business. In Frihedsbrevet.fo's podcast and interview with Jørn Astrup Hansen, who coins the term Klaksvík Syndrome, the symptoms are presented as still occurring whenever the organisation of the Danish kingdom involves Danish authorities’ involvement in Faroese matters.

Without claiming that this event is directly present in Karen Melchior’s reference to a Faroese backlash, the concept of Klaksvík Syndrome is relevant to understanding the particular form of dissent to Danish power that Faroese inhabitants and politicians may exert. Dissent which does not and need not qualify as colonial uprising for coloniality to be a relevant perspective on current discussions of it. The fear of a Faroese backlash destabilises the notions of power imbalance present in Danish coverage of Faroese abortion rights and the political asymmetry which is assumed by journalists and sources such as Lisa Holmfjord. The mentions of backlash by sources such as Jørgen Albæk Jensen and Karen Melchior also expand the temporal span which the coverage addresses from an isolated focus on individual global events to acknowledgements of a longer Danish-Faroese history.

In the next section, I explore how mid-term and long-term perspectives on the Danish kingdom and the Faroe Islands construct a chronology and represent temporal discourses which evaluate the status of Faroese society, and how colonial discourse is related through the structuring of Denmark, the Faroe Islands and the Danish kingdom on a civilisational timeline.
Chronos, civilisational advancement and the denial of coevality

Temporal discourse operates as an indication of societal status and development, which can also be connected to inherent dynamics of journalism:

*Journalism constitutes a series of interrelated practices for the social construction of time. It arrests the ordinary and the unusual in various forms of texts that create feelings of simultaneity, help define the contemporary, outline possible futures, and shape our understanding and memories of the past.* (Bødker & Sonnevend, 2018, p. 3)

In addition to operating within a paradigm of urgency and occasion, Bødker and Sonnevend emphasise the chronological work which undergirds journalism as it might attempt to affect the course of events. Time and temporal displacement between audience and the Faroe Islands exemplifies a way in which the Faroese Other is presented as different — as behind or “not quite there yet”, but perhaps on the correct path to a Danish ideal.

This temporal perspective is central to the logic of colonial discourse, and a relevant contribution is Johannes Fabian’s exploration and discussion of *coevality* and the denial of it, as the colonial other is not considered contemporary to the imperial centre (Fabian, 1983, p. 39). Fabian’s seminal book *Time and the Other. How Anthropology makes its Object* is a detailed study of how anthropology has presented its objects of study as illustrations of a former version of the civilisation that anthropologists and their audiences represent, and how this is a governing logic of colonial discourse, which establishes difference and justifies dominance (Fabian, 1983). Whilst Fabian’s critique denounces how colonial objects are placed on one linear development towards a Western ideal, I wish to include Stefan Helgesson’s alternative perspective, and how acknowledging multiple temporalities can be part of the argument that difference does not constitute civilisational lack:
To state the antinomy in the starkest terms possible, one could say that postcolonial scholars both denounce the way in which the others of the Western self are placed notionally in another time than the West and not only analytically affirm but indeed valorize multiple temporalities. Although the postulation of temporal difference, on the one hand, is suspect because it is not so much a reality as an expression of power under the regime of colonial modernity, temporal difference is, on the other hand, beneficial either because it challenges the unitary time of Western modernity or because it simply provides a conceptually more accurate account of the historical complexity of the postcolony. (Helgesson, 2014, p. 546)

Helgesson argues for an understanding of temporal difference as an accelerating unevenness of change, and intentionally avoids terms such as progress or development, and thus presents an alternative to the “ideological projection of modernity as a single, monolithic temporality” (Helgesson, 2014, p. 556). By analysing examples of colonial literature, which demonstrate heterochronicity as multiple chronologies crisscrossing in the narratives, despite their authors’ claims of being culturally and temporally more advanced than the others they describe, Helgesson underscores the rhetoricity of spatiotemporal distance “as an ideologically driven construction of the colonial subject as different, serving to buttress the Europeans’ understanding of themselves as modern and advanced” (Helgesson, 2014, p. 553). Put differently, rhetorical constructions of time reveal less about the described than those doing the describing, as the ordering of others as lagging behind is a fashioning of oneself as advanced. This aligns with one of my critical aims: to point out how journalism about the Faroe Islands establishes or bolsters a Danish self-image. Temporal narratives might be attempts at pinpointing where others are in time, but no matter the futility of that attempt, they can position the audience as more advanced or as the pinnacle of societal evolution. While Fabian focuses on the denial of the other as contemporary, Helgesson develops this critique and argues for acknowledging heterochronicity without the normative devaluation it usually entails. Temporal difference is in any case in postcolonial studies of literature and anthropology to be considered a symptom of ideology at work. Temporal difference links to how
advancements and changes in abortion legislation become a sign of pathology, of a regressive or advancing society closer or further away from the ideal.

**Comparing developments**

Whilst the previous section on kairotic events showed how journalism on Faroese abortion rights isolates their subject from its context in the Danish kingdom, temporal discourse as demonstrated by Fabian and Helgesson is also the construction of chronologies as emphasising the need to intervene or understand (Faroese) difference from the (Danish) norm.

In *Reporterne*, spokesperson for Faroese matters in Dansk Folkeparti (En. *Danish People’s Party*), Hans Brodersen describes the difference between the Faroe Islands and Denmark, using time as an indicator for the resistance to change in the Faroe Islands:

> *We have had abortion here for 40 years, and they haven’t got there yet in the Faroe Islands. We also implemented registered partnerships 30 years ago, between same-sex partners, which they have only now implemented in the Faroe Islands.* (Ingrisch & Jeppesen, 2017)

Brodersen compares the political development regarding same-sex marriage to abortion legislation, and through syntactic repetition makes an argument by parallelism (Fahnestock, 2011, p. 226). Brodersen presents the difference in legislations as different points on the same trajectory towards a modern society, which Denmark has already completed. To *not have got* somewhere yet, seems like a natural and neutral description of legislative development. But not all nations’ legislations on reproductive rights

49 Original: “Vi har haft aborten her i 40 år, og der er man ikke nået til på Færøerne endnu. Vi har også for 30 år siden indført registreret partnerskab mellem to af samme køn, det har man først nu implementeret på Færøerne.”
necessarily progress towards liberalisation, as not everyone considers abortion as a symbol of civilisational welfare. Global legislations reflect a variety of reproductive norms, far from all having the same principle of an unquestionable right to choose abortion freely until the 12th week of gestation, which the Danish law stipulates. Temporal discourse includes but obscures these ideological conflicts, and thus, the employment of time as indicator of civilisational development reflects the Danish trajectory as an expected norm for reproductive legislation developments.

Karin Gaardsted, spokesperson for Socialdemokraterne (En. The Social Democrats), also describes the Faroe Islands as not being there yet and her respect towards that:

As a human being I would like it differently, but as a politician I actually respect it. We have seen that the Faroe Islands after many years have moved and gained an acceptance of gay people for instance. It is the same set of problems, it has been very difficult in the Faroe Islands, and now we are in a situation where gay people have much better conditions there. And I also think that there will be movements around abortion, especially when you get to the point that you know that women are so well-informed/enlightened (Da. veloplyst), so that an excess in induced abortions can be avoided. (Ingrisch & Jeppesen, 2017)⁵⁰

Gaardsted’s comment also invokes the same sense of civilisational progress as Brodersen mentions, and she differs between her wishes in private and as a politician, for this development necessarily takes time but has been proven to occur, as the example with

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⁵⁰ Original: “Øhm, nej, det mener jeg ikke. Jeg vil lige understrege her, at jeg ikke er modstander af abort, det vil jeg gerne understrege, det er jeg ikke. Men jeg har respekt for, at man på Færøerne ikke er der endnu - ja, det har jeg faktisk respekt for som politiker. Som menneske kunne jeg godt ønske mig noget andet, men som politiker har jeg faktisk respekt for det. Vi har jo set at Færøerne efter mange år, har bevæget sig hen og har fået en accept af homoseksuelle for eksempel, det er den samme problematik, det har været meget vanskeligt på Færøerne, og nu står vi i den situation, hvor homoseksuelle har langt bedre vilkår deroppe. Og jeg tror også, at der ville komme bevægelser omkring abort, især når man når dertil at man ved at kvinderne er veloplyste, så man forhåbentlig kan undgå alt for mange provokerede aborter.”
same-sex marriage demonstrates in her view. Her mentioning of *enlightenment* as a prerequisite for avoiding excessive abortions might be interpreted as a slight towards Greenland, where induced abortions outnumber births. This would indicate that despite liberal abortion being favourable, liberal abortion can also be *too* liberal given a contrasting lack of enlightenment and civilisational progress — a possible Goldilock’s principle of the Faroe Islands being too little and Greenland being too much, while Denmark is just right.

The temporal references are not isolated to the Danish sources, as Faroese participants also underscore the lack of development in the Faroe Islands. When journalist Anna Ingrisch points to the ethical dilemma between securing women’s rights and respecting Faroese autonomy, Victoria Voda, a Faroese woman and political candidate in Denmark, replies:

> Democracy is the most important thing, not to say that it is more important than women’s rights, but I think it is something we will arrive at on our own, we just need a little time. That is how it is in the Faroe Islands, we are a bit behind, also regarding gay rights, but again, it is something which is to be decided on in the Faroe Islands.
> (Ingrisch & Jeppesen, 2017)⁵¹

Voda thereby underscores the temporal dislocation between the Faroe Islands and Denmark herself, in her claim that the Faroe Islands will catch up eventually and by their own development. Her argument still emphasises the Faroese right to political autonomy.

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⁵¹ Original: “AI: Og alligevel så siger du det er vigtigt, at man ikke overtræder den grænse. Dilemmaet i dag, det etiske dilemma, det er jo på en eller anden måde om respekten for Færøernes selvbestemmelse og respekten for rigsfællesskabet skal stå over kvinners rettigheder. Og det siger man jo på en måde, ja det skal det, hvis man ikke mener at danske politikere skal gennemføre det. 
VV: Altså, vores demokrati er jo det vigtigste, jeg siger jo ikke at det er vigtigere end kvinders ret, men jeg tror at det er noget vi selv vil komme til, vi skal bare bruge lidt tid til det, sådan er det på Færøerne, vi er en lille smule bagud, også med rettigheder til homoseksuelle, men igen, det er noget der skal bestemmes oppe på Færøerne.”
Illustrating age

The fact that the Faroese legislation is older than the Danish is a recurrent topoi. In Politiken’s podcast “Abort på Færøerne – skyld, skam og hemmeligheder” (En. Abortion in the Faroe Islands – guilt, shame and secrets), journalist Anna Winsløv makes the point that the Faroese law first and foremost “is really old. It stems all the way back to 1956 and is actually the same law that Denmark had before we got liberal abortion 1973” (Schmidt, 2021)\(^52\). While 1973 is more recent than 1956, they are only separated by 17 years, while 48 years had passed since the Danish amendment meaning that the Danish law could also be defined as old. The valorisation attached to age is thus implied as negative for the Faroese law compared to the Danish law.

The journalists at Radio24syv made similar comments on the difference between the Faroese and the Danish law. Anna Libak introduces 24syv Morgen by stating that,

\[\text{In Denmark there is liberal abortion. But that is not the case in the Faroe Islands, with whom we otherwise share the Danish realm. In the Faroe Islands, the old Danish abortion legislation of 1956 is still in effect, and it is so old that it is signed by king Frederik IX. That is the law, which we abolished definitively in 1973, but the old law is still in effect in the Faroe Islands.} \] (Libak & Svejstrup, 2018)\(^53\)

The modal qualifier definitively expresses how the Danish model is perceived as permanent, even if global events show that reproductive and sexual rights do not follow a

\[\text{\underline{\text{\textsuperscript{\footnotesize52} Original: “Det er jo først og fremmest en lov, som er rigtig gammel. Den stammer helt tilbage fra 1956 og er faktisk den samme lov som Danmark havde inden vi fik fri abort i 1973.”}}}\]

singular timeline towards liberation. The difference in abortion legislations is also implied to seem odd, as if those “with whom we otherwise share the Danish realm” are expected to have the same laws as Denmark; the age of the law is emphasised, which is not only old, it is so old that it is signed by the former king (who reigned from 1947 to 1972). A naïve point, as many laws still considered legitimate are signed by former regents, as illustrated by the contrasting comments made by two sources in the Politiken article “Her er der ikke fri abort” (En. No liberal abortion here) (Winsløv & Helmann, 2021). Gynaecologist Katrin Kallsberg and Minister of Health and Social Affairs Elsebeth Mercedis Gunnleygdóttur represent opposing views on the age of legislation, and Kallsberg finds it odd that her practice follows a law “which is so far from reality. It reflects a view you had in the 1950s and therefore it should be amended” (Winsløv & Helmann, 2021). Gunnleygdóttur has the opposite view. She expresses satisfaction with the way the current law is practised and remarks that:

*It should also be observed that just because a law is old, it is not an automatic sign that the law does not work in practice. The current government has no plans at present to work with the abortion legislation.* (Winsløv & Helmann, 2021)

Gunnleygdóttur claims that old age does not signify an infirm legislation, just as the old age of the Danish law can be presented as a source of pride.

These examples of temporal discourse emphasising chronological development represent the overall arguments used both to support and oppose change, positions I will analyse separately in my chapter on Authority. Still, it is not only their arguments, but their mere presence which also underscores the temporal perspective represented in Danish

55 Original: “Det skal også bemærkes, at bare fordi en lov er gammel, er det ikke nødvendigvis et tegn på, at loven ikke fungerer i praksis. Siddende regering har ikke p.t. planer om at arbejde med abortlovgivningen.”
journalism, as using older voices or sources from a previous time also constitutes a
temporal discourse: “How time is rendered, for example, connects to choices about whose
voices will be represented — even to choices concerning point of view” (C. P. Wilson,
2018, p. 121). Christopher Wilson discusses the ethical and interpretive concerns
journalists bring to their stories through choices regarding sources as voices, and these
concerns are relevant when considering how these choices at times lack an ethical and
interpretive depth in the textual corpus.

In 55 Minutter from 2018, journalist Tinne Hjersing Knudsen reuses the phrases from
24sv Morgen, when describing the legal context:

_In the Faroe Islands, the old Danish abortion law from 1956 is still in effect. It is so old
that it was signed by King Frederik IX, and is the law which we abolished definitively
here at home in Denmark in 1973, 45 years ago, when abortion was liberalised._
(Knudsen, 2018a)

Following this introduction, a 55 second segment sums up the show’s theme: It begins
with a male speaker reading a part of the preamble to the 1956 law (Knudsen, 2018a).
The verbiage which reflects 1950s language is likely to seem old-fashioned to
contemporary audiences, giving a sense of the law being archaic, which is further
emphasised by the speaker’s satirical reading in a caricature of the old regent’s voice.
Voice here represents a decidedly temporal perspective where even the speaker performs
an entertaining journalistic stance by ridiculing age. The speaker points out that this law
has been annulled and that it has been legal to have an abortion in Denmark, “ever since

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56 Original: “Men sådan er det faktisk ikke på Færøerne, selvom vi er forbundet med landet i
Rigsfællesskabet. På Færøerne der gælder nemlig den gamle danske abortlov fra 1956. Den er så gammel at
den er underskrevet af kong Frederik den 9., og det var den lov som vi endegyldigt afskaffede herhjemme i
Danmark i 1973 for 45 år siden, hvor aborten den blev fri. Men den gælder altså stadig på Færøerne.”
57 Original: “Vi, Frederik den 9. af Guds nåde Konge til Danmark har ved vort samtykke stadfæstet følgende
lov: En kvinde der afbryder sit svangerskab eller lader det afbryde vidende om at betingelserne for lovlig
tsengerskabsafbrydelse ikke er til stede, straffes med hæfte op til 3 måneder. Under vort kongelige hånd og
segl, Frederik den 9., 1956.”
we as one of the first countries in Western Europe set abortion free in 1973. Just not in the Faroe Islands” (Knudsen, 2018a). Age is a symbol of pride when it represents the Danish norm, and a sign of regression in the Faroese context, and while 1956 and 1973 as mentioned are only separated by 17 years, the emphasis is on the 45+ years since these laws were put into effect.

Older voices are also represented in 24syv Morgen, when journalist Kaare Svejstrup features a quote from a former Faroese politician, when interviewing May-Britt Kattrup, spokesperson for health issues for the party Liberal Alliance (Libak & Svejstrup, 2018). Johannes Martin Olsen (born 1933) was a member of the Faroese parliament from 1970 to 1988 and was a periodical substitute for Faroese representatives in the Danish parliament from 1979 to 1998. Svejstrup presents the quote by saying that Olsen “is a former member of the Danish parliament and also he is from the Faroe Islands” and encourages Kattrup to listen to “how he talks about abortion”:

_I was in the Danish parliament for eight years, and what I was often teased about and also attacked with in the Nordic Council was pilot whale killing in the Faroe Islands, and I remember that I eventually was so fed up with it, and then I thought that I really want this to stop. I was alone down there, amongst so many people, so I thought, what do I do about this — yes, then there was a priest, a female priest who came and gave me a round in the Danish parliament about the pilot whale killing in the Faroe Islands. Then I said, you know what, you stand every Sunday on a pulpit and preach and all of that, and well — but are you aware of the fact that if you didn’t have a good and stable water purification system in Copenhagen, then all of Øresund [the sound separating Denmark_
Kattrup is confounded by the quote and its odd comparison and argument. Even though Olsen is still living, he is a former politician, and the situation he describes took place at least 20 years ago. The conversation does not follow smoothly after the quote, which seems ill-suited, since it does not affect Kattrup’s view of the current situation. She points out that:

Well, it is another culture, they have their own self-rule, I don’t understand why they hold that opinion, but we have to just — if that is the way they want to live their life, and that is what they want, well, then we, like, have to respect that (...) And then try to say that you have legislation from the 50s in the Faroe Islands, where large parts of the world have sort of moved on, and whether that might be something to be inspired by. (Libak & Svejstrup, 2018)

Perhaps intended as an illustration of an archaic and absurd way of thinking, Olsen’s quote as representative of Faroese politicians is not used or referred to again as a poignant example, and it complicated rather than engaged the interview with Kattrup.

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59 Original: “Jeg var i Folketinget i otte år, og det som jeg blev sådan drillet med og overfaldet med også i Nordisk Råd, det var hvalfangst på Færøerne, og jeg kan huske at efterhånden så blev jeg så træt af det, og så tænkte jeg at det her vil jeg have at stoppe altså. Jeg var alene dernede, i blandt så mange mennesker, så tænkte jeg, hvordan gør jeg med det her — jo, så kom der en præst, en kvindelig præst til mig og gav mig sådan en omgang i Folketinget med grindedrabet på Færøerne. Så siger jeg, ved du hvad, du står hver søndag på en talerstol, og taler og alt det der, og altså, men er du klar over at hvis du ikke har dit renseværk så godt og så stabilt i København, så vil det hele Øresund have været rødt i vind der, med alle de aborter som I foretager her.”

60 Original: “Altså det er jo en, en anden kultur, de har jo deres eget selvstyre, jeg forstår ikke at de har den holdning, men det må vi jo - hvis det er den måde de vil leve deres liv, og det er det de vil have, altså så må vi ligesom respektore det.”
While the above analysed examples emphasise age in a quite literal way and explicate legislation as signs of an archaic society, the feature articles I turn to now illustrate age in implicit contextualisations and references to Faroese culture.

The article in Kristelig Dagblad, “Her er abort for de få” (En. Here abortion is for the few), invokes notions of time or temporal development in a number of ways (Funch, 2018). The digital version of the article includes parallax-scrolling, where the background features shifting images of Faroese nature and landscapes.

On the first page, the text following the headline is set on a black background in white print, and reads: “In the Faroe Islands, everyone speaks with reverence about the unborn child — but women, who have had an abortion, feel that the social control is suffocating” (Funch, 2018). The following page is a shot of the islet of Tindhólmur with a semi-transparent text box across, and the text is not from an interview, but a quote from Jørgen-Frantz Jacobsen’s novel Barbara:

There was his cousin Barbara, who had been married to two priests. She had celebrated weddings with many more men, he knew, he was a bright head, nothing got past him. It was shameful for the family and a scandal, that is what it was. (Funch, 2018)

With the quote from Barbara, we are transported back in time to when “celebrating weddings” was a euphemism for sexual activity before formal marriage. This archaic perspective coupled with the uninhabited landscape frames the Faroe Islands as distant in time (as well as in space and culture). Barbara is one of the few Faroese novels that have achieved Danish acclaim and tells the story of a Danish priest who loses his heart to the Faroese woman Barbara, and loses her, when his duties and the Faroese climate and

61 Original: “Men der var nu hans kusine Barbara, der havde været gift med to præster. Hun havde holdt bryllup med mange flere mænd, han vidste det, han var et lyst hoved, intet gik ham forbi. Det var en skam for familien og en forargelse i det hele taget” (Funch, 2018).
geography separate them, and she finds someone else. The quote represents the unspoken thoughts of her cousin, Gabriel, a petty and jealous merchant who relays the local gossip about Barbara. The character of Barbara, and those of her husbands, are based on the historical figure Bente Christine Broberg, who in Faroese myths and storytelling is blamed for the death of her first two husbands and the mental illness of her third, despite there not being any historical evidence for this (L. Nolsøe, 2001). Barbara is the archetypal “bad woman” in Faroese myth, and her story evokes the patriarchal history of disciplining women who somehow do not conform. In Niels Malmros’ film adaptation, Barbara is depicted as a child of nature, bare-foot and generous with her emotions, in contrast to the composed and traditionally schooled priest Peter Arrheboe, who falls in love with her; a favourable portrayal of Barbara compared to the traditional story, and perhaps the most well-known version of the story in Denmark (Malmros, 1997). In either case, the character of Barbara sets the tone and point of view that she and other Faroese women are treated unfairly by the men who (still) decide their fate. Later in the article, an anonymous woman who is interviewed makes a remark about how she interprets the current abortion law as a political signal from the Faroese parliament and how unwanted pregnancies are a burden women must carry alone. She claims the public Faroese policy to be that: “(...) women should not decide for themselves. Which takes us back to the Middle Ages again”62 (Funch, 2018). She thus expresses the common sentiment and governing logic of abortion rhetoric, that the reproductive regime which contrasts her view is backwards and a remnant of a dark past — the same past which Barbara might have lived in. The Middle Ages might be a neutral denomination for the period from the fall of the Roman Empire to the fall of Constantinople, but connotes a darker time filled with superstition and patriarchal control.

62 Original: “Det er signalet, også fra Lagtinget, at kvinden ikke skal bestemme selv. Så er vi ligesom I middelalderen igen.”

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The contemporary Faroe Islands are the focus for the authors of “Her er der ikke fri abort” (En. No liberal abortion here) published in Politiken in 2021. When the journalists travel out of Tórshavn, they make remarks about the lack of “supermarkets”, “cafés” and “shops”, which could be considered symbols of contemporary culture. Whilst the Faroese suburbs and countryside lack these indicators of modernity, they are brimful of those symbolising conservatism and tradition, namely “churches, old and new” (Winsløv & Helmann, 2021). Similarly, the illustrations feature traditional, old buildings, which might be more characteristically Faroese even if architecture from the 20th and 21st century is more common. Despite the organisation Fritt Val being featured as representing a progressive movement advocating for change, their physical location is described with attention to aesthetics as a temporal indicator. The interview takes place at the Faroese Women’s Organisation’s house, Mettustova, which Fritt Val members have at their disposal. It is located in the oldest part of Tórshavn, with aesthetically iconic “black, wooden cottages with wet grass-thatched roofs” (Winsløv & Helmann, 2021). This dated aesthetic is highlighted inside as well, as the journalist describes how Mettustova is decorated with 1980s paintings and the portraits of grey-haired feminists. Representative of Fritt Val, Billa Jenný Jónleifsdóttir, nonetheless embodies a push for change in the Faroe Islands. She expects it will take more young and female politicians before the abortion rights issue is resolved, but still observes that liberalisation in the Faroe Islands can occur suddenly:

*Liberalisation is on the other hand quite swift. The other day there was a first reading of a motion for same-sex parents to have the same rights for parental leave as heterosexual couples. That is something I had never expected to happen ten years ago.* (Winsløv & Helmann, 2021)

Liberalisation can, according to Jónleifsdóttir, develop exponentially over time, a contrast to the parallelism in previous arguments about liberal developments in the Faroe Islands. Helgesson’s concept of heterochronicity and the accelerating unevenness of change are thus illustrated in Jónleifsdóttir’s quote (Helgesson, 2014, p. 556). And yet, narratives featured in the same article (and its accompanying podcast) also give the impression that not much has happened in these years. A 61-year-old woman has similar reflections on getting an abortion 40+ years ago as a 20-year-old who got one last year, and both have feared and still fear that their stories will be revealed by participating in the media. Coevality, as the simultaneously occurring and not developmentally organised notion of time, which Fabian offers as an alternative to colonial temporality, could be a way of framing these narratives and arguments, but is occluded by the sense of temporal standstill these examples express. In contrast to the journalistic focus on kairotic events and the isolation of the Faroese present from the long-term context, which I analysed in the first part of this chapter, these articles attempt to include history.

One example of heterochronicity and acknowledgement that Faroese society does change even if not by Danish standards, is found in the DR podcast “Abort på færøsk” (En. Abortion in Faroese) from 2013. The podcast includes a recording of muffled speaking and paper rustling before an unknown speaker in Danish states that: “In favour of the proposal were 95 votes, 56 were opposed, 17 were neither in favour nor opposed, 11 were absent. The proposal is passed and will be sent to the Prime Minister” (Gaardmand, 2013). The sound clip is from the Danish parliament in 1973 where we hear Karl Skytte, then President of the Parliament, announce that the abortion law had passed, according to the hosting journalist in the podcast Nola Grace Gaardmand, as the “culmination of several years of heated debate and women’s fight for liberation” (Gaardmand, 2013). After stating that the Faroe Islands chose to keep the old law, Nola Grace Gaardmand points out that “the story

64 Original: “Det er i år 40 år siden at folketingets daværende formand, Karl Skytte, rejste sig i folketingssalen, ringede med klokken og annoncerede det, der var kulminationen på flere års ophedet debat og kvindekamp. Danmark havde nu fået fri abort.”
still is not as simple as that and that a lot has happened in these 40 years where they have found their own quiet ways of doing things” (Gaardmand, 2013). Time functions as a separator and indication of difference between the two nations, but in “Abort på Færøsk” time does not stand still in the Faroe Islands. Development has taken place and created a Faroese custom, although it has not secured the same evolution as in Denmark.

**Faroese resistance to liberalisation**

A topos which simultaneously stirs and supports the notion of time as a chronological development towards a static and universal endpoint in the coverage is the representation of conservatism in the Faroe Islands. Sometimes presented as the explicit wish to arrest developments towards ideals, represented by foreign cultures such as Denmark’s, conservative temporal discourse represents a longing to go back in time, back to being more authentically Faroese.

In “Abort på færøsk”, two Faroese experts comment on history and time on a more abstract level than elsewhere (Gaardmand, 2013). Bishop Jógvyan Friðriksson describes the tradition of listening to the daily obituaries, which are aired after every news programme on Faroese national radio and are the primary way of announcing deaths and funerals in the Faroe Islands. To Friðriksson, the radio obituaries symbolise the heightened awareness of death in Faroese culture and he relates it to a history of being bound by nature. His commentary thus evokes an archaic culture, where it seems like the Faroe Islands do not count amongst modern nations with contemporary amenities which protect them from death and other natural forces. The other expert source, social anthropologist Firouz Gaïni, also stresses the traditional aspects of Faroese culture and sees a wish to shield Faroese tradition against global developments. According to him, it seems as if some Faroese people prefer the way life has been and try to hinder further development as a sign of cultural disintegration.

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65 Original: “Men så enkel er historien ikke. Meget er sket i løbet af de sidste 40 år, også på Færøerne, hvor man har fundet sine egne stille måder at gøre tingene på.”
While his commentary reflects the fact that the Faroe Islands have changed, it also represents the desire to maintain a cultural distance from, for example, Denmark.

The polarisation of conservative and progressive activism in the Faroe Islands is an explicit theme in an article from Weekendavisen titled ‘Annika skifti kyn’ (En. Annika changed gender), which also touches upon the status of the Faroese abortion law (Munk, 2018). The first source, social worker and former politician Karin Kjølbro, connects geographic isolation to a fear of anything foreign and thereby new:

*Society has changed a lot in recent years. Back in the day you lived very isolated up here, and the radio was primarily used to hear the weather forecast. To this day, people are sceptical of anything new or foreign.* (Munk, 2018)

Kjølbro’s reference to scepticism is not to be read as a positive trait, and since Kjølbro has devoted her life to fighting this conservatism, her reverent descriptions of older days do not position her as nostalgic or conservative. Her political life represents the development of equality and Faroese political and legal inclusion of minorities: she was one of the first two women elected for parliament in 1978; and she was the only politician who voted to amend the anti-discrimination act to ban discrimination based on sexuality in 1988, which was not amended until 2006. It then took ten years for same-sex marriage to be legalised, and now amendments to allow same-sex adoption and legal gender affirmation have followed, underscoring the increasing tempo of liberalisation in the Faroe Islands. All of these facts are included in the article and illustrate the complex landscape of conservatism and change.

Through the ensuing catalogue of sources, the push for conservation versus change is illustrated. Politician, Sonja Jógvansdóttir, has put forward a proposal in parliament regarding legal gender affirmation. Annika Ró Samuelsen, a young transwoman, hopes this will signal to the younger generations that there is a future where diversity is more accepted in the Faroe Islands. On the other end of the political spectrum, the article features Arni Zachariassen, to whom “conservatism and the Christian values are the alpha and omega of Faroese society” (Munk, 2018). Zachariassen describes himself as having taken part in the battle of values he sees as detrimental to a traditional way of life: “He is nervous that the future will be about feelings instead of traditions, and thinks that the ‘Western, individualistic lifestyle’ is a threat to family life and marriage” (Munk, 2018). To Zachariassen and those he claims to represent, society is on a negative developmental route to decline, and accepting alternative norms for reproductive citizenship is a step in the wrong direction. The journalist Amalie Schroll Munk points out that Faroese legislation contains similar values, since it “might have opened up towards homosexuals, but still includes elements which can seem outdated and out of touch with contemporary lifestyle” (Munk, 2018). “Out-dated” and “out of touch” contrasts the Faroese legislation with the political norm in Denmark, and the general tendency in the artefacts of presenting Faroese law and parts of Faroese society as backwards or stagnated. But longing for the past or the future seems like active reflections amongst the sources, who rather than being presented as mere symptoms of a Faroese lack of societal advancement have chosen to actively represent progressive or regressive movements. Discourses on liberalisation, conservatism, permanence and change are inscribed with temporal markers, which upon closer inspection can emphasise the coevality of Faroese culture despite its heterochronic formation (Fabian, 1983; Helgesson, 2014).

67 Original: “For ham er konservatismen og de kristne værdier alfa og omega for det færøske samfund.”
68 Original: “Han er nervøs for, at fremtiden kommer til at handle om følelser frem for traditioner, og mener, at den ”vestlige, individualistiske levestil” truer familielivet og ægteskabet.”
69 Original: “Det samme gælder for lovgivningen, som måske nok har åbnet op for homoseksuelle, men stadig indeholder passager, der kan virke forældede og ude af trit med en moderne livsstil.”
My final example, illustrating how the Danish kingdom’s chronology is presented, is included to show the haphazard treatment of historical dates and the way they are used to argue for Danish superiority. Tinne Hjersing Knudsen, journalist of 55 Minutter, is interviewed by Kaare Svejstrup of 24syv Morgen, when she gives a brief chronology of abortion legislation in relation to Faroese autonomy:

You could say that, when we first had access to abortion in Denmark, which we did in 1956 [sic], and that abortion legislation was abolished in 1970 and 1973, where you say that abortion was set free. But at that time, the Faroe Islands had gained home-rule. And then they simply chose that they did not want that. (Libak & Svejstrup, 2018)

Knudsen takes Denmark as a starting point and lists the years the Danish legislation was amended (though the first Danish law on abortion was implemented in 1937). Whether she refers to 1956, 1970 or 1973 as “that time” when the Faroe Islands had home-rule is unclear, but Knudsen expresses the right to decide which laws are implemented as a recent development. Knudsen continues:

So, they did not want liberal abortion and then they pretty much were allowed to go on with that. Denmark could at any time — and still can – just decide that, well you might not want it, but now you have to have liberal abortion, end of story. But no one wants to get close to that, it has sort of been up to the Faroe Islands to decide. (Libak & Svejstrup, 2018)

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70 Original: “Man kan sige at da vi første gang fik adgang til abort i Danmark, der gjorde vi det i 1956, og den abortlovgivning afskaffede vi så sidenhen i 1970 og 1973, hvor man siger at aborten den blev fri. Men på det tidspunkt, da havde Færøerne fået hjemmestyre. Og der valgte de simpelthen bare, at det ville de ikke have.”

71 My section on “The Faroese position in the Danish realm” points to how legislation in the Faroe Islands has rarely been out of the hands of the Faroese government.

72 Original: “Altså de ville ikke have den der frie abort, og så fik de egentlig bare lov til at fortsætte med det. Danmark kunne til enhver tid - og kan stadig - bare bestemme, det kan godt være at I ikke vil have det,
Acknowledging that oral discussions do not always have the most precise formulations, I still wish to underscore how nonchalant Knudsen’s representation of Faroese autonomy is. The fact that the Faroe Islands have gone from being a county to a self-governing country is perhaps implied, but this is subject to the claim that all autonomy can be revoked at the Danish government’s choice, as the history of Faroese autonomy is disregarded.

**Concluding discussion: temporal consequences and logics**

In this chapter, I have analysed temporal discourse with a focus on kairotic events, which occasion the analysed artefacts but isolate the Faroese present from the Danish kingdom’s history; and the use of chronological time, as it emphasises civilisational development and temporal difference between the Faroe Islands and Denmark.

The Trump administration’s enforcement of the global gag rule in 2017, the Irish referendum liberalising abortion legislation in 2019 and the American Supreme Court’s overturning of Roe v. Wade in 2022 all constitute events which occasion journalistic coverage of abortion rights. In Denmark these events were seized as moments to turn the focus closer to home and discuss the Faroese abortion rights situation. While explicit demands for Danish legislative action in the Faroe Islands were only presented when Radio24syv discussed the global gag rule, the conversations occasioned by global events consistently circled back to the power held by Denmark: Danish silence as hypocrisy continues to be an argument which circulates in media coverage of abortion in the Faroe Islands. While the journalistic framing and advocacy for action were not informed by a historical perspective on the Danish kingdom’s policy and the Faroese position within it, sources, such as the Danish Minister of Equality Eva Kjer Hansen, acknowledged this long-

men nu skal I have fri abort, slut. Men det er der ikke nogen der vil røre ved, det har ligesom været op til Færøerne selv at bestemme det.”
term history and used the moment to address political conventions which might resonate with an informed audience to silence it, such as the Faroese public, in contrast to the perspective adopted by journalists and expressed in their second persona. Kairotic events, therefore, express the temporal blinders for journalists attempting to establish synchronic parallels to global events, while remaining unaware of historical parallels within the Danish kingdom.

In reference to the overall Danish political reluctance to act, I propose the concept of Klaksvík Syndrome as an explanatory factor which destabilises notions of power and asymmetry in the Danish kingdom — one which a Faroese audience and sources which take a long-term perspective of political developments take into account.

Whilst my analysis of temporal discourse as kairotic events showed how journalism on Faroese abortion rights isolates its contemporary coverage of abortion from its context in the Danish kingdom, temporal discourse as the construction of chronologies takes a diachronic perspective to account for Faroese difference and slowed development. Compared to slow developments in LGBT+ rights and illustrated through the age of Faroese legislation and political perspectives, as well as the presence of the Faroese past, chronological constructions of time depict the Faroe Islands as either still in the past or haunted by it today.

The use of temporal discourse is addressed in my first research sub-question:

*How is civilisational development in the Faroe Islands inferred and contrasted to Denmark and how can this convergence in the structural logics of abortion rhetoric and colonial discourse be productively approached by scholars and journalists?*

Though one of my points has been to critique the logic of singular time towards a goal which Denmark inhabits, I do not argue against aspiring for a Danish model. Even if the Danish model has its pitfalls (e.g. in relation to later term abortion, see Heinsen, 2023, 2022), and is no longer amongst the most liberal abortion legislations globally, its
paradigmatic relocation of abortion legislation from criminal law to civil rights law is a legitimate ideal. The problem is if advocacy for change pushes forward without acknowledging that change could be a step in another direction. Considering the Danish legal trajectory to be the only possibility for abortion rights to develop ignores what the synchronic international events used as kairotic events point out: that abortion rights in this age are being both liberalised and restricted.

Demands for historical context and background information given by journalists can vary, but I will argue that a basic premise for discussing issues of the Danish kingdom, especially related to autonomy and legislation, must be a diachronic perspective and reflected use of past events. Understanding and admitting that these discussions have happened before, that Danish politicians inherit their silence from their predecessors, due to the historical developments in both parliament, legislation and the media, should be a prerequisite if this type of journalism is expected to resonate with those invested in the issue. As Ulf Hannerz points out, regimentation is an essential part of journalistic production, and time restraints push journalists to find solutions which could be quick fixes (Hannerz, 2012). Though few journalists have the privilege of time in amounts, which can avoid the need for occasional quick fixes, these kairotic events risk skewing the conversation.

Merging the spatiotemporal hierarchisation of abortion rhetoric and colonial discourse conceptually nevertheless entails a risk: is the rhetoric of Danish journalism on Faroese abortion rights an expression of the former or the latter if they are so similarly structured? Are the tendencies I analyse as colonial discourse perhaps just expressions of how all forms of abortion rhetoric structure conflicting biopolitical regimes as signs of pathology or civilisational development? I will say no, but rather than taking an either-or stance, my argument is that these similarities emphasise the need for extra caution if one as a journalist aims at producing ethically and ideologically sound coverage. As studies of reproductive and sexual rights necessarily include perspectives on how inter- and intranational geopolitics affect biopolitical debates and practices, so should the study and production of coverage of these issues.
As my further analysis points out, it is not merely temporal discourse which positions the Faroe Islands as lesser. In the analysed discourse and discussions of autonomy, the spatiotemporal hierarchisation of the Faroe Islands and Denmark is not solely based on the structural logics of abortion rhetoric: the spatial othering and performance of authority add to the impression of colonial ideology at work.
Place

In this chapter, I analyse the geopolitical spatialisation of the Danish kingdom in the textual corpus and how place-based rhetoric about the Faroe Islands functions in the Danish media’s coverage of the Faroese abortion rights situation. I explore how the Danish kingdom is represented spatially as geographically divided but politically close, unified but asymmetrical and how the Faroe Islands as a place is defined by its environment of majestic nature, isolation and old-fashioned aesthetics. Based on the overarching research question about how autonomy is represented, I focus on how the Faroe Islands are presented as politically dependent on Denmark, and how Faroese society is presented as materially dependent on its natural environment, thus emphasising the geopolitical aspect of this biopolitical subject.

After first focusing on how the Danish kingdom is imagined as a community, I analyse how the Faroe Islands are expelled as a separate and lesser place in discussions of the Faroe Islands taking place in the artefacts. This rhetorical mode of classification is partly informed by the tradition of imagology, as the study of national stereotypes, and I emphasise the metaphor of the Faroe Islands as Denmark’s backyard as a governing trope (Leerssen, 2007, 2016).

I then progress to analysing the backyard metaphor in the context of two separate rhetorical modes, which are affirmation of the Danish kingdom’s asymmetry and naturalisation of Faroese culture (Spurr, 1993). Through this, I specify which topoi are prevalent in the analysed material and how they are organised and used to infer something about the Faroe Islands, and argue that the backyard trope is representative for the circulated notion of the Danish term Rigsfællesskabet. By including a postcolonial perspective, I emphasise its productive potential when analysing Danish rhetoric about the Faroe Islands, and deconstruct the logics of relating Faroese geography to culture.
Classifying and imagining the Danish-Faroese community

Just like national borders are based on human decision-making, the notion that the people dwelling within these borders represent a more or less homogenous group is a social construct. The acknowledgement of the rhetorical nature of national identities and relationships is widespread, even though popular and political opinion might reflect a view of these as natural or inherent (Anderson, 2006). These “imagined communities”, to quote a central theorist of national identity theory, Benedict Anderson, are the result of years of national discourses, creating a sense of communion and “horizontal comradeship” between people, who might have never met (Anderson, 2006, p. 7). Conversely, these imagined communities are defined by their difference to other communities, lending nationalism the rhetorical structure of definition through negation, as for instance being Danish is defined as not being Swedish, and Faroese as not being Danish. This mode of classification is central to national romantic and nationalist discourse, which in reverse also classifies everything different as Other:

*The tendency to attribute specific characteristics or even characters to different societies, races or nations is very old and very widespread. The default value of human contacts with different cultures seems to have been ethnocentric, in that anything that deviated from accustomed domestic patterns is Othered as an oddity, an anomaly, a singularity.* (Leerssen, 2007, p. 17)

With the romantic nationalist ideals of the long 19th century, the notion of national identity and ethnic essentiality were cemented, and nations and cultures as natural and fundamental became the subject of scientific study. Even though this essentialist-determinist understanding of nationality has been challenged in the 20th century, national character is in many contexts still perceived as an ontological and autonomous existence, “as a ‘real’ thing pre-existing its articulation and persisting independently from it” (Leerssen, 2007, p. 20). This thesis is based on the idea that national identity should rather be conceived of as “internalized collective self-images taking shape in the structural context of a Self-Other opposition” (Leerssen, 2007, p. 22, 2016). Joep Leerssen, and others in the scholarly field of imagology, focuses on how national identity takes
form in the juxtaposition of images of self (auto-images) versus images of others (hetero-images) and it is relevant to consider how the Faroe Islands balance on the verge of being comparable to the norms of the audience which journalists address, before their difference becomes the central argument. Central to my analysis, and the reason for including imagological concepts, is thus this dynamic of viewing the Danish example as the norm and the Faroese case as Other: the analytical concepts of auto- and hetero-images are an efficient starting point before I turn to a postcolonial approach to this us-them dichotomisation. Firstly, I analyse the construction and apparent surprise about Faroese difference.

**Proximity equals similarity: surprise and amnesia**

A recurrent topos in the textual corpus I analyse is an explicit surprise over the fact that the Faroe Islands’ legislation can and in fact does differ from Danish legislation. This can be ascribed to the general lack of knowledge about the Faroe Islands in Denmark, but more to the point, they address preconceptions about which forms of difference and similarity are expected within the Danish kingdom.

Journalist Tinne Hjersing Knudsen, who participates in 24syv Morgen and hosts 55 Minutter on Radio24syv, several times describes the basics of the Faroese and the Danish laws, pointing out that these laws are not the same “even though we are connected to the country in the Danish realm”, and expresses the same surprise about differing legislations, as many if not most of the Danish sources do. Despite a lack of knowledge being legitimate, this sign of ignorance is foregrounded as a sensational trait, evoking a sense of exigence; a need to inform the public about this fact. One of Knudsen’s sources in 55 Minutter, Charlotte Wilken-Jensen, gynaecologist and representative of the sexual and reproductive health NGO Sex og Samfund (En. Sex and Society), also states that:

> What is interesting is that very few even know that there is not liberal abortion in the Faroe Islands. People cannot even imagine that, because you think the Faroe Islands are
Wilken-Jensen thereby also equates surprise with legitimate ignorance and bolsters this argument on the warrant that the Faroe Islands’ proximity to Denmark (“so close”, “a sister country”, “part of the Danish realm”) should result in similar legislation. Being physically or politically close to Denmark ought to amount to a similarly “enlightened” culture, the Faroe Islands surprise by apparently not being so.

When interviewed by Radio24syv’s journalist Morten Svejstrup, spokesperson on healthcare for the Liberal Alliance, May-Britt Kattrup underscores that liberalising abortion is a decision for the Faroe Islands to make and not an issue which the Danish government is to enforce. She then adds:

But I think it is great that we are bringing it up here, that we debate it, we put focus on it, and I was really — well when you called me yesterday and asked if I wanted to come in, I had no idea that there wasn’t liberal abortion in the Faroe Islands. I was totally surprised, because I had just taken it for granted, that of course there was. So I was really, yeah, it was actually you who told me that there wasn’t. (24syv Morgen, 1. marts 2018, 2018)

Original: “Det interessante i det her er, at der er meget få der ved, at der ikke er fri abort på Færøerne. Det kan folk simpelthen ikke forestille sig, fordi man synes at Færøerne det er da et oplyst land og det er så tæt på, og broderland og alt muligt, og del af Rigsfællesskabet.”

Original: “MK: Jeg synes der skal være fri abort i alle lande og alle stater. Kvinder skal have lov at bestemme over deres egen krop og det er det eneste rimelige. SK: Og det har de jo så ikke på Færøerne, en del af Rigsfællesskabet, et land som vi står meget meget nært her i Danmark. Hvad tænker du om det? MK: Altså stod det til mig, så skulle de da have det. Men det står altså til Færøerne selv. De har hjemtaget de her områder, de har færøsk selvstyre og det er jo ligesom Færøerne der skal bestemme, hvad de vil med deres lovgivning i deres land. SK: Ok —”
Her knowledge is limited to assuming that the Faroe Islands and Denmark automatically share legislation, despite separate governments and legislative realms being a central principle in the Faroese Home Rule Act and thereby the basis of the current Danish kingdom. Notably, this lack of knowledge does not seem like something Kattrup feels obliged to excuse, even though it could be considered foundational for Danish politics.

Surprise is also foregrounded when discussing the lack of dialogue on the matter, which again is linked to the proximity between Denmark and the Faroe Islands. When interviewing Mette Gjerskov, spokesperson for Socialdemokraterne (En. Social Democrats), who has been actively criticising other countries with restrictive abortion legislations, Knudsen emphasises this:

*But, Mette Gjerskov, that is what I think is so weird, well that, how can it never have been brought up, when the Faroe Islands are so close to Denmark? We see them, we talk to them all the time, we even speak the same language, we are in the Danish realm, and all kinds of things. Why is it that the Vatican State gets a clout round the head before the Faroe Islands do?* (Knudsen, 2018a)^75

Even though proximity can take on both material, symbolic and abstract meanings, Knudsen’s statements do not make sense in a literal way. The Faroe Islands are located 1,400 kilometres from Copenhagen, which defies being close; it is unclear who the “we” are and how they communicate with a Faroese “them” as there is no daily collective

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^75 Original: “Jamen, Mette Gjerskov, det er også det jeg synes er så mærkeligt, altså, hvordan kan det være at det aldrig er blevet taget op, når Færøerne de er så tæt på Danmark? Vi ser dem, vi taler med dem hele tiden, vi taler endda det samme sprog, vi er i Rigsfællesskabet, og alt muligt. Hvorfor er det så Vatikanstaten, der får en over nakken, før Færøerne gør?”
forum for deliberation between Faroese and Danish politicians; and people in the Faroe Islands might understand Danish, but they speak Faroese, which Danish authorities rarely understand or speak. The ignorance here represents a naive impression of unity, because even though Danish might be an official language in all three parts of the realm, there is no legitimate basis for referring to a “we” speaking “the same language”. Knudsen thereby goes to some lengths to connect the Faroe Islands and Denmark and expresses an imagined sense of linguistic and political union. This image of a “we” and a “them” as supposedly similar attests to the Danish hetero-image of the Faroe Islands as straddling the position of being simultaneously within and without Danish national identity.

In the later interview with Minister of Equality, Eva Kjer Hansen, Knudsen repeats the question and represents this naive view of the Danish kingdom as a forum:

> But no matter what, you have a concrete forum, where you could have this discussion, well, you could go over and talk to some of the Faroese members of the Danish parliament for instance, who are in Copenhagen. Or you could take the discussion in the Danish realm because we are sort of connected that way. Why don’t you? (Knudsen, 2018b)

What is meant by the Danish realm as a forum is again not clear, as there is no mention of any specific political group or meeting representing a forum. Though this image of community can be disqualified as simplistic, it reflects a view of how the Danish kingdom —

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76 Original: “Men I har jo trods alt et helt konkret forum, hvor I kan tage den diskussion, altså, du kunne gå over og tale med nogle af de færøske medlemmer af Folketinget for eksempel, der er i København. Eller så kunne du tage diskussionen op i rigsfællesskabet, fordi vi ligesom er bundet sammen på den måde. Hvorfor gør du ikke det?”
77 The Faroese and Danish government have organised diplomatic relations, and the Faroese members of the Danish parliament are part of political group structures, but the latter are not representatives of the Faroese government, as they are elected as members of the Danish parliament. These details remain unclear in the coverage, which groups the entire political landscape of the Danish kingdom into one group of political representatives.
is organised. One which Rebecca Adler-Nissen describes as a forgetting of the historical basis of its current organisation:

> Danish collective identity discourses are structured around the idea of a perfect fit between state, nation and people. This implies a collective amnesia when it comes to its imperial past. This makes Faroese arguments about more autonomy within a Danish federation deeply disturbing. (Adler-Nissen, 2014, p. 74)

What I term surprise, Adler-Nissen refers to as a deep disturbance, which both illustrate the ideological confusion this topos marks: the collective topos of proximity is inferred from an assumption of similarity, generating the recurrent topos of surprise. What Adler-Nissen describes as “Danish collective identity discourses” could also be considered the doxa in Danish society, or what basic common ground the journalists can address when discussing the Faroe Islands’ position. As Ulf Hannerz points out, journalists hope to make “effective instant claims on audience memories, hoping to find the contexts for new items already available there” (Hannerz, 2012, p. 217). As I pointed out in the previous chapter, the historical context for the current formation of the Danish kingdom is absent from Danish coverage of the Faroese abortion rights situation, which could also be conceptualised as imperial amnesia. Knudsen’s naive interpretation of the Danish kingdom’s organisation and the inferred topos of surprise from proximity not equalising similarity can thus also be related to the forgetfulness or lack of memory of the Danish public about Denmark’s history. Resulting in a basic assumption of a perfect fit, where the Danish kingdom is one state, nation and people, but where the Faroese position is left unaccounted for in most contexts. The historical details of the Faroese development from being a county to becoming a self-governing territory is left out, as the final example in the Time chapter also pointed out.

This collective identity discourse is represented in the Danish Constitution, where the first chapter states that it is in effect in all parts of the Danish kingdom, and that legislative power resides with the monarch and the government (Folketinget) in union and cannot be delegated out (Grundloven (En. The Danish Constitution). (1953, L. Nr.

https://Www.Retsinformation.Dk/Eli/Lta/1953/169, 1849). Scholars, such as Jørgen Albæk Jensen, have pointed to the conflict between how the Danish Constitution defines the organisation of the Danish kingdom and how it is enacted through, for instance, the Home Rule Act of the Faroe Islands, since it delegates power to the Faroese government (Heimastýrislógin (En. the Faroese Home Rule Act), 1948; J. A. Jensen, 2003). Jørgen Albæk Jensen tries to describe this legislative construction on Radio24syv, but his quote is used to emphasise the power vested in the Danish government to overrule the Home Rule Act (Ingrisch & Jeppesen, 2017)”

Rather than going into details about the scholarship which debates the current construction of the Danish kingdom as unconstitutional, I will claim that it is not awareness of these details of the Danish Constitution that makes the participants of the analysed material surprised by the fact that the Faroe Islands have their own laws. It is rather caused by the lack of knowledge and awareness about the Faroe Islands in general, which lacks an acknowledgement of the period which led to Faroese autonomy in the form that it has today.

Another version of this is when Anna Winsløv from Politiken discusses her reporting in the podcast “Abort på Færøerne – Skyld, skam og hemmeligheder” (En. Abortion in the Faroe Islands – Guilt, shame and secrets) (Schmidt, 2021). Winsløv says that she and her colleague were surprised to find out that:

[t]here is a place in the Danish realm, where abortion is not liberal. Because you know, the Faroe Islands are a part of the Danish kingdom, and we have the same Queen, but there is a place in the Danish realm, where women do not automatically have the right to abortion in the same way as we do in Denmark. (Schmidt, 2021)

78 Original: “Ja, det er muligt, fordi al lovgivningsmagt i Danmark ligger jo hos Folketinget og hos regeringen i fællesskab, og det giver altså også muligheden for at lovgive om ting der foregår på Færøerne.”

79 Original: “Da min kollega Rasmus Helmann og jeg begyndte at researche den her historie, så kom det faktisk rigtig meget bag på os, at der er et sted i rigsfællesskabet, hvor aborten ikke er fri. Fordi at altså,
While the Danish Constitution states that legislative power is shared by the monarch and Folketinget, the monarch’s role in legislative matters is a formal requirement to sign laws. The monarch has not signed laws in the Faroe Islands since the Home Rule Act, and though Queen Margrethe II is monarch of the Danish kingdom including the Faroe Islands, her position is in no way related to having similar laws. The Queen is rarely included in descriptions of the political organisation of the Danish realm, as she has no agency over political decision-making, but by Winsløv she is evoked as a symbol of union.

Spatialising the relationship: the backyard

The immediate expectation that the Danish kingdom is a homogenous legal realm is thus a central topos, formulated in a variety of ways, where surprise is presented as legitimate and information about this difference becomes a validating reason for covering the issue.

As I have shown, this difference is formulated in decidedly spatial terms, where journalists and sources describe the Faroe Islands as being “so close”, “a part of the Danish realm” or “a place in the Danish kingdom”. As I defined in the introductory chapter, the union between Denmark, the Faroe Islands and Greenland is officially called the Danish kingdom or the kingdom of Denmark (Da. det danske kongerige), but in Danish vernacular a variety of terms are used. The most common is the Danish idiom rigsfiællesskab, which is translated into the unity of the realm (or just the Danish realm for brevity) in government contexts, but more literally translates to imperial union. As an oxymoron, combining a hierarchical notion of empire with the vertical connotation of a union, this word illustrates the ideological confusion of the Danish kingdom, which is further expressed through a recurrent metaphor found in the analysed material, the Faroe Islands as Denmark’s backyard.

Færøerne er en del af det danske rige, og vi har denne samme dronning, men der er altså et sted i det danske rige, hvor kvinder ikke automatisk har ret til fri abort, på samme måde som vi har i Danmark.”

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Lisa Holmfjord from Dansk Kvindesamfund confirms the topos of surprise, but frames it as deliberate ignorance, as she points out that most “ordinary Danes” are not even aware of the abortion situation in the Faroe Islands, while Danish politicians choose to ignore it:

*And then it sounds hollow in our ears, or at least my ears, because we do not tidy up in our own backyard. It is as if we have chosen to place ourselves at a blind angle, where we cannot see the weeds growing down at the back, and that is convenient because it is not pretty, but I do not think that the politicians want to remove them.* (Ingrisch & Jeppesen, 2017)

In Holmfjord’s analogy, the Faroese backyard is overgrown with weeds, a shameful and unattractive ground, which Denmark chooses to ignore. Danish politicians are positioned as having the power to remove the weeds, i.e. the abortion legislation, and the backyard metaphor gives an impression of Denmark as the main house, with the Faroe Islands at the back under their domain. Holmfjord repeats the metaphor and rephrases the same points even more directly later in the same interview:

*Shouldn’t we take a look into our own backyard? That is what we are not doing. We are closing our eyes and pretend like there are no weeds growing there, and there are. And that is really bad. It is as if the Danish government values the Danish realm and the*

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80 Original: “Ja, allerførst så skal der selvfølgelig lyde en klapsalve for at vi går ind markant og markerer os som stat i forhold til Trumps global gag-rule. Men der er ikke fri abort på Færøerne, og det er de fleste almindelige danskere slet ikke klar over tror jeg. Men politikerne ved det godt, og det ved Ulla Tørnæs også når hun udtaler at retten til at bestemme over egen krop er en dansk mærkesag. Og det kommer til at runge hult i vores ører, eller i hvertfald i mine ører, fordi at vi netop ikke rydder op i vores egen baghave. Det er som om, at vi har valgt at placere os i en blind vinkel, hvor vi ikke kan se det ukrudt der vokser nede bag i, og det er bekvemt for det er ikke kønt, men jeg tror heller ikke at politikerne har lyst til at fjerne det.”
peace that rests over it higher than women's rights to decide over their own bodies.
(Ingrisch & Jeppesen, 2017)\(^8\)

Not clearing the weeds in the backyard is thus an analogy for keeping the peace in the Danish kingdom by compromising essential principles such as bodily autonomy. The backyard is just vague enough for it to make sense as an image, but on the other hand, why would it disturb the peace to maintain your own garden? Territorial conflicts are usually based on apparent trespassing, which you would not be doing in your own backyard. No matter what, the backyard metaphor frames the Faroe Islands as subordinate to Denmark as Danish land and emphasises the asymmetry of the geopolitical relationship of the Danish kingdom. The backyard metaphor foregrounds the empire rather than the union. Even though Holmfjord is pointing to Danish politicians and scolding them for their passivity, her remarks become dismissive of the Faroe Islands.

Political candidate, Bjørn B. Brandenborg also addresses what he considers hypocrisy by Danish politicians in 24syv Morgen, Radio24syv’s second show on the issue, which aired a year or so after Lisa Holmfjord’s participation. Brandenborg recognises Danish politicians’ willingness to criticise Donald Trump, “but when it is about our own backyard and the Faroe Islands, then we are struck by a thundering silence”, and thus reuses the backyard metaphor (24syv Morgen, 2018)\(^8\). Brandenborg dismisses the claim about not engaging out of respect for the Faroese “self-rule law”, since this issue according to him is “about much more than the EU, fishing quotas or other areas of trade, which the Faroe Islands usually are a part of: This is about whether women themselves should be part of deciding

\(^8\) Original: “Skulle vi lige kigge i vores egen baghave, det er jo det vi ikke gør. Vi lukker øjnene, og lader som om at der ikke vokser noget ukrudt der, og det gør der. Og det er rigtig skidt. Det er som om, at den danske regering, de vægter Rigsfællesskabet, og den fred der hviler over det, højere end kvinders ret til at bestemme over egen krop.”

\(^8\) Original: “Vi er rigtig gode til at gå ud og kritisere Donald Trump når han skærer støtten til afrikanske nationers abortstøtte, men når det kommer til vores egen baghave og til Færøerne, så er vi ramt af en larmende tavshed.”
over their own bodies” (24syv Morgen, 2018). Brandenborg presents the legitimacy of starting a debate as deriving from the asymmetry of the Danish kingdom, since “when it is in the Danish realm under Denmark, and it is a Danish law they follow, I also think that Denmark has a right to start this debate” (24syv Morgen, 2018). Even though he emphasises the right to start a debate, and nothing more, his focus on the Faroe Islands as “under Denmark” and as having a “Danish law”, when combined with his use of the backyard metaphor, presents the right to critique as a consequence of the relationship, instead of rightful action to address reproductive and sexual rights issues in general.

In the fourth show from Radio24syv about abortion rights in the Faroe Islands, Tinne Hjersing Knudsen also returns to the metaphor of the Faroe Islands as backyard and tries to establish it as a fitting term: “now that the Faroe Islands are in the Danish realm, can we not agree they thereby are in our backyard, they are someone we are really close to?” (Knudsen, 2018b). To which Minister of Equality Eva Kjer Hansen, whom Knudsen interviews, agrees. The collective topos of Faroese proximity to Denmark is thereby repeated, but not immediately used to infer anything about the relationship. It is just established as metaphor for the Danish kingdom. Instead of elaborating what this means, Knudsen quotes an opinion piece from Karen Ellemann, the previous Minister of

83 Original: “Og det forstår jeg simpelthen ikke, og undskyld mig, det er jo sådan at man undskylder det tit ved at sige at det handler om selvstyreloven og at Færøerne selv skal have ret til at bestemme, men det her emne det handler altså om meget mere end EU, fiskekvoter eller andre handelsområder, som Færøerne plejer at være med i. Det her handler om hvorvidt kvinder selv skal være med til at bestemme over deres egen krop.”

84 Original: “Nej, det er jeg ikke enig i. Og jeg synes at vi er kommet lidt længere i den debat, det her handler ikke længere om - det er rigtig nok, at Danmark ikke skal blande sig i al lovgivning på Færøerne, og det gør vi heldigvis heller ikke, men det her spørgsmål er bare noget der rækker langt over den der røde linje, som jeg synes der er, når det her handler om kvinders ret til selv og bestemme over deres egen krop, og når det er i rigsfællesskabet under Danmark, at det er en dansk lov de følger, så synes jeg også at Danmark, de har et ansvar til at tage debatten.”

85 Original: “THK: Eva Kjer Hansen, du er ligestillingsminister for Venstre, vi skal til at runde af, men altså når nu Færøerne er i rigsfællesskabet, er vi så ikke enig om at de sådan er i vores baghave, det er nogle vi er rigtig tæt med?
EHK: Det er jeg enig i.”
Equality, and Ulla Tørnæs, Minister of Developmental Aid, where they do not mention the Faroe Islands, but state that: “If we bury our heads in the sand and let fear of involvement and trench warfare keep us from raising issues, then our calls to other countries seem shallow and become decidedly easier to avoid” (quoted in Knudsen, 2018b). Knudsen elaborates that,

This just reminds me of this fear of involvement towards the Faroe Islands for years and I am sort of getting it from you as well —you want to encourage the Faroese politicians to do something, but you are not willing to go in and criticise them, specifically. (Knudsen, 2018b)86

From presenting the Faroe Islands and Denmark as neighbours and “close” in a potentially positive sense, the opinion piece speaks of trench warfare, and thus frames the issue as a military conflict in stalemate. By implication the two countries are made more equal, where Denmark’s perceived superiority is restricted through a fear of involvement. The image of trench warfare might remind a Faroese audience of the Klaksvík conflict, and the ensuing fear of involvement represented by the Klaksvík Syndrome. The reason for this stalemate is nevertheless not discussed, and the only thing Knudsen and Hansen manage to agree on is that the Faroe Islands are close to Denmark and placed in or as their backyard.

86 Original: “Tilbage i marts der skrev din forgænger, Karen Ellemann, som altså var ligestillingsminister der, og Ulla Tørnæs, et langt debatindlæg i Kristelig Dagblad om hvor vigtig det er at Danmark både kæmper for ligestilling og kvinders rettigheder ude i verden og så hjemme i Danmark. Der står ikke noget om Færøerne i det her, men der står det her, som jeg synes er lidt interessant: “Hvis vi stikker hovedet i busken, og lader berøringsangst og skyttegravskrige afholde os fra at tage problemerne op, så lyder vores opfordringer til andre lande hule, og er markant nemmere at komme uden om”. Det minder mig bare lidt om denne her berøringsangst der har været overfor Færøerne i flere år, og den hører jeg altså lidt fra dig nu, du vil opfordre de færøske politikere til at gøre noget, men du er ikke villig til at gå ind og kritisere dem, sådan konkret.”
What this means in practice is left unclear, and the backyard metaphor is used by critics of Danish politicians’ passivity as an argument for some sort of intervention. I argue that it mirrors the term *rigsfællesskab* by both constituting a collective, a joint piece of land, but underscoring Danish superiority as having ownership of its subordinate areas.

**Affirming asymmetry**

The above analysis shows how journalists and sources try to organise the Danish kingdom and use spatial terms to illustrate the vertical and horizontal aspects of this imagined community. The Faroe Islands are not included in a Danish “we” and exist as an extension of the Danish domain, though this position is complex upon closer inspection. The backyard is an empty signifier until it is defined as “overgrown with weeds” and “shameful”, and in this section I will expand on how negative connotations are circulated within the textual corpus and present the Faroese backyard as inferior.

As I discussed in the introductory chapter, the Faroe Islands are not a Danish region but have not been unanimously defined as a postcolony in the relevant literature. This neither-nor position is complex, but in this analysis I apply David Spurr’s *rhetorical modes*, which he has developed in analysis of colonial discourses of journalism, travel writing and imperial administration, to point out how this form of national identity discourse expresses problematic constructions of power.

David Spurr refers to the rhetorical modes of nonfiction and journalism as involving “tropes that come into play with the establishment and maintenance of colonial authority, or as sometimes happens, those that register the loss of such authority” (Spurr, 1993, p. 2). This loss of authority is highly present, as my analysis has shown through the recurrent topos of surprise.

Spurr’s book, *The Rhetoric of Empire*, focuses in comparison to Edward Said’s *Orientalism* on a generalised taxonomy of colonial discourses, where their differences are acknowledged but also found to form recurrent structures (Said, 1978). Spurr lists eleven rhetorical modes of colonial discourse, which are not to be considered definitive nor
discrete, as they entwine in different forms and will necessarily show aspects which need their own categorisation. *Classification*, which Spurr subheads as *The Order of Nations*, can be considered an overarching theme in my analysis, and reflects my previous point that the Faroe Islands are classified as almost Danish, but still defined as outside of a Danish self-image. Classification can be considered a general aspect of all national discourse, as it defines and separates nationalities. The backyard topos further categorises the Faroe Islands as subordinate or lesser, and as different from or other than the central norm represented by Danish legislation.

In the subsequent topoi, these classifications as subordinate and other are expressed in modes which relate more directly to colonial argumentation. Spurr describes the mode of *Affirmation* as *the White Man’s Burden*, a phrase which since Rudyard Kipling’s poem by the same name has expressed the self-claimed duty of white people as colonisers to manage the troubles of non-white people as colonised. To establish this duty as self-evident, the coloniser must present the colonised as lacking the means to manage themselves to the degree that intervention is imperative. To draw on Said, this construction of the other as lacking above all mirrors the imperial centre as able, which underscores that colonial discourse “as such has less to do with the Orient than it does with ‘our’ world” (Said, 1978, p. 12). The rhetoric about the Faroe Islands is just as much a constitution of Denmark as rightful superior as it is an illustration of the Faroe Islands as in need of help. My dissection of the arguments thus far is not intended to say that the coverage of the Faroe Islands is false or intentionally misinformed, but rather that it functions as an establishment of Denmark’s superiority and the need to export Denmark’s superior ideals to whomever might challenge this status. As Spurr underlines, media work through displaying the world in all its disintegrating forms for popular consumption, where “the rhetorical economy of the media creates a demand for images of chaos in order that the principles of a governing ideology and the need for institutions of order may be affirmed” (Spurr, 1993, p. 109). The mode of affirmation and its establishment of a hierarchical union is also based on the formulation of an “us” represented by a collective subjectivity and a “them” who threaten the institutions of order and unity (Spurr, 1993, p. 122).
In a 2021 article in BT.dk about the abortion rights situation in the Faroe Islands, gynaecologist Charlotte Wilken-Jensen, who has commented several times on the issue, underscores her claim that Denmark should exert pressure on the Faroe Islands:

*I think we have to. It is unacceptable, that we are in an imperial union (Da. et rigsfællesskab) with a country which on this issue behaves like the darkest developing country (Da. sorteste uland).* (Astrup, 2021)\(^{87}\)

Denmark thus needs to assert its authority. The Danish term *uland* was initially used as a contracted form of *underudviklet land* (En. *underdeveloped country*), but later redefined as meaning *udviklingsland* (En. *developing country*). It is used interchangeably with the term *third world country*, which usually refers to countries which are “technically, economically and industrially underdeveloped country, often with bad infrastructure, singular means of export and low levels of education” (‘Uland,’ n.d.). For perspective, the Faroese gross domestic product per capita has been higher than Denmark’s since 2018 (*Hagstova Føroya (Statistics Faroe Islands)*, 2021). To be clear, Wilken-Jensen does not claim the Faroe Islands to be a developing country, but makes a simile, where the adjective *darkest* or *blackest* is reminiscent of travelogues to distant and exoticised lands, such as the colonies which Spurr analyses.

This link between the Faroe Islands and developing countries began in the first episode on Radio24syv, where the initial critique was based on a perceived hypocrisy between critiquing Trump’s reimplemention of the global gag rule and not also critiquing the Faroe Islands. A critique which was further bolstered by featuring a quote by Minister of Developmental Aid, Ulla Tørnæs, who had said that:

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\(^{87}\) Original: “Det mener jeg, at vi skal. Det er uacceptabelt, at vi er i rigsfællesskab med et land, som på det her område opfører sig som det sorteste uland”.

124
It is a Danish key issue that the right to decide over your own body also includes women in the developing countries. (Quoted in Reporterne, 2017)\textsuperscript{88}

Though it can be assumed that this principle also covers women in so-called industrialised countries, the issue at the time was about how abortion care was made a reason to annul all development aid from the US. This discrepancy between the cases is underscored by several of the interviewed sources, who make a point about not comparing the Faroe Islands to so-called developing countries. Danish politicians are thus pressed to describe the Faroe Islands in sympathetic terms in response to the comparison to so-called developing countries. Henrik Brodersen, spokesperson for Dansk Folkeparti (En. The Danish People’s Party) makes a point about the Faroe Islands being a “really Western-oriented, well-functioning society and they are perfectly capable of taking care of their population (...) There is no comparison between third world countries and the Faroe Islands” (Ingrisch & Jeppesen, 2017)\textsuperscript{89}. His mentioning of Western-oriented might reflect his party’s aversion to Muslim and Middle Eastern societies, but the need to state that the Faroe Islands are a well-functioning society reflects a discrepancy in the way this conversation is established by comparison.

Journalist Anna Ingrisch asks similar questions in different ways to get the spokesperson for Socialdemokraterne Karen Gaardsted to acknowledge the so-called hypocrisy, which Gaardsted denies. Ingrisch asks if Gaardsted can see the hypocrisy in “not wanting to address criticism towards a Western country, even though they have exactly the same

\textsuperscript{88} Original: “Det er en dansk mærkesag at retten til at bestemme over egen krop også gælder i kvinder i udviklingslandene”.

\textsuperscript{89} Original: “Nu skærer man jo nok alle over en kam, men det kan man selvfølgelig sagtens sige, og man kan sige at vi går foran i alle udviklingslande før netop at give kvinder ret til fri abort, men her synes jeg også, at det er vigtigt at sige, at Færøerne, det er et rigtig vestorienteret, velfungerende samfund. Og de kan sagtens tage hånd om deres befolkning.”

125
legislation which they have in these developing countries, which you are happy to criticise” (Ingrisch & Jeppesen, 2017).90

At no point has a direct comparison been presented between legislation in the Faroe Islands and countries in which organisations are stripped of funding because of the global gag-rule. The comparison solely rests on Ingrisch’s assumption that so-called developing countries do not have the same legislation as in Denmark. Where the organisations stripped of funding operate has not been specified, so it is not possible to make an actual comparison, and in any case Ingrisch’s argument confounds the critique of Donald Trump for defunding development aid organisations and criticising countries which do not have the same form of legislation as in Denmark.

May-Britt Kattrup, spokesperson for Liberal Alliance, argues in the same programme in favour of Faroese autonomy by separating the Faroe Islands from the typical image of a developing country. She points out that the Faroe Islands are:

another… setup… it is another culture, than the one we have, and, but on the other hand it is a democratic society, and the women aren’t oppressed, and it is women who themselves must stand up and say something about this. Because they aren’t like in many African countries, well, there they do not have the opportunity to stand up and step in and do much. (Knudsen, 2018a).91

90 Original: “Nej, men når der ikke er fri abort, så er der ikke fri abort, så er det vel ligemeget om det er et udviklingsland eller om det er et vestligt land. Det kunne måske for nogle kritikere, jeg tror faktisk at Lisa Holmfjord fra Dansk Kvindesamfund nævnte det selv, fremstå endnu mere hyklerisk, at man så ikke vil rette kritikken hen mod et vestligt land, fordi selvom man har helt samme lovgivning som de har I de her u-lande, som man gerne vil kritisere.”

91 Original: “THK: Hvad synes du at det siger, om det færøske samfund, at de stadigvæk har en abortlovgivning der er fra 1956?
MK: Det er jo et andet… setup… det er en anden kultur, end vi har, og, men det er jo på en anden side et demokratisk samfund, og det er jo også nogle kvinder, som ikke er undertrykte, og det er jo også nogle kvinder som selv må stå frem og sige nogle ting omkring de her. Fordi de er jo ikke ligesom i mange
Despite defining the Faroe Islands as decidedly different from Denmark, Kattrup does not categorise them as a country which Denmark apparently has a right and obligation to intervene in, while insinuating that some countries might be.

In Radio24syv’s 55 Minutter, the Faroe Islands are directly classified with countries with problematic abortion legislations (Knudsen, 2018a). In the 55 second summary at the beginning of the show, Denmark is highlighted as a pioneer country, and the Faroe Islands are considered a part of Denmark, before the potentially dramatic consequences are mentioned:

*Faroese women go to Denmark to have the procedure, or they risk health or a prison sentence by having an illegal abortion at home. This puts the Faroe Islands in the same category as countries like Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Ireland and Pakistan. What do you think? Should Denmark put pressure on the Faroe Islands to legalise abortion? (Knudsen, 2018a)*

This comparison is based on whether these countries permit abortion on the basis of the pregnant person’s request alone, i.e. living up to the Danish norm for abortion. Comparing the legislation in more detail, some countries permit abortion when abortion is requested on the basis of foetal disability, rape or incest, or if the health of the pregnant person is at

afrikanske lande, altså der har de jo ikke muligheden for at stå op og stå frem og gøre ret meget. Men på Færøerne er der jo ikke tale om undertrykkelse af kvinden, så de har, de burde have nogle andre muligheder for at selv ligesom træde i karakter på det her område. Men jeg tror ikke det er nemt for dem, altså det er det ikke, men det er nok derfra at det må komme i første omgang. Og så kan vi andre hjælpe, ved at rejse debatten, ved at tale om den, ved at bakke dem op i debatten. Der kan vi hjælpe. Men selve lovgivningen er på Færøerne, og det må vi respektere.”

risk (Ethiopia, Burkina Faso, Kuwait), while Saudi Arabia only permits abortion if health is an issue, and Pakistan has a total ban on abortion (World Health Organization, 2023).

These countries are otherwise rarely compared to Nordic countries such as Denmark and the Faroe Islands, and some of them are renowned for breaching human rights and not securing elementary rights for women and sexual minorities. A similar comparison of abortion legislation could be made with European countries such as Belgium, Italy and Switzerland, who do not permit abortion upon request, as in Denmark; or with Great Britain or Finland, whose legislations list the requirements for permitting abortion and technically still regulate abortion under criminal law, though abortion in practice is permitted in all cases within 12 weeks of gestation. Countries such as Poland, Malta and Andorra have total bans on abortion, which reflects their religious governments and could be a fitting comparison to the Faroe Islands. By choosing to compare the Faroe Islands to culturally different and geographically distant nations, the argument that the Faroe Islands are vastly different and virtually foreign is made clear.

The comparison between the Faroe Islands and Ireland is also emphasised in a later version of 55 Minutter. As in the other episodes, a 55 second summary presents the show’s theme:

A large majority of Irish voters on Friday said yes to changing the Irish constitution, making abortion legal in the country. Ireland has since 1983 had Europe’s strictest abortion legislation. Until now, Irish women have only been permitted abortion if their lives were in danger because of their pregnancy. If they for instance were pregnant because of rape or incest, well, then they could not have an abortion. The yes to abortion in Ireland puts pressure on the countries who say no to abortion. Not least Northern Ireland and the Faroe Islands. The latter are a part of the Danish realm. We ask Minister of Equality Eva Kjer Hansen, who is happy about the yes in Ireland, if she also has hopes that women in the Faroe Islands get the right to liberal abortion. (Knudsen, 2018b)
While it is fair to say, that the Faroese law is comparable to the former Irish law, in that neither permitted abortion based on request, the Faroese law permits abortion in far more cases than the former Irish law did. The highlighted example in the 55 second summary of abortion care based on criminal conduct, is for instance clearly legal in the Faroe Islands. What is also pointed out in the programme is that the referendum was about the Irish constitution, which since 1983 had stated that the life of a foetus was equal to the life of the person carrying it. A remarkable form of anti-abortion legislation which is rare in Europe and does not exist in the Faroe Islands.

These comparisons and associations localise the Faroe Islands amongst the troubled countries with restricted access to abortion, and while this general argument is fair, the details are vague, and the spatial discourse moves the Faroe Islands further away from Denmark than is perhaps necessary. Regarding these references to Danish superiority over the Faroe Islands, and the need to interfere, I argue that they express the rhetorical mode of colonial discourse in the form of affirmation of the Danish burden to save the Faroe Islands from themselves.

The agential asymmetry between the Faroe Islands and Denmark is further emphasised by presenting Faroese society as subjected to its natural environment — a juxtaposition of human and material agency, which the next section explores as the rhetorical mode of naturalisation.

**Naturalising culture**

My focus in this section on topoi is on how descriptions and depictions of the Faroe Islands are used to argue for their status in the Danish kingdom and to account for why abortion legislation differs from the rest of the kingdom. If the topos of the backyard is imagined as a concrete place, a landscape, or a geological formation, what do the images and verbal illustrations of the Faroe Islands make out this domain of the Danish kingdom to be? Inspired by W. J. T. Mitchell argument that landscape not merely are but do
something, and as cultural practice are instruments of power relations I question how landscapes are circulated and a “focus for the formation of identity” (Mitchell, 2002, p. 2)

As I have pointed out, nature’s influence on culture is both a scientific subject and a common assumption. Of course, our environments influence our behaviour just as geography can shape societies, and ascribing these influencing factors is a common part of how we humans make sense of why others are not like us. Seeing the historical condition of humanity as an effect of natural causes or considering differences in natural surroundings as accounting for moral differences between people is both a historical and ongoing way of making meaning but is also one with links to problematic national identity discourses.

The ascription of nature as affecting the moral constitution of others is a historical element of colonisation, which has rightly been discredited as reductionist essentialism, even if it continues to inform our commonplace discussions of others and why they are different to us. This ought to be seen as a discursive move and David Spurr defines this rhetorical mode as Naturalisation; as depictions of Wilderness in Human Form, where concepts such as the noble savage and children of nature represent the romanticised images of the apparently less civilised.

*Hence a rhetorical posture in modern journalism: the interchangeability of natural and social phenomena as applied to the Third World survives from its earlier manifestations in nineteenth-century natural and moral philosophy.* (Spurr, 1993, p. 165)

Images of nature abound in media coverage of the Faroe Islands, and in the ensuing section, I explore its argumentative function as naturalisation of the relation between the Faroese people and their environment as presented to a Danish audience. How is the culture made sense of by commenting on the geographical material? And how is this culture able to explain the resistance to liberal abortion rights?
Faroese nature is comparable to other mountainous islands and regions, such as New Zealand and Scotland, but is starkly different to the Danish countryside. Cliffs, mountains and sloping green fields with no trees make up the traditional images of Faroese nature, be it in tourism related material or journalism about Faroese issues, including abortion rights. Establishing a visual common ground, which reminds the audience of where the story is taking place, is fairly easy in the Faroe Islands, since the landscape is a central topos in all coverage. Recalling the Faroese landscape is a way of making effective instant claims on audience memories, since the image of Faroese nature is most likely already available there (Hannerz, 2012, p. 217).

The 2018 feature article in Kristelig Dagblad “Her er aborten for de få” (En. Here abortion is for the few) presents as a typical example of visual framing (Funch, 2018). The article opens with a photograph of Nólsoyarfjørð, the fjord outside of Tórshavn, with the article’s headline in black font across the image. Whereas the printed version is limited in space for photographs, the online version features several photographs of Faroese nature and landscapes as dividers between text sections; in a form of parallax scrolling, the images in the background move slower than the text, adding a visual depth to the article as it progresses.

The second page has a black background with white text stating: “In the Faroe Islands, everyone speaks reverently about the unborn child — but women who have had abortions feel that the social control is suffocating” (Funch, 2018)93. These are typical sentiments ascribed to both anti-abortionists (reverence) and those having abortions (shame), but here they are located specifically to the Faroe Islands by visual and verbal reference.

93 Original: “På Færøerne taler alle med respekt om det ufødte barn — men kvinder, som har fået en abort, føler, at den sociale kontrol er kvælende.”
The next page is another photograph, this time from the beach in Bøur viewing the islet Tindhólm, whose jagged peak is iconic and has been used in tourism material and in footage in several international film and television productions. The perspective is sublime with an overcast sky reaching far behind the cliffs and waves cascading over the beach in the foreground. Over the photograph is a transparent grey text box with the quote from Jørgen-Frantz Jacobsen’s novel Barbara, which I analysed in the chapter on Time. The quote, which recalls a history of misogyny in the Faroe Islands, overlays the uninhabited rocks in the vast sea, and the two hetero-images stand as complementary pillars in Faroese culture and nature. By including the quote from the novel, journalist Maja Funch invokes the repeated and repeatable image of the Faroe Islands created across cultural references (tourism, history and popular culture), and mobilises a Danish audience who might only be familiar with some of these topoi but can infer their relationship: the evil tongues surrounding Barbara still speak badly about women in today’s Faroe Islands.

The first interview in the article is with a woman who has had two abortions, and is set at a café in Tórshavn. Funch describes their location, and comments on the demographic and geographic environment:

*Tórshavn has around 20,000 inhabitants, and around 50,000 people in total live in the Faroe Islands. The mountains tower over villages and towns, and the landscape is naked and grass clad. Here the gaze pierces everything. Metaphorically speaking as well.*

(Funch, 2018)

The paragraph moves from statistical facts to illustrative descriptions of the landscape surrounding Tórshavn and the villages of the Faroe Islands. Society is materially related to

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94 Original: “Tórshavn har cirka 20.000 indbyggere, og på Færøerne bor der omkring 50.000 i alt. Fjeldene rejser sig over bygder og byer, og landet er bart og græsklædt. Her gennemborer blikket alt. Det gælder også som metafor.”
nature, as social control is represented through the omnipresence of mountains and their perspective. They tower over the population as if they exert control, and the mountains’ perspective reminds one of Jeremy Bentham’s panopticon, which in the artefact embodies Michel Foucault’s point about discourse being a similar construct which surveys all subjects (Foucault, 1977). As Klaus Dodds also points out in his introduction to the field of geopolitics, mountains have a certain geopolitical allure, where “mountains make people and as such we can explain, even predict, human history” (Dodds, 2015, p. 4). The small population of the Faroe Islands is subject to its surrounding nature—not the other way around.

The next image in the article features Villingadalsfjall, a mountain majestically looming over the old part of the small village of Viðareiði, whose church faces the mountain like a manmade David versus the cosmic Goliath. Ocean meets earth meets air meets volcanic rocks formed millions of years ago and the small human homes are tiny compared to the visual geography taking up almost all the image. The mountain seems to lean symbolically on the church tower, as if local religion is the only thing keeping the town from succumbing to the surrounding elements.

The mentioned images separate the text sections in the article, and from Tórshavn the narrative travels north to where the audience is introduced to the anti-abortion activist Sylvia. The descriptions of the journalist’s road trip begin by quoting the psalm Nearer, my God, to Thee, and focuses on the abundance of Christian congregations and churches in Tórshavn, which follow the road:

As the car rushes north, chapels, the mission house Libanon and houses with names such as Gloria, Betesda and Zion are tucked in under mighty mountains. The mountains
are almost like a cathedral, here humanity is small and the sky/heaven endlessly large.
(Funch, 2018)\textsuperscript{95}

Again, the might of the mountains is accentuated, and the buildings for religious congregations are in comparison small safe havens. The description fits the photograph of Viðareiði as well, as the link between nature and religion is wrought in an explicit simile. The dual meaning of the Danish word *himmel* as both sky and heaven bring out the contrast between civilisation and the celestial.

Even though the religious sentiments might be implicit from the beginning, Faroese nature is emphasised as the defining trait before turning to religion. The readers might not know much about Faroese culture and politics, as general knowledge about Faroese societal issues is, as we have seen, sparse in Denmark. The previously mentioned mountains and the use of landscape photographs might activate some of the most general preconceptions of the Faroe Islands (that there are mountains, and they are awe inspiring), before exploring societal dynamics further. It is noteworthy how it is not until after several pages, we first see any explicit mention of religion, which might be read as implicit by a religiously oriented audience. The newspaper *Kristelig Dagblad* has, as its title implies (En. *Christian Daily Paper*), an explicit focus on existential, cultural and religious themes, which nonetheless is not mentioned from the onset in this article. Descriptions of Faroese society are embedded in descriptions and illustrations of nature before the consequences of the natural environment are related to the high prevalence of Christian congregations and activity. Nevertheless, the relationship between nature and religious culture might be implicit for the audience.

\textsuperscript{95} Original: “Mens bilen suser mod nord, putter bønhúsid (sic), Missionhus Libanon (sic) og huse med navne som Gloria, Betesda og Zion sig under vældige fjelde. Bjergene er næsten som en katedral, her er mennesket lille, og himlen uendelig stor.”
Politiken’s 2021 article also uses similar imagery, but in the style of drawn illustrations (Winsløv & Helmann, 2021). The online version of the article begins with a dynamic illustration of a Faroese village with a church and the surrounding mountains and ocean, comparable to the photograph of Villingadalsfjall in Kristelig Dagblad (Funch, 2018). In the print version, this is also the first illustration that heads the article.

The green mountainside is dark and sombre, and the contrasting red church roof is centralised as if it is facing the black and grey mountains across the fjord, protecting the small village houses from the natural elements. Across the illustration a white transparent text box appears when you scroll through the digital version, presenting the article's full title: “No liberal abortion here: 20-year-old Bjørg looked for prams, while she waited for her doctor’s response. She feared a rejection” (Winsløv & Helmann, 2021). The illustration is replaced by a white background as the reader scrolls through the digital version, and the subheading sums up the Faroese situation and the article’s focus: women risk motherhood against their own wishes and being ostracised from a society where many equate abortion with murder (Winsløv & Helmann, 2021). The rest of the illustrations are kept in the same illustrated style and show a woman holding a pregnancy test, a gynaecological examination chair, the previous woman walking between traditional Faroese houses and past two women looking at her, and the woman walking alone down the hill from the cathedral in central Tórshavn. This location is also mentioned verbally in the article:

Distances are short in Tórshavn. From the smoking area outside the nightclub Sirkus, down by the docks, we can faintly see the capital’s whitewashed cathedral. With its slated roof and golden spire, it marks the entrance to the rocky peninsula, which the old

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part of town is built on. There are the easily recognisable government buildings with a view of container ships and snow topped mountains. (Winsløv & Helmann, 2021)

Tórshavn becomes a meeting spot between the secular and the religious, nature and civilisation, democratic institutions and the symbols of Faroese capitalism. While the nightclub Sirkus has been featured in articles about Faroese culture before, since it is the first LGBT+ bar and houses many art and political events, it is not described further in this article.

On the visual side, the illustrations pick out elements which might seem essentially Faroese. The header illustration with the red-roofed church looks remarkably similar to Kunoy around 50 km north of Tórshavn and one of the most northern points of the islands compared to the centrally placed Tórshavn. The impression of the illustrated woman walking through the same town or city on all the images might not work with those familiar with the Faroe Islands, but the icons fit well with the overall image and the collective topoi of the Faroe Islands: the small traditional houses, the beautiful landscape, the omnipresent churches, and the nosy gaze of everyone around you—all present at all times, just like the panoptic mountains.

Contrasted to Tórshavn are the small villages scattered across the islands, which at the same time are contrasted to Danish suburbs in a peculiar manner:

The drive out of Tórshavn does not involve a view of multi-lane highways and malls like City2 and Fields. Instead, it is of wild flocks of grazing sheep with horns on their foreheads and ringlets on their stomachs. Vibrant green mountains and steep cliffs take

your breath away. And the weather is having a hard time deciding what season it is.
(Winsløv & Helmann, 2021)98

The descriptive passage again links to the general image and collective topoi of the Faroe Islands: picturesque, predominantly populated by sheep and meteorologically dramatic, but almost in an unintentionally ironic way, since there are many places in Denmark and the rest of the world without malls like City2 and Fields (since these are in Copenhagen), Faroese sheep are domesticated and have two horns on either side of the head (i.e. not on their foreheads), while the illustrations of the articles are kept in quite mellow, dark and decidedly un-vibrant colours. The section still establishes the place-based argument where nature anticipates religious fervour:

Outside the capital are also the many villages of the Faroe Islands. Small and medium sized village communities where supermarkets, cafés and shops are a long drive away. Instead, most villages have a church, old and new alike. Which reflects the fact that almost 40% of the Faroese population attends church at least once a month, according to a Faroese Gallup poll. Believing in God is a big deal, and religion is omnipresent when ethical issues are discussed. Privately as well as politically. (Winsløv & Helmann, 2021)99

Compared to the article in Kristelig Dagblad, the introductory elements in Politiken feature religion, as the first image includes a church. Like the article in Kristelig Dagblad, the

98 Original: “Kører man ud af Tórshavn, er det ikke flersporede motorveje og storcentre som City2 og Fields, man har udsigt til. Det er i stedet vilde fåreflokke med horn i panden og slangekrøller på maven, der græsser. Skriggrønne fjelde og stejle bjerge, der tager pusten fra én. Og et vejr, der har svært ved at beslutte sig for, hvilken årstid det er.”
images and texts highlight the natural elements and add a dramatic tinge to them, though the link between natural formations and social formation is not as predominant as in Kristelig Dagblad. The connection between short distances and snooping gazes is still inferred in a manner which relates to the inferential topoi of nature defining culture.

Spatial discourse is not only linked to the natural environment, but also to the architecture and other humanly made aesthetics. The Politiken journalists interview Billa Jenný Jónleifsdóttir from the abortion rights organisation Fritt Val, and meet her in the Women’s Organisation house in the old part of town, where “the capital’s otherwise single-unit houses (Da. parcellignende huse) are replaced by black wooden huts with wet, green grass-thatched roofs” (Winsløv & Helmann, 2021). It is hard to translate the Danish word “parcellignende” in a fitting way, since “single-family house” or “detached house” does not connote the traditional suburban feel of the Danish term for standard housing. Though the wooden houses figure more predominantly on the visual side, the predominance of houses like those also found in Denmark is mentioned too. In the Faroe Islands, the oldest and therefore most central architecture is not the standard European half-timbered house or blocks of apartment buildings found in most big cities in Denmark. Black wooden huts with grass-thatched roofs might thus seem odd to a Danish or unfamiliar audience, while a Faroese audience is well aware that this area is right next to the government’s offices, bars and restaurants and is a central, vibrant area.

The 2013 DR podcast “Abort på Færøsk” (En. Abortion in Faroese) also makes use of the sights when travelling across the Faroe Islands to visit different sources. The podcast is recorded partially in a studio and partially in the Faroe Islands, where the journalists have travelled to and travel between different islands and locations. By using on-site recordings, their travels are featured in the soundscape of the podcast, for example when the

100 Original: “Nede ved havnen ligger Tórshavns gamle bydel, hvor hovedstadens ellers parcellignende huse bliver erstattet af sorte træhytter med våde grønne grætage.”
journalists travel from Tórshavn to the southernmost island Suðuroy. The sound of rain and a horn sounding from the ferry make up the background for Gaardmand’s voice-over, which describes the view and setting of the ferry crossing:

On the trip, we sail past several of the eighteen islands, which together make up the North Atlantic island kingdom, the sun is high in the sky, while we sail past the grass-clad rocky islands rising directly out of the Atlantic Ocean. (Gaardmand, 2013)\textsuperscript{101}

Comparable to most tourist descriptions of the Faroe Islands, Gaardmand emphasises the natural beauty of the Faroe Islands in good weather and the contrast between steep cliffs and soft grass. Gaardmand calls the Faroe Islands an island kingdom (Da. ørige) instead of a group of islands (Da. øgruppe), which almost presents the Faroes as a separate entity and not “part of Denmark/the Danish kingdom”, as most journalists formulate the relationship. A large part of their visit takes place in Tórshavn, where Gaardmand describes the individual settings of the stops they make, giving the audience a mental map of Tórshavn. The central hospital (Da. Landssygehuset), which is the only place abortions can take place, is described as located on a hill sloping out to the sea and can be seen from most parts of the small capital. The medical institution is thus centralised in the narrative they create. The journalists also visit the Women’s Organisation’s house, the same grass-thatched 300-year-old house which houses Frítt Val now, and from there, they travel north to Lamba on the second-largest island Eysturoy, where the sound from a religious radio station in the car illustrates the change of setting. These two localities are repeated throughout the analysed material as the location for abortion rights and anti-abortion activism respectively and emphasise an internal Faroese dynamic. This nuancing of the

\textsuperscript{101} Original: “Vi kører ombord på færgen, der tager os fra Tórshavn til Færøernes sydligste ø, Syderø. En lille ø, to timers sejlads fra hovedstaden, hvor små 5.000 af Færøernes i alt 48.000 indbyggere bor. (Lyd af regn og skibshorn). På turen sejler vi forbi flere af de østlige øer, der tilsammen udgør det nordatlantiske ørige, solen står højt på himlen, mens vi sejler forbi de græsbeklædte klippeøer, der rejser sig direkte op af Atlanterhavet (Skibslarm).”
Faroese map is an alternative to the generalised image of the Faroe Islands as one homogenous place.

The *Weekendavisen* article “Annika skifti kyn” about the progressive and conservative movements in the Faroe Islands also uses spatial rhetoric to underscore the variation of opinion across the Faroe Islands (Munk, 2018). Journalist Amalie Schroll Munk illustrates the two wings of liberal progressives versus conservative traditionalists in two ways. First, through the quotidian meeting between the socialist politician Sonja Jógvansdóttir, who has put forward the proposal concerning legal gender affirmation, and the Christian centrist politician Bill Justinussen, who is often quoted for his stance against abortion and LGBT+ rights:

*In the canteen, where the whale killing painting has pride of place on the wall, we meet a large group of Sonja Jógvansdóttir’s political colleagues, including Bill Justinussen from the strongly Christian and traditional centre party Miðflokkurin. (…) The two politicians greet each other kindly.* (Munk, 2018)

Bill Justinussen is not quoted, but only figures as he is passing by, but readers might have noticed his name before, as he is an often-quoted source. His radical and opposing view is mentioned briefly, while their cordial encounter is emphasised in an independent clause.

Secondly, the two wings are embodied through different locations in the Faroe Islands and the topoi of Tórshavn versus the North:

102 Original: “I kantinen, hvor grindedrabsmaleriet troner på væggen, støder vi på en stor håndfuld af Sonja Jógvansdóttirs politikerkolleger, herunder Bill Justinussen fra det stærkt kristne og traditionelle midterparti Miðflokkurin. I årevis har det kristne parti kæmpet imod ethvert politisk forslag, som har i sinde at forstyrre landets kristne grundsyn. De to politikere hilser venligt på hinanden.”
An hour’s drive from Annika Samuelsen’s home is the village of Gøta on the northernmost island Eysturoy. There are 60 kilometres between Tórshavn and Gøta, but the distance between village and capital seems enormous. Here in the northern part of the Faroe Islands, the anti-Christian revolution has not gained a foothold. Surveys show that 62 percent of the northern population believes that God created humans. In Tórshavn that number is 40 percent. (Munk, 2018)\(^{103}\)

Munk describes the polarisation between so-called conservatism and liberal-mindedness in abstract terms throughout the article, which nonetheless was “tangible as you moved around in the kingdom in the Atlantic” (Munk, 2018)\(^{104}\). Here she points out the concrete geographical and ideological difference and how it overlaps.

**Between exotification and nation-building**

In DR P1’s *Abort på Færøsk* (En. *Abortion in Faroese*), Nola Grace Gaardmand interviews the Faroese bishop, Jógvan Fríðriksson, who personallyarticulates his view of how Faroese culture is formed by its geographical location. The journalists are invited to his offices, where he makes a point of listening to the radio at noon, when the daily obituaries are read aloud. As mentioned previously, all major news programmes in the Faroese broadcasting corporation are followed by obituaries, meaning that the most recent deaths and coming funerals are mentioned three times a day. Fríðriksson describes this tradition to the journalists, who ask if this means that all Faroese people are reminded of death daily. Fríðriksson replies:

\(^{103}\) Original: “En times kørsel fra Annika Samuelsen’s hjem ligger byen Gøta på den nordligste ø Eysturoy. Der er 60 kilometer mellem Tórshavn og Gøta, men afstanden mellem bygd og hovedstad synes enorm. Her i den nordlige del af Færøerne har den antikristelige revolution ikke fået fodfæste. Undersøgelser viser, at 62 procent af nordeøernes befolkning tror på, at Gud har skabt mennesket. I Tórshavn er tallet 40 procent.”

\(^{104}\) Original: “Polariseringen er til at tage og føle på, når man bevæger sig rundt på riget i Atlanten. Kløften mellem konservatismen og frisindet har sjældent været større.”
Yes, yes, but death is a part of life, right? The Faroe Islands are, as the British soldiers said during the war, “the land of maybe”. We are in the middle of the Atlantic. We live so close to nature that we depend on nature, both as ally and adversary. A sailor for instance, when he plans the coming year, everything depends on if the weather permits it, and if and if, and whether and whether and if. Nothing is a given. (Gaardmand, 2013)\textsuperscript{105}

Friðriksson here refers to the idiosyncratic and unofficial national slogan of the Faroe Islands, perhaps stemming from the British occupation during the Second World War, reflecting how no plans are ever final, since bad weather can always get in the way. As a sort of rephrasing of the Christian dictum \textit{deo volente} or \textit{God willing}, the weather is elevated to the highest governing force of the Faroe Islands, and only if “the weather is willing” then humans can enact their plans. Gaardmand asks Friðriksson whether he suspects this affects the Faroese opinion on abortion, to which he replies: “Yes, quite clearly. It is intimately related, I think. But for us life is, as one says, holy” (Gaardmand, 2013)\textsuperscript{106}. Gaardmand states that Friðriksson himself does not oppose abortion but claims that it is part of the Faroese DNA to be conflicted about the subject. Gaardmand relays his points: “While most support women’s rights to bodily autonomy on one hand, the Faroese are affected by a deep veneration of nature, death and life” (Gaardmand, 2013)\textsuperscript{107}. Friðriksson continues: “In older days, you lived so close to nature, and you were bound by nature, right? That meant that you lived in covenant with life and death every day. So, in the Faroes


\textsuperscript{106} Original: “NGG: Tror du at det er noget som påvirker færingers forhold til det her med abortspørgsmålet. JF: Jaja, det er ganske klart. Det hænger nøje sammen tror jeg. Men for os er livet, som man siger, helligt.”

\textsuperscript{107} Original: “Men ifølge JF ligger det nærmest i færingerernes DNA, at være splittet om abortspørgsmålet. For mens de fleste på den ene side, bakker op om kvinders ret til at bestemme over egen krop, er færingerne samtidig påvirket af en grundlæggende ærefrygt over for naturen, døden og livet, mener han.”
it is intimately related” (Gaardmand, 2013). As the head of the Faroese church, Friðriksson is expected to relate Faroese culture to higher powers and deem life as holy, but his positioning of nature and the weather as ultimate powers almost seems to recall a primordial sensitivity predating religion. Through his ethos there is a clear link between this awe of nature and religious awe, but his interview is remarkably void of explicitly religious argumentation.

In the Weekendavisen article “Annika skifti kyn” from 2018 about progressive and conservative movements in the Faroe Islands, the place-based rhetoric of Faroese sources frames the article. The article begins by quoting Karin Kjølbro, whom Munk has visited in her home:

“Look at that painting behind you”, Karin Kjølbro says and points towards the end wall in her living room in the Tórshavn-suburb of Argir. Next to one of Mikines’ famous whale killing paintings, there hangs a smaller painting in a golden frame. “It shows the village of Skarð. In 1913 all the village’s men perished in a shipwreck. The only survivors were the women, a newborn baby boy and a very old man —the sea had taken everyone else. A few years later, the village was deserted. No-one has ever moved back. Can you imagine what this nature does to people?” she says and points to the mutinous sea, which billows and roars right outside the living room’s large windows. (Munk, 2018)
Through this comparison, the same agency which shaped the village in the painting is found right outside of Kjølbro’s home: the wind and the sea are necessary but hazardous for a Faroese way of life. The article does not feature a picture of the painting, but this image and images of Faroese nature and culture topically frame the rest of the articles. Kjølbro continues and makes the connection between nature and religion, which Bishop Jógvan Friðriksson in Abort på Færøsk left implicit: “Nature and religion are intertwined in the Faroe Islands. They always have been. You had to believe that someone was protecting you, when you went to sea or walked the mountains” (Munk, 2018). The need to trust some higher power is thereby made central in Faroese culture by Kjølbro’s own words.

Later Munk pays a visit to the Faroese parliament, where the wall decor similarly mimics its outside environment and illustrates Faroese culture:

> In the Faroese Lagting in the centre of Tórshavn is a whale killing painting by Mikines like the one in Karin Kjølbro’s living room. The motif bears witness to a part of Faroese culture steeped in tradition, because even though liberal mindedness has snuck in and turned Faroese society upside down, there are some things you cannot touch. Despite strong criticism from animal rights activists from all over the world, the sea in the Faroese bays is still coloured red by the blood of pilot whales, when the hunt is conducted summer after summer. You do not just change matters like these. The same goes for legislation, which might have opened towards homosexuals, but still includes sections which can seem outdated and out of touch with contemporary lifestyles. Abortion has not yet been liberalised and the issue is so inflamed that neither one nor

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the other wing seriously dares enter the struggle. You do not just change matters like these. (Munk, 2018)\textsuperscript{111}

Munk again uses an illustration of the Faroese environment to further exemplify the seemingly deep-rooted Faroese mentality. As mentioned previously, when I analysed an excerpt from this quote, the claims about culture are not evidently ascribed to anyone but are presented as Faroese doxa, though the words are the journalists’ responsibility.

Mikines’ whale killing motifs are renowned and iconic, and so is the whale killing itself, which is easily described by the topoi of blood-coloured bays. By repeating the same sentence, which underscores that some things are not to be changed, Munk likens the whale killing tradition to the abortion legislation: neither is something the Faroese are willing to change, especially not due to external pressure, and both can engender heated debates, both abroad and in the Faroe Islands.

Obstetrician and gynaecologist, Katrin Kallsberg, also states the link between abortion legislation and Faroese environment:

There is something about children, family and nature in Faroese culture. A sense of cohesion, almost mythical. It is as if you as a society have decided that it is good that we have a lot of children. Children belong, they are valuable, a blessing. It is not in the same


145
way considered a tragedy to get pregnant early on in the Faroe Islands as it is in Denmark (Winsløv & Helmann, 2021)\textsuperscript{112}.

What we cannot discern from this quote is whether Kallsberg could be questioning the propriety of this myth, if it is Faroese doxa which should be challenged, or if it is something Kallsberg qualifies her own decision-making by. She does explicate a perceived difference between Faroese and Danish culture, but the journalists do not engage her reasoning further than repeat it through the emphasis on nature, dramatic landscapes and monumental mountains, which I have analysed elsewhere.

The examples show that this essentialising naturalisation is not only done by non-Faroese and not only in colonial ways but is also used by ethnic groups in reference to themselves. Still, it is important to understand this as two sides of the same national identity discourse. The instrumentalisation of an outside gaze of oneself has perhaps been central in the development of a national self in many countries and has definitely been so in the Faroe Islands.

Kim Simonsen describes travel literature about the Faroe Islands before and throughout the long 19\textsuperscript{th} century, and how exotification by foreign visitors has been internalised in the Faroese image of a national self (Simonsen, 2012). The view of the Faroe Islands as different from others, unique in practices and traditions and incomparable to their neighbouring countries, has served as a basis for Faroese nation-building. The view of the Faroe Islands as isolated, picturesque and the epitome of traditional Nordic culture, and at the same time desolate, uninhabited and religiously conservative is as old as the first formulations of what it means to be Faroese (Simonsen, 2012). From this discourse of visiting travellers

defining national characteristics, Faroese nationalist rhetoric has evolved. The Faroese claim to autonomy and acknowledgement is thereby based on this instrumentalisation of an external othering, which warrants the status as a nation of its own.

Bergur Rønne Moberg has further described this instrumentalisation of exotification and self-exotification in the development of Faroese cultural tourism (Moberg, 2021). Highlighting a large-scale campaign from Visit Faroe Islands, where breathtaking images of Faroese nature were accompanied by words with the prefix un- (Unspoiled, unexplored, unbelievable), Moberg points out the recurrence of self-exotification as comparable to ways of defining the Faroe Islands as a distinctive destination in Faroese literature (Moberg, 2021). He gives examples from William Heinesen's authorship, where the renowned author reflects on portrayals of the Faroe Islands lacking alternatives, since both Faroese nationalists and Danish authors maintain an exoticised “folklorist view of the Faroe Islands” (Moberg, 2021, p. 213). Folklorist in the meaning of romanticised, simplified and essentialised, to which Heinesen offers a corrective with the novel The Lost Musicians, which begins with the iconic sentences:

*Far out in a radiant ocean glinting like quicksilver there lies a solitary little lead-coloured land. The tiny rocky shore is to the vast ocean just about the same as a grain of sand to the floor of a great dance hall. But seen beneath a magnifying glass, this grain of sand is nevertheless a whole world with mountains and valleys, sounds and fjords and houses with small people. Indeed in one place there is even a complete little town with quays and storehouses, streets and lanes and steep alleyways, gardens and squares and churchyards. There is also a little church situated high up from whose tower there is a view over the roofs of the town and further out across the almighty ocean.* (Heinesen, 2006 in Moberg, 2021, p. 219)

Though this paragraph can be sentimental to a Faroese audience such as myself, and its emphasis on Faroese minuteness, isolation and distance is evident, the almost humorous point that there nevertheless exists a whole world with small people and even a little town juxtaposes the otherness of Faroese existence. As the rest of the novel explores existential
questions, social reality and the grandeur and triviality of human life, it becomes a story that could have unfolded in many places, even if the Faroese environment is centralised in the narrative. William Heinesen was one of the Faroe Islands’ most acclaimed authors, writing poetry and novels, ranging from social to magical realism. Heinesen received the “little” Nobel prize (The Swedish Academy’s Nordic Prize) in 1987 and had previously been nominated for the Nobel Prize in Literature (NobelPrize.org, 2023). Allegedly, when hearing rumours that he was positioned to win, Heinesen withdrew his nomination, pointing to the fact that Faroese literature should be honoured by a writer who has written in Faroese, while he himself wrote in Danish: a story that attests to the conflicted nature of Faroese subjectivity as affected by Danish culture.

Heinesen’s literature has a way of representing the Faroe Islands as a microcosm, rather than an anomalous outskirt, as “more than an abandoned geography, but even as a world in itself” (Moberg, 2021, p. 219). Moberg states the difference between exoticism and self-exoticism as the idealised and othering objectification of “distant” geographies by colonial-continental cultures versus the reflective resistance of the objectified culture’s own position of utterance (Moberg, 2021, p. 208). The rhetoric of self might be reminiscent of the rhetoric of othering but differs in subject positions and function: speaking about oneself is vastly different than speaking about others. Moberg’s use of the dichotomisation of distant geographies versus colonial-continental cultures is a productive distinction, and so is his point about the difference between roles and positions, which in the next chapter will inform my focus on Authority.

Concluding discussion: negating Faroese and human agency
The Danish heteroimage of the Faroe Islands straddles the position of being alike and apart from the Danish autoimage, as they are expected to be similar but deemed other. I draw upon Rebecca Adler-Nissen’s argument that Danish collective identity discourses are structured around the Danish Constitution’s idea of a perfect fit between state, nation and people, which makes arguments about Faroese autonomy disturbing (Adler-Nissen, 2014, p. 74). As journalists leave out vital details in how the Danish kingdom is organised,
it both reveals a lack of knowledge and an expectation that it is shared by the audience, and “implies a collective amnesia of its imperial past” (ibid.).

A recurrent metaphor in Radio24syv’s coverage is the notion of the Faroe Islands as Denmark’s *backyard*, which I claim illustrates the ideological confusion of the rhetoric of the Danish kingdom: the backyard metaphor gives the impression that Denmark is the main house, and is used to state that its Faroese backyard is overgrown with weeds — a shameful and unattractive place, which Denmark chooses to ignore. It mirrors the term *rigsfællesskab* by both constituting a collective, a joint piece of land, but underscoring Danish superiority as in charge of its subordinate areas.

I thus present the backyard metaphor as a governing image of the Faroe Islands as place, which is further defined by two subsequent topoi which illustrate the colonial aspect of this discourse. The Faroe Islands are compared and almost called a developing country and related to other distant, colonised and orientalised countries with wide-ranging abortion legislations. This rhetorical mode and inferential topos affirms the asymmetry between Denmark and the Faroe Islands, and positions the Faroe Islands as inferior. The other topos relates to how Faroese culture is inferred from its environment as naturalisation, where religion, abortion scepticism and the Faroese mentality is discussed in relation to the mountains, the weather and the sea. As I conclude I point to the difference between exoticism and self-exoticism as the idealised and othering objectification of “distant” geographies by colonial-continental cultures versus the reflective resistance of the objectified culture’s own position of utterance.

The analysed aspects of how Faroese autonomy is tied to notions of the Faroe Islands as a place through spatial rhetoric is addressed by my second research sub-question:

*How is autonomy regarding bodies and nations, as both the individual bodies of Faroese people and the national body politic of the Faroe Islands, represented in contemporary Danish journalism?*
I have chosen national identity discourse and postcoloniality as theoretical approaches, also because the central difference between mine and Prasch’s study is that I study how place is used to make sense of people, i.e. the culture of Faroese society and how it differs from what is presented as the norm to a Danish audience. The Faroe Islands as place is not merely described to make an abstract argument; part of the place-based rhetoric functions to make sense of how Faroese culture is or has become what it is. The Faroe Islands are located 14,000 kilometres away from Denmark, and though images and vivid descriptions can give an impression of being there or here, when journalists report about or from the Faroe Islands, this does not amount to the Faroe Islands being a persuasive argument in and of itself in the sense that Prasch refers to: when journalists conjure images of majestic mountains and spatial distance in the Faroe Islands, the audience is separated from the situation and reading or listening along in, most likely in Denmark. The Faroe Islands are, and have for the most part been, a mediated place for a Danish audience; an accumulated national image which to other than Faroese inhabitants primarily exists as a representation.

This representation is as shown reductionist and essentialist at times and points to the issue with nationalist discourses which emphasise the interchangeability of culture and nature. Though I primarily emphasise this issue as a way of negating a Faroese public as audience, the consequence can also be an employment of antiabortion logics in a context that seeks the opposite ideal. Mitchell urges critics to contemplate “the fit between the concept of landscape in modernist discourse and its employment as a technique for colonial representation” (Mitchell 2002, 3). This representation of Faroese cultural traits in the recurrent form of landscape and dated architecture represents a form of effacement of Faroese culture as nothing other than the setting it exists within — as if the Faroese context dominates the Faroese inhabitants. Nathan Stormer addresses how women and pregnant bodies are absent in anti-abortion rhetoric, while the idealised foetus is presented as an almost self-sufficient and isolated being (Stormer, 2000). Based on Nancy Fraser’s critique of the Habermasian ideal for public deliberation, Stormer analyses the analogy between the exclusion of women from the bourgeois public sphere and that in the discursive space surrounding abortion: “The woman’s absence from the
image of a fetus also erases the question of her consent to the pregnancy” (Stormer, 2000, p. 134). When the Faroese abortion rights situation is discussed as a constellation of children – family – nature, the personhood of women as other than mother’s is neglected, both when Faroese sources and Danish journalists make this connection.

I claim there is a risk in repeating this negation of agency, when Danish journalism underemphasises the autonomy of Faroese individuals and argues against the autonomy of the Faroese body politic by advocating for Danish rule. If Faroese individuals and the body politic are circumscribed by a focus on what power nature and the Danish government holds, the actual people who should make decisions on Faroese abortion legislation are excluded from the deliberative space about abortion rhetoric within the Danish kingdom. I continue this argument in the next chapter by pointing to how Faroese sources are represented.
Authority

In this third chapter of analysis, I focus on the notion of *authority*, as a meeting between the ethos and agency of journalists and sources. I have chosen the ambiguous *authority* as governing term for the deictic markers of “I” or the “who”, to represent the dual facets of what my analysis is aimed at emphasising: how participants in Danish media coverage of the Faroese abortion rights situation discuss autonomy and embody the positions they represent in the Danish kingdom. When taking an overview of the many newspaper articles and transcriptions of radio material, the use of the first-person pronoun “I” or “we” is common and marks the abundant use of sources, which directly represent the parties involved, as well as the journalist’s own use of their position in the conversation. They also represent the *us* and *them* as my previous analyses have outlined.

In the first part, I analyse how journalists position themselves, marked by the use of the first person singular or plural. While some journalists explicate their own opinions and positions, others perform an omniscient role, which partially relates to the genres they report in. I analyse how the differently performed roles imply an audience; a second persona, which reflects the apparent ideological perspectives on the Danish kingdom that have been emphasised in the previous analytical chapters. Explicating the journalistic position in the text can be an expression of adherence to the ritual of strategic objectivity, but also an acknowledgement of the status of the journalist, as narrator, orchestrator and authority of the text.

The second part explores source authority, and how sources are positioned. Firstly, through my taxonomy of representational, discursive and vernacular sources, which leads to a perspective on the difference between Danish and Faroese sources. While the first two types are both Danish and Faroese, the vernacular position emphasises the Faroese consequence-victim, and I analyse how sources are positioned as representations versus representatives in their given context. Developing Gayatri C. Spivak’s critique of representation into a juxtaposition of these two ways of positioning and ascribing agency,
I underscore how the use of sources in this way continues the general orientation of Danish journalism on Faroese abortion rights as implying a colonial perspective.

Establishing authority: ethos and the first-person pronoun

Despite my abstract approach to ethos as the organisation of participants in deliberative fora, which I presented in my Analytical strategy, I approach the analysis through concrete instantiations of how journalists and sources are positioned. Ethos can, in a journalistic context, relate to the credibility created by and through the reporter, as well as the institutional ethos of papers and broadcasting networks, which adds another layer to audience expectation and might formulate its own ethos as guidelines and ideals. Just like journalists from DR are expected to act in a somewhat different manner to journalists at Radio24syv, the difference between using Faroese sources and Danish sources also reflects different ways of fulfilling professional ideals. The variety of broadcasting stations and newspapers allows for different norms for journalistic professionalism, and my analysis of this is intended to emphasise the different ways in which journalists engage the conversation: through explicit foregrounding of their immediate reactions, or through subtle inscriptions of their perspective on the place and people they report on. The fora created by Danish journalists make space for voices with widely different agendas to meet:

*The text speaks ambiguously. Is it the voice of an individual writer, the voice of institutional authority, of cultural ideology? It is all of these things, often at the same time.* (Spurr, 1993, p. 11)

While my analysis draws on the individual norms of different media, my focus is on the individual journalist in relation to the cultural ideology I have analysed thus far. Journalists are always present in their text, be it as a barely visible orchestrator of sources or active voices explicating valorisation. This presence or self-inscription is part of the interpretation and communication of historical actuality. To explicitly link this position to colonial discourse: “For the colonizer as for the writer, it becomes a question of
establishing authority through the demarcation of identity and difference.” (Spurr, 1993, p. 7). This division between identity and difference, the *same* and the *other*, is as mentioned a governing structure throughout national discourses, organising and creating the markers of an *us* and a *them*. In journalism, the writer can share the status of *us* with both their object of reporting and their intended audience, and my focus will thereby be on the ways in which journalists create identification with the Faroese situation or uphold or create markers of difference.

I have touched upon how the use of personal pronouns reflects the instability of how the Faroe Islands are both placed within the Danish “us” and addressed as outside, when Tinne Hjersing Knudsen asked politician Mette Gjerskov, why Faroese abortion rights are not discussed by her and her colleagues:

> We see them, we talk to them all the time, we even speak the same language, we are in the Danish realm, and all kinds of things. (Knudsen, 2018a)

Over the course of this single utterance, the “we” morphs from facing a “them”, which then disappears, before the “we” refers to an apparently monolingual Danish kingdom, which “we”, Faroese and Danish alike, inhabit. The “we” is the politician, the journalist, the Faroese object of their discussion and the universal Danish/Faroese citizen cohabiting the kingdom.

Lisa Holmfjord, the first source in Radio24syv’s coverage, also obscures the signified in her use of “we”:

> Well, when we got liberal abortion in 1973, back then the Faroe Islands chose and were allowed to keep the old abortion legislation. So, this is something we have agreed to, and

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*Original: “Vi ser dem, vi taler med dem hele tiden, vi taler endda det samme sprog, vi er i Rigsfællesskabet, og alt muligt.”*
I actually think it would suit us well to have it changed. (Ingrisch & Jeppesen, 2017)″

As a citizen of Denmark, Holmfjord gained liberal abortion rights through the politicians representing the body politic’s wishes, and this view of the Danish public and government as one entity is the premise for understanding Faroese autonomy as something “we” have agreed on and can have changed. The use of the first-person pronoun thus conflates ethnicity, professional ethos and agency continuously, pointing to how participation in the coverage of Faroese abortion rights reflects an invitation based on some form of status, which is then discussed or renegotiated implicitly by journalists and sources.

Uses of the first-person pronoun in journalism are abundant, but contested, and as a textbook on using oneself in journalism, Hvad laver JEG her? (En. What am I doing here?) begins: “You may not use yourself in journalism” (Moestrup et al., 2022, p. 9). Though the textbook contributes by questioning this formal principle, this dictum is central in journalist training. As a rhetorical dictum to replace this claim as a superior and irrevocable truth, I argue that the use of oneself must serve a purpose, and in analysis of it, I as critic emphasise what is offered to the audience. As we can expect, not all genres and thus media include first person narratives from journalists: the live aspect of oral discussions centralises the immediate opinion of different participants in a different way than feature articles, where the journalist has the chance to augment or redact their presence in the text. Radio shows thus might feature more uses of first-person pronouns, while some radio shows do so more than others, and the same goes for newspaper

I, the journalist

When the Polish abortion ban was brought to public attention by Danish journalists and politicians in 2021, and the latter advocated for economic and medical aid to the people affected, the former used the occasion to compare the situation with its Faroese counterpart. Several articles took the form of traditional interview, where parts of the questioning are edited out to foreground the sources’ comments.

In “Politikere vil presse Færøerne: Aborten skal sættes fri” (En. *Politicians want to pressure the Faroe Islands: Abortion should be liberated*” (Astrup, 2021), the comments by obstetrician and gynaecologist Charlotte Wilken-Jensen are presented as Peter Astrup explains the current conditions in the Faroe Islands, where quotes are included and woven into his descriptions:

> “And it is reprehensible, says Charlotte Wilken-Jensen, leading medical consultant at the obstetrics and gynaecology department at Hvidovre Hospital. She has carried out abortions on women who have taken the trip from the Faroe Islands to Denmark to have the procedure.”(Astrup, 2021)

In this quote, the narrative shifts from Wilken-Jensen’s direct quote to the journalist’s relay of her experiences, without his questions being foregrounded. The audience is thus not invited to see whose knowledge informs what parts of the interview, as source quotes and journalistic commentary interweave.

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115 Original: “Og det er kritisabelt, mener Charlotte Wilken-Jensen, der er ledende overlæge på Gynækologisk-Obestrisk Afdeling på Hvidovre Hospital. Hun har selv foretaget aborter på kvinder, som har måttet tage turen fra Færøerne til Danmark for at få foretaget indgrebet.”

156
When Astrup afterwards interviews Karen Melchior, a politician who has co-authored an open letter advocating for the support of Polish women, Astrup steps visibly into the interview, and in a question emphasised as his own by italics, asks: “But when we pressure Poland, shouldn’t we also put pressure on the Faroe Islands? They are more or less a part of us” (Astrup, 2021). This explicit inclusion of the journalist’s question is not uncommon and does not necessarily breach decorum in this type of article. To compare, journalist Frederik Meldgaard Lauridsen from Information interviews Pernille Skipper, another politician vocal about the need to support Polish women who wanted to expand the offer to include Faroese women, and the article presents as full conversation, shifting back and forth between Lauridsen’s questions and Skipper’s answers (Lauridsen, 2021). While Lauridsen never refers to a we or I, Astrup has chosen to include one of his own questions, where the use of the first-person plural denotes an overlap between the politician and the journalist: they are both Danish. As the only question from Astrup featured in the article, it springs to one’s attention and even more so when it reveals the otherwise invisible journalist, who claims a shared authority with the politician he interviews in a definition of the Faroe Islands as a they but part of us.

I have included this example to highlight that the uses and creations of a we are present in contexts where we might not expect them, but where they illuminate a way in which the journalist positions himself and the conversation about the Danish kingdom. A different position, often found in the feature-style long-reads of literary journalism, is the journalist as all-knowing narrator who reconstructs their impressions without necessarily claiming them as their own.

Amalie Schroll Munk interviews Faroese politicians and citizens in the article “Annika skifti kyn” (En. Annika changed gender) (Munk, 2018). Her presence is mostly implied, as

16 Original: “Men når vi presser Polen. så bør vi vel også presse på hos Færøerne? De er jo mere eller mindre en del af os selv.”
the article describes the settings and contexts outside of the direct quotes from her sources. Twice she explicates her physical presence, when “she greets me and generously shows me around in the parliament” or when “he takes a seat across from me” (Munk, 2018).

A third time is through the only direct question included in the interview. While all the other sources answer questions, which are left out of the final article, Munk changes strategy when interviewing Arni Zachariassen. He is active in the Baptist Brethren congregation, a theologian and described as “actively taking part in the struggle over values, which he describes as detrimental to traditional society” (Munk, 2018). As a representative of the conservative movement, his character might counter the ideology of an audience which supports liberal abortion rights, though Weekendavisen has been defined as a conservative newspaper (Søllinge, 2023).

“Homosexuality, transgenderism and liberal abortion are all parts of a movement away from the actual purpose in life”, he calmly begins. “People try to construct their own reality instead of being in the reality, which is created for us. I find that very problematic.” (Munk, 2018)

Though his implicit critique of social constructivist and poststructuralist thinking might resonate with conservative readers, his comment is described as “strong opinions” by Munk and can seem radical to those interested in the Faroese abortion issue. Towards the end of the interview, which concludes the article, Munk appears visibly through her italicised question posed directly to Zachariassen, who has just defined the fight for

117 Original: “de senere år har han taget del i den værdikamp, som han selv beskriver som ødelæggende for det traditionelle samfund.”

118 Original: “Homoseksualitet, transkønnethed og abortfrihed er alt sammen en del af en bevægelse, der søger væk fra livets egentlige hensigt,’ begynder han roligt. ‘Folk prøver at konstruere deres egen virkelighed i stedet for at være i den virkelighed, som er skabt for os. Det finder jeg meget problematisk.’
liberalisation as selfish. Munk asks: “Is it selfish to want to live as you are, and love whomever you want?” (Munk, 2018). Though Zachariassen gets the last word — that we are created to procreate and are part of something bigger — Munk’s direct question explicates the perspective of an audience to whom religious argumentation is not valid. While all the other sources in the article represent views presumably shared by a liberal-minded audience, who might be Munk’s intended audience, her direct question more than implies an audience in disagreement with Zachariassen: it visually and explicitly counters his opinion. It also unveils Munk’s position as something other than an invisible onlooker, and grounds the perspective we have been offered in the article in the explicit voice of its creator.

In comparison to Weekendavisen’s article by Munk, the journalist in Kristelig Dagblad’s “Her er aborten for de få” (En. Here abortion is for the few) is not mentioned a single time: when presenting the interviewed sources, one anonymous woman is seated in a café, another woman states something in another part of town, and when the third source is interviewed in a different part of the country, the car rushes north almost by its own volition (Funch, 2018). The sources and places appear for the reader without any explicit mention of whose questions make them talk or whose gaze interprets their meaning. The journalist’s impressions and interpretations are present through the article’s descriptive paragraphs which do not include quotes. Some list basic facts, such as the legislation in the Faroe Islands, or describe how it differs from legislation in neighbouring countries; others describe the Faroe Islands using the temporal and spatial discourses and topoi analysed earlier. I analysed excerpts from the Kristelig Dagblad article in Time, where a quote from a fictional novel about the historical Barbara was featured, and Place, where the descriptions of the natural environment featured ascriptions of agency as the Faroese mountains were described as forming the local culture and society. These interpretations from the journalist contribute by contextualising the history and setting of Faroese

119 – Er det egoistisk at ville kunne leve, som man er, og elske, hvem man vil?”
society, but also frame the conversation they have created about why the Faroese legislation is the way it is. It exploits tropes of Faroese culture and nature, connecting an audience’s previous knowledge of the country with the current theme, and does so without positioning the journalist as a visible mediator. Though it is inconspicuous, and a classical genre trait, I emphasise this to anticipate my discussion of norms for perspicuity when journalists cover a subject considered other from their home audience.

Performing objectivity as strategic ritual

Perspicuity is performed in other articles, not because they replace first-person narrations, but because they complement it. Unlike any of the other artefacts, the *Politiken* article “Her er ikke fri abort” (En. *No liberal abortion here*) includes a separate fact-box on what can be defined as their method (Winsløv & Helmann, 2021). Under the header “How we did it”, the journalists, Anna Winsløv and Rasmus Helmann have described how they reached their sources, how they cross-checked their sources’ narratives, which authorities were invited to comment, and the fact that they know their sources’ full identities (Winsløv & Helmann, 2021). This section enacts *objectivity as a strategic ritual*, Gaye Tuchman’s term for the performance of professional norms, which journalists often are required to follow, or at least feel themselves required to, in order to defend themselves against anyone questioning their objectivity (Tuchman, 1972). The

120 Original: “Sådan gjorde vi

I to måneder har vi arbejdet på at finde kvinder, der har fået foretaget en abort på Færøerne. Kvinderne har henvendt sig på baggrund af facebookopslag i diverse grupper og på Instagram samt ved at opsøge os personligt under vores besøg på Færøerne.

Vi har talt med syv færøske kvinder, der alle har fået en abort. Fem af kvinderne har fået foretaget en abort på Færøerne, mens to er rejst til Danmark.

Fortællingerne bygger på kvindernes erindringer. De faktuelle oplysninger i forhold til kvindernes beretninger, eksempelvis tidspunktet og stedet for aborten, er bekræftet enten ved forevisning af kvindernes sygejournaler eller via kilder tæt på kvinderne, der har kendt dem under forløbet.

Kommunelægernes formand og Færøernes socialminister er blevet forelagt kvindernes oplevelser. Ministeren ønsker ikke at gå ind i enkeltsager, men beklager, hvis der er foregået uhensigtsmæssig behandling.

Vi er bekendt med kvindernes fulde identitet.”

160
clear description of their approach helps audience members understand how they have gathered the facts and narratives they present. The use of the first-person plural thus defines their metacommentary on how the article was created, but also figures throughout their reporting, as they move across the country, meet sources, and take in impressions of the settings: “A sculpture of a newborn boy in bronze is one of the first things we notice, when we step into the entrance hall at the hospital” (Winsløv & Helmann, 2021). Rather than presenting the sculpture as unavoidable or determinant for anyone’s impression of the hospital, the journalists include it as being their first impression. The audience is offered their perspective, but the inclusion of the first person plural pinpoints it as a personal impression of someone visiting for the first time.

Similarly, one of the two journalists who authored the article emphasises her preconceptions and impressions of the Faroe Islands, when interviewed by journalist Gudrun Marie Schmidt in the podcast accompanying the article. In “Abort på Færøerne: skyld, skam og hemmeligheder” (En. Abortion in the Faroe Islands: guilt, shame and secrets), Anna Winsløv acts as an expert, foregrounding her own impressions and thoughts (Schmidt, 2021): “When my colleague Rasmus Helmann and I started researching this story, we were actually really surprised that there is a place in the Danish realm where abortion access is not liberalised” (Winsløv & Helmann, 2021). I analysed this as an inferred topos of surprise from Faroese geographical proximity not equalising similarity to Danish legislation earlier, but Winsløv points out her own surprise without claiming it is shared by the audience or other sources. Again, as in the article, the methodical aspect of the reporting is mentioned:

We travelled to the Faroe Islands, where we stayed in Tórshavn for eight days, in an
apartment we had rented, and pretty quickly we found out that these women we were to meet and talk to, they did not want to meet downtown in Tórshavn, and they did not want to meet in cafes or other public places. (Schmidt, 2021)

The quote describes their practical approach and simultaneously points out the immediate knowledge gained from being physically placed in the Faroe Islands; their access to interviews is, of course, affected by their ability to provide a private setting for them, and while it cannot come as a surprise given the taboo nature of the subject, this way of taking the audience through one’s own route to knowledge can lend the journalist’s reporting an air of transparency. Transparency which both reveals truths about the place they visit, and their naiveté about the full context of it.

The ethos of including distinct voices

The above examples present as using quite traditional styles for their given genre. Other media and their journalists position themselves explicitly as breaking norms and using their voices actively. The broadcaster Radio24syv was created with the intention of:

(...) creating a broadly appealing and innovative news and talk radio station, which mixes news, actuality, culture and debate, with journalistic and communicative quality, new narrative formats and programme genres and with special requirements of having distinctive radio hosts, a high degree of listener engagement, satire and a broad representation of musical genres. (Kulturministeriet, 2010)

The above quote emphasises innovation, quality and the distinctiveness of the hosting journalists, which Radio24syv was expected to represent. Steffen Moestrup has analysed a

Original: “Jamen, vi rejste til Færøerne hvor vi boede i Tórshavn i 8 dage, i en lejlighed som vi lejede, og vi fandt ret hurtigt ud af at de her kvinder som vi skulle mødes med og tale med, de ikke havde lyst til at mødes nede i Tórshavn by og de havde ikke lyst til at mødes på cafés eller andre offentlige steder.”
selection of programmes from Radio24syv as examples of persona-driven cultural journalism and describes Radio24syv’s general goal and ethos to be broadcasters of “something different” or a “distinct alternative” to other broadcasters (Moestrup, 2019, p. 7). Moestrup also points out that: “Some of the news programmes have displayed a rather subjective and opinionated approach” (2019, p. 107). Without implying that some are displaying too much subjectivity and personal opinion, I will emphasise examples of how journalists position themselves and their perspective.

The most conspicuous of the journalists from Radio24syv to cover the Faroese abortion situation is Tinne Hjersing Knudsen. As host of her own show, 55 Minutter, her character can be expected to take up space and be instrumental in how the programme is constructed. She both figures as host on 55 Minutter and as expert-source on 24syv Morgen since her research included a trip to the Faroe Islands. In 24syv Morgen Knudsen opines what she expects to happen in the Faroe Islands following this focus on abortion rights:

Well, I think that there will be a heated debate maybe, following these shows which we are transmitting now, or these segments on their abortion legislation. And otherwise, I think that there is going to be a big debate on the abortion legislation in connection with the transfer [of abortion legislation from Danish to Faroese jurisdiction] this summer. (24syv Morgen, 2018)

Her expectation that Radio24syv’s shows would cause a stir reflects an ideal of journalism as potential catalyst for public deliberation; the ethos and agency of journalism is

\[\text{Original: “KS: Hvad kommer der til at ske med abortlovgivningen på Færøerne, tror du?}
\[THK: Altså jeg tror, at der kommer til at være en ophedet debat måske i forbindelse med de her programmer som vi sender nu, eller de her indslag om deres abortlovgivning. Og ellers så tror jeg at der kommer til at komme en stor debat om abortlovgivningen i forbindelse med at de hjemtager området til sommer.”}

163
foregrounded and positions Tinne Hjersing Knudsen as an authority. Even if the expected debate did not follow the shows, her comment underscores the professional ethos and implied agency of journalism creating forums for deliberation.

Knudsen’s emphasis of her own view and sense of agency is augmented in 55 Minutter (Knudsen, 2018a). In the first of the two episodes discussing the Faroese abortion rights situation, Knudsen foregrounds her surprise about the silence amongst Danish politicians, whom she has invited to the show, but have turned her down:

For it happens to be so that when I did this story, then I was much looking forward to calling all the female politicians in our conservative (Da. borgerlige) government. Liberal abortion and women’s right to their own bodies is a major key issue for the government. (Knudsen, 2018a)

Knudsen elaborates on how Ellen Thrane Nørby, Minister of Health, Ulla Tørnæs, Minister of Developmental Aid, and Karen Elleman, Minister of Equality, all have mentioned women’s rights and abortion care internationally as priorities, but none have accepted her invitation to participate in the show. Knudsen also mentions that she has found no public criticism of the Faroe Islands by any of these politicians, and not even found any political debates in the councils or groups who have worked with the transfer of jurisdiction of Faroese matters. Knudsen talks her audience through every move she has made to try to get any relevant politicians to comment at any time, and meanwhile works up an indignant tone and expresses her frustration at the silence and lack of response to her requests. Finally, her monologue culminates in the following:

And you know what, you three Ministers, you four Venstre-women, I actually think it is

125 Original: “For det er sådan da jeg lavede denne her historie, så glædet jeg mig faktisk rigtig meget til at ringe til de kvindelige ministre i vores borgerlige regering. Fri abort og kvinders ret til egen krop, det er jo en kæmpestor mærkesag for regeringen.”
hypocritical that you can make time to tour the world and say that it is your key issue to implement liberal abortion and support women’s rights to decide over their own bodies. But when it comes to the Faroe Islands, which is in your own backyard and is a place where you have serious and concrete influence, yeah, then you do not want to say anything. I actually think it is weak. (Knudsen, 2018a)\textsuperscript{126}

Knudsen then gives them a final, public invitation to join her show — “If you ever get the time or want to prioritise abortion legislation in the Faroe Islands” (Knudsen, 2018a)\textsuperscript{127}. Knudsen’s indignation is with politicians whom she considers have a commitment to publicly communicate their policy. As the metaphor of the backyard is repeated, the asymmetry of the Danish kingdom is explicated by claiming that Danish politicians have serious and concrete influence. Knudsen scolds inaction interpreted as weakness, while I interpret their silence as strategic, defined by Barry Brummet as violating expectation, drawing public attribution of predictable meanings and appearing intentional and directed at an audience (Brummet, 1980, p. 289). Meanwhile, Knudsen’s own agency is emphasised through the expectation that her call will summon politicians, and the frustration with the unexpected result is expressed through a tirade: apt on a radio platform defined by distinct voices, but almost indecorous as a reaction on the politics of the Danish kingdom. To underscore Brummet’s third element defining strategic silence, I argue that this silence is apparently intentional, but not directed at Knudsen and her implied audience, but rather a potential Faroese audience. Knudsen’s personal opinion expressed

\textsuperscript{126} Original: “Og ved I hvad, I tre ministre, I fire Venstre-kvinder, jeg synes faktisk at det er noget hykleri, at I har tid til at turnere hele verden rundt og sige at det er jeres mærkesag at få indført fri abort og styrke kvinder ret til at bestemme over egen krop. Men når ellers når det kommer til Færøerne, som ligger i jeres egen baghave og er et sted, hvor I har stor og helt konkret indflydelse, ja, så vil I ikke sige noget. Jeg synes faktisk, det er for slapt.”

\textsuperscript{127} Original: “Ulla Thornæs har tidligere sagt, at hver gang der er en åben mikrofon, så skal vi simpelthen bare advokere for fri abort. Så jeg vil gerne sige til dig, Ulla Tornæs, til Ellen Thrane-Nørby, til Karen Ellemann og Janne Heickmann, fire stærke venstre kvinder, jeg har fire mikrofoner her i studiet, og de står åbne til jer når I er klar til at komme og tale om Færøerne. Hvis I altså får tid eller lyst til at prioritere abortlovgivningen på Færøerne.”
through outrage and disappointment thus reflects the cultural ideology that Danish politicians have and should exert agency towards the Faroe Islands, but the forum she tries to create does not resonate with the context it reconstructs and does not generate conversation.

The misinformed view of what forum for political action Danish journalism can create, combined with a bold reporting style, is also represented by Anna Ingrisch and Anna Libak, journalists on 24syv Morgen, whom I have analysed previously. Their interview style on one sides performs frank speech by embodying candid honesty in a discourse muddled with political hesitation, but on the other side reveals the journalists’ naive interpretation and exposing ill-informed arguments on this issue. They can seem to represent the unasked or vaguely answered questions in the Danish public sphere about why Danish politicians do not react to and address the Faroese abortion situation, but their explicit interpretation is based on assumptions which inhibit the conversation rather than inform audiences of why Danish politicians prefer to stay silent.

**Source authority**

Complementing the use of oneself as journalist, is the journalist’s use of sources. As a prerequisite for proper journalistic practice, the inclusion of experts, experiences and external comments qualifies the journalistic output as more than the journalist’s own opinion and impressions: “Essentially, journalism’s paradigm follows a science-like model, where reporters gather authoritative data and then present it without explicitly taking a side in the discourse” (Berkowitz, 2019, p. 166). This paradigm represents an idealised understanding of journalism, and one which echoes the claim to support verified facts, truth and democratic agency, which marks the journalistic ethos (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2001). On an operational level, this model is performed differently, and as I have pointed out in reference to Gay Tuchmann’s argument, objectivity is a strategic ritual performed to maintain an impression of professional integrity (Nørgaard Kristensen, 2004, p. 49; Tuchman, 1972). Including sources is an integral part of this.

Sources of varying status can have varying goals and thereby derive various benefits from
participating in the media, as several scholars have pointed out (Berkowitz, 2019; Binderkrantz, 2012; K. R. Johansen & Johansen, 2022; Peter & Zerback, 2020). As Dan Berkowitz illustrates through a typically adversarial metaphor: “In essence, the relationship between reporters and their sources has long been depicted as a battle for power over public opinion and public consent” (Berkowitz, 2019, p. 165). These potential conflicts in interest are evident through how Danish politicians implicitly address a different audience than the journalists do, which I have argued by distinguishing between a Faroese audience and a Danish audience. But to emphasise my analytical aim, I will, in the following, focus on what types of sources are featured in the coverage of Faroese abortion rights in Danish media, and on what authority they are ascribed by journalists through the role they are cast in.

**Representative, discursive and vernacular sources**

The purpose of this section is to emphasise how different sources participate differently and how a perspective on the colonial aspect of source authority versus journalistic authority can inform our understanding of which roles representatives, experts and ordinary people serve and how their national identity feeds into these roles. From my mapping of participants, the sources in the analysed material can initially be organised into three general groups:

**Sources of representative authority, or politicians:**

Given the topic’s political theme — abortion legislation and advocacy about it – it comes as no surprise that politicians are featured in most of the coverage on Faroese abortion rights. Paul Manning describes a “hierarchy of credibility”, ranking sources based on their authority and value to journalists from government representatives with capacities to shape agendas to ordinary people with politically marginal status (Manning, 2001, p. 4). While political realities of influencing society should challenge the inherent assumption of politician’s agency, the immediate fact that political representatives hold authority and the fact that they are widely represented in the material I have analysed qualifies them as a central category of sources.
The inclusion of Danish politicians in the coverage of Faroese political issues emphasises the apparent assumption that they are in control over the Faroese issue: “When high prestige official sources appear in the news, the reporter-source relationship tends to legitimise or even reify the power structure of society” (Berkowitz, 2019, p. 172). No matter the included source’s refutation of power, the principle of including Danish politicians ascribes them an ethos of political agency, which positions them as powerful in the forum created by journalists.

The first politician interviewed by Radio24syv journalists is Henrik Brodersen, spokesperson on Faroese matters for Dansk Folkeparti. He is asked directly whether he “as a politician, wants to introduce liberal abortion in the Faroe Islands” (Ingrisch & Jeppesen, 2017). Brodersen replies that he wants to, but in a context where the Faroese population is part of the implementation: “We have a tradition of not forcing anything on each other in our Danish realm” (Ingrisch & Jeppesen, 2017). Journalist Anna Ingrisch then interrupts him to correct him, “because then your answer to my initial question is no, because you have the legal option, that option is present in the Danish parliament, to introduce liberal abortion (…))”, which ends in Brodersen agreeing that he does not want to implement liberal abortion in the Faroe Islands, only if the Faroese parliament requests it (Ingrisch & Jeppesen, 2017).

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128 Original: “Færøerne-ordfører for Dansk Folkeparti, velkommen til programmet. Vil du være med til som politiker, at indføre fri abort på Færøerne?”

129 Original: “Ja, det vil jeg faktisk gerne, men det vil jeg i den sammenhæng, at man fra den færøske befolkning, sætter sig sammen og implementerer det i loven. Vi har en tradition for at vi ikke hiver noget ned over hovedet på andre i vores Rigsfællesskab.”

130 Original: “AI: Jeg bliver nødt til at rette dig indledningsvis, Henrik Brodersen, fordi at så er svaret jo sådan set på mit oprindelige spørgsmål et nej, fordi du har jo muligheden for juridisk, den mulighed har man i Folketinget, at gennemføre fri abort så — hvis jeg spørger dig igen, om du vil være med til at indføre fri abort på Færøerne, så er dit — så er det rigtige svar vel egentlig nej? HB: Nej, det er det ikke, fordi det vil jeg gerne — AI: Ja, du vil gerne hvis at det færøske Lagting gennemfører det —”
Ingrisch’s questioning of him is direct and moves between frankness and candidness, as her questions represent an interpretation of autonomy in the Danish kingdom, which she must assume her audience shares. As she repeats the same questions and corrects the inconsistencies of Brodersen’s replies, she performs the role of the fourth estate in keeping the establishment in check. Even though Brodersen has made clear that he does not want to implement a law against Faroese wishes, Ingrisch still asks “why not push it through, when you have the opportunity?” (Ingrisch & Jeppesen, 2017). Brodersen replies by saying, that having a right does not make it an obligation, and there would be no point in “hitting the Faroe Islands over the head with a law they themselves are not interested in using” (Ingrisch & Jeppesen, 2017). Ingrisch replies, that “It would make a difference, that you would be able to have an abortion in the Faroe Islands, that’s a pretty concrete difference?”, and while Brodersen interjects that abortions are possible in other cases, but not in the same way as in Denmark, Ingrisch interrupts him and says “No, there is no liberal abortion in the Faroe Islands, and Danish politicians can decide that. Why not use that right?” (Ingrisch & Jeppesen, 2017). And so their conversation revolves and returns to the same question in different formulations, which seems futile, but allows Brodersen to elaborate his response in several ways. His final remark to Ingrisch is in reply to whether he considers it hypocritical to criticise Donald Trump’s global gag rule banning abortion aid and not implement abortions rights despite having the option to. Reminding the audience that the global gag rule refers to banning aid in so-called developing

131 Original: “Og så er spørgsmålet selvfølgelig, hvorfor ikke det, fordi den ret den har I jo sådan set, og jeg tror da nærmest udelukkende at alle partier, i hvertfald dem repræsenterer i Folketinget, de går ind for fri abort, så hvorfor ikke gennemføre det, når I har muligheden?”

132 Original: “Fordi at vi har en ret, men vi har ikke en pligt, og det er det at man skal skille om det, så det er vel ikke en *fordel* (utydelig tale) i noget som helst, at man fra dansk side af kom og dunkede Færøerne oven i hovedet med en lov, som de ikke selv er interesserede i at gøre brug af.”

133 Original: “AI: Men det ville gøre den forskel, at der ville være mulighed for at få abort på Færøerne, det er vel en ret konkret forskel?
HB: Det er der jo også i andre tilfælde, men det er rigtig, man kan ikke, som vi kalder det, selv bestemme hvornår man -
AI: Nej, der er ikke fri abort på Færøerne, og det kan danske politikere være med til at bestemme. Hvorfor ikke benytte sig af den ret?”
countries, Brodersen states that: “There is no comparison between third world countries and the Faroe Islands” (Ingrisch & Jeppesen, 2017). The perhaps obvious point in his final remark could lead one to think that it need not be mentioned, but as I pointed out in the previous chapter, the analogy between the Faroe Islands and so-called developing countries is repeatedly brought up and therefore needs to be countered by sources.

In the same show, Karin Gaardsted, spokesperson on Faroese matters for Socialdemokraterne, is also asked if she wants to introduce liberal abortion in the Faroe Islands. Her reply is concise and to the point:

_I would love to. The very day they want it themselves, and that is the decisive factor in this, and where Ulla Tørnæs has assisted with funding, that is in developing countries, and the Faroe Islands are not a developing country. The Faroe Islands have self-rule, and there are some areas on which the Danish parliament still, as you say, legislate there. But we do not legislate against the Faroe Islanders’ wishes._ (Ingrisch & Jeppesen, 2017)

Gaardsted does not accept the premise proposed by the first source, Lisa Holmfjord, and goes to some lengths to underscore the difference between the Faroe Islands and developing countries, between the Danish kingdom and total domination, since “the

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34 Original: “AI: Forstår du kritikken, det er hyklerisk at gå og pege fingre ad Trumps dekret her om at fratage støtten til organisationer, der tilbyder abort, når man så samtidig ikke vil indføre den samme politik, her hvor man selv har muligheden?

HB: Nu skærer man jo nok alle over en kam, men det kan man selvfølgelig sagtens sige, og man kan sige at vi går foran i alle udviklingslande for netop at give kvinder ret til fri abort, men her synes jeg også, at det er vigtigt at sige, at Færøerne, det er et rigtigt vestorienteret, velfungerende samfund. Og de kan sagtens tage hånd om deres befolkning.

AI: Henrik -

HB: Der er ikke nogen sammenligning mellem tredje verdens lande og Færøerne.”

35 Original: “Det vil jeg da rigtig gerne. Den dag, hvor de selv ønsker det skal være. Og det er lige præcis det springende punkt i det her, at der hvor Ulla Tørnæs har givet penge til, det er udviklingslande, og Færøerne er jo ikke et udviklingsland. Færøerne har selvstyre, og der er nogle områder som det danske Folketing stadigvæk som man siger lovgiver om deroppe. Men vi lovgiver ikke imod Færøernes ønske.”
fundamental assumption is that we legislate together with the Faroese self-rule, and I do not think we should tamper with that principle” (Ingrisch & Jeppesen, 2017)\(^{136}\). This is yet another example of refutation of the colonial discourse running through the interviews. Spokespersons Mette Gjerskov and May-Britt Kattrup, whom I have analysed excerpts from before, who also participate in Radio24syv’s programming, emphasise Faroese national autonomy in similar ways.

Sources of discursive authority, or experts:
In contrast to representative sources holding political agency to some degree, experts are sources of discursive authority ascribed to them by virtue of their knowledge on relevant topics. The typical image of an expert is, for example, the researcher, who refers to their own research on a given topic in an interview in the media. Laursen and Trapp have studied how the expert role in Danish media is shared by traditional experts such as university-affiliated researchers, but also think-tanks or interest groups, who are usually committed to particular goals, and how these either appear as experts, by referring to their research, or advocates who express their own opinions (Laursen & Trapp, 2021, p. 2). The conflicted definitions of what constitutes an expert is relevant for my taxonomy, as the type of comments different expert sources give underscore how expertise regarding national and bodily autonomy is conflated. With the professionalisation of interest groups, representatives of reproductive rights organisations are often presented and perform as both experts and advocates. As I have pointed out through the example of Charlotte Wilken-Jensen, a professional ethos (being a gynaecologist) is combined with their advocacy (in favour of the liberalisation of Faroese abortion legislation) (in for example 55 Minutter: Aborten Er Ikke Fri På Færøerne, 1. Marts 2018, 2018; Astrup, 2021).

\(^{136}\) Original: “Altså, jamen jeg kan bare slet ikke forestille mig at det sker, og sige at Rigsfællesskabet ville krakelere og falde fra hinanden, hvis man indfører sådan en lov, det synes jeg er, det er meget at overdrive tingene, men altså grundholdningen er, at vi laver lovgivningen sammen med selvstyret på Færøerne. Og den grundforudsætning synes jeg, at vi skal lade være med at pille ved.”
Laursen and Trapp point out in their study of the shifting roles of central sources used by journalists, that the types of actors which gain media coverage “and the extent to which journalists grant certain actors an advocate role or a more credible expert role in news stories” seems to be changing (Laursen & Trapp, 2021, p. 1). An example of this is how professor Jørgen Albæk Jensen is initially asked to describe the legal foundations of political agency in the Danish kingdom, which he is an expert on without mentioning his own research (such as Jensen, 2003; Jensen et al., 2020). As a concluding remark, the interviewing journalist invites him to shed his role as a professor of law and comment as a political expert, though it lies outside of his professional domain. I emphasise this example again, because offering a professor of law the role of political commentator expresses an expansion of what agency an expert has. Laursen and Trapp’s emphasis on shapeshifting in source roles links to the fluidity of role ascription and emphasises the narrative function of the types of sources featured. As they point out: “[J]ournalists also need sources with qualities which can be cast in roles other than the expert role, in line with the institutionalized dramaturgy of news stories” (Laursen & Trapp, 2021, p. 3). The shapeshifting nature is not isolated to the expert sources, but I emphasise this role because it illustrates several issues: the necessity of including participants who define what is at stake in the Faroese abortion issue in order to qualify the discussion taking place in the forum journalists create; and having a critical perspective on who is included as an expert on the issue and on what grounds.

As an example of the opposite, Kristelig Dagblad features quotes from three sources which are initially presented as just “Three Faroese person’s (Da. færingers) opinions about elective abortion” (Funch, 2018). The generic title connotes the ordinary person source type, but the three hold positions in Faroese society which set them apart as both political representatives and experts, which is specified within their separate text-boxes: Jenis av Rana is a practising doctor and an MP (not mentioned is the fact that he is one of

\[137\] Original: “Tre færingers holdning til provokeret abort.”

172
the few politicians whose political agenda includes working for a ban on abortion); Lív Patursson holds an M.Sc. in gender studies (and is a member of the Faroese Gender Equality Committee though it is not mentioned); and Maria Jørðal Niclasssen is a minister of the church (and chair of the Faroese Ethical Council). Though it might seem like a minor detail, their roles reach far beyond being “Faroese”, which turns my attention towards the third and final category of sources.

**Sources of vernacular authority, or ordinary people:**

In their conceptual framework on ordinary citizens in the media, Christina Peter and Thomas Zerback emphasise that journalists not only select sources based on their specific features, but also provide the context for which to interpret the sources’ role:

*Ordinary citizens are by no means a homogenous group of people. Their heterogeneity mostly stems from different roles and functions that they can fulfil in a given news report.* (Peter & Zerback, 2020, p. 1005).

What is emphasised here is the journalist’s ideal of what an ordinary citizen can function as: it is the journalist’s script which is being enacted. Kendall Phillips describes the opposite, a form of speaking out of place, when defining *rhetorical manoeuvres*, which are “those moments when we choose to violate the prescriptive limits of our subject position and speak differently by drawing upon the resources of another subject position we have occupied” (Phillips, 2006). Phillips focuses on the potential of performing subjective multiplicity in contrast to external subject positioning, and ultimately points to rhetorical manoeuvres as a site of dissent or resistance: performing another aspect of what is proscribed as your identity holds potential for shifting the agency you are ascribed. But in the following examples, I will emphasise what I consider a version of the opposite, where journalists in adherence to a form of scripts shifts the subject position of the sources, so that they speak from another form of source authority than the one they are initially interviewed as.

In the same show which Hans Brodersen and Karin Gaardsted participate in, Jacob
Vestergaard is interviewed, as a member of the Faroese parliament for the conservative party Fólkaflokkurin (Ingrisch & Jeppesen, 2017). Vestergaard is asked about his thoughts on the criticism presented by Lisa Holmfjord and Dansk Kvindesamfund, and the apparent hypocrisy they claim the Danish parliament is guilty of. Vestergaard states that anyone is welcome to “criticise” if they want, in the same manner as Dansk Kvindesamfund criticises the Faroe Islands, but differentiates between criticism and “overruling democracy in the Faroe Islands”:

*I can appreciate criticism of one another, and we should of course tolerate that, (...) then you can debate and discuss it, but to go from there and legislate on our behalf, you can’t do that, because then you breach some — well, what we have built since we got home rule, the processes and the agreements we have made with each other. (Ingrisch & Jeppesen, 2017)*

Vestergaard elaborates his point about debating and criticising, and begins another sentence saying: “We have respect for one another —”, when he is interrupted by Ingrisch, who states that she needs to ask him a final question:

*[B]ecause I know that you are one of the Faroese people who opposes liberal abortion. A standpoint, which is very common in the Faroe Islands and relatively rare in Denmark. Why are you against liberal abortion? (Ingrisch & Jeppesen, 2017)*

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*Original: “Jamen man kan godt kritisere, hvis man vil, og det at Dansk Kvindesamfund kritiserer Færøerne, det må de gerne, ligesom at man kritiserer tingene, som man synes er forkert. Men derfra og sige at man skal ind at blande sig lovgivningsmæssigt, og overrule demokratiet på Færøerne, og det som Lagtinget på Færøerne skal med færøsk lovgivning, det er noget helt andet. Jeg har da forståelse for at man kritiserer nogle ting hos hinanden, og det skal vi selvfølgelig tåle, hvis man havde en anden mening om vores lovgivning i Danmark, så kan man godt debattere det og diskutere det - men derfra og så gå ind og lovgive for os, det må man ikke, for så overtræder man nogle (tøver) Ja, det som vi har bygget op siden vi fik hjemmestyreordningen, de processer og de aftaler som vi har mellem hinanden. Så det skal man ikke, men man må gerne debattere, og kritisere hvis man har lyst til det, det kan vi så også, hvis vi synes at Danmark skal opføre sig på en bestemt måde. Vi har respekt for hinanden —”*

*Original: “Jacob Vestergaard, jeg bliver nødt til at spørge dig her til sidst, fordi at jeg ved at du er en af de* 

174
Vestergaard is the first politician and source who is asked about his opinion on abortion. Some of the Danish spokespersons have mentioned their approval of liberal abortion legislation in passing, to make clear that they support Danish values, even though they do not want to export them to the Faroe Islands. It illustrates the different functions of why journalists have chosen to include them.

*Journalists may include citizens in their news stories to inform the audience about certain events or issues (e.g., the potential symptoms of a coronavirus infection), but they can also use them to illustrate more general categories of people or events (e.g., people holding a certain opinion).* (Peter & Zerback, 2020, p. 1005)

By explicating Vestergaard’s opinion beforehand and juxtaposing it as “common in the Faroe Islands and relatively rare in Denmark”, Ingrisch shifts his position as source as being a representative or a stand-in for the Faroe Islands to being a representation or a depiction of the Faroe Islands. Peter and Zerback’s distinction between informing the audiences and illustrating people or events thus points to a conflation of the different meanings of representation, which I claim can be approached through a postcolonial lens (Spivak, 1988).

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak’s argument in “Can the Subaltern Speak?” is multifaceted and based on a critique of Gilles Deleuze’s claim about intellectuals’ responsibility in political struggle: when Deleuze states that “there is no more representation; there is nothing but action”, Spivak argues that this claim rests on a misunderstood and run-together version of two forms of representation (Spivak, 1988, p. 70). Based on Spivak’s critique of how representation can fixate the identity of those whose case we plead, I see this as a way of

færinge, der er imod fri abort. Et synspunkt, som jo er meget udbredt på Færøerne, og må man sige relativt sjældent i Danmark. Hvorfor er du imod fri abort?”
explaining the dissonance between the roles Danish and Faroese sources are ascribed. As representatives of various institutions, bodies and organisations, the Danish sources, especially in Radio24syv’s coverage, are invited as Vertretung, stand-ins for a perspective offered the means of arguing — of using rhetoric-as-persuasion (Spivak, 1988, p. 72).

While Faroese sources when directly asked to be synecdochical illustrations of Faroese society are prompted to behave like Darstellung, descriptive of Faroese society in the form of rhetoric-as-trope (Ibid.). In contrast to the rhetorical maneouvers, Phillips has defined, where maneouvring is a form of self-representation, the Faroese sources are maneouvered by journalists, and in contrast to the way Jørgen Albæk Jensen is maneouvered from being one type of expert to being another, the Faroese sources shift status from having an arguing position to becoming illustrative tropes.

These different roles or shifts in source positions are evident within the coverage of Faroese abortion rights in Danish media: partly because the Faroe Islands as a place is distant from a Danish audience, and naturally its inhabitants will be used as descriptions of their homeland. But the difference between what role and authority journalists ascribe different sources demands scrutiny due to its consequences for the rhetorical forum: by asking how sources are invited to represent an issue, and how this position can be shifted by journalists during their interviews, intersecting problems with representation in journalism and colonial discourse are emphasised. While I do not claim that this is an intentional reduction of agency, I do claim that the synechdocal position of depicting Faroese society is less agential than being a representative of the arguments one is invited to make.

This can be exemplified by another Faroese source in the same show: Victoria Voda is 27 years of age, running for office in Copenhagen’s city council, and according to the journalist who interviews her, knows “several Faroese women who have had an abortion”
Her status as source thereby implies a political ethos, but she mainly embodies a representation of Faroese society.

Asked whether she thinks Danish politicians should enforce liberal abortion legislation in the Faroe Islands, Voda replies “No, they most definitely should not. In the Faroe Islands we have the Lagting [the Faroese parliament], which has jurisdiction, the Folketing [the Danish parliament] should not interfere with that” (Ingrisch & Jeppesen, 2017). Ingrisch returns to the claim that the Folketing has jurisdiction to legislate in the Faroe Islands, by asking why it is so important, “when we have jurisdiction”, to which Voda replies that “it is a limit, you cannot cross, we are in the Danish realm, and as mentioned, we have jurisdiction, and therefore it is important that we keep that limit if we are to agree in the Danish realm” (Ingrisch & Jeppesen, 2017). As they both use the first person plural, Voda and Ingrisch address each other as if they were representatives of their respective nations.

Ingrisch then refocuses her inquiry to address Voda as a consequence-expert, “as a young woman of 27 years”, and asks if she would like there to be liberal abortion legislation in the Faroe Islands. Voda points out that she does and when asked whether her opinion is shared by those living in the Faroe Islands, Voda refers to surveys which show that 25% are in favour of liberal abortion, but she again underscores that “it is very important that it is an issue that is handed over to the Faroese population, that they are the ones who make the decision” (Ingrisch & Jeppesen, 2017). Voda in this way keeps the conversation...
at the political representative level, before Ingrisch questions Voda about her knowledge of abortions in the Faroe Islands and how her acquaintances have managed to secure abortions. Voda explains that she knows two young women who had abortions when they were around 17-18 years old:

[T]hey went to the doctor, and they simply said that they did not know who the father was, and that they had been doing drugs, and that they had no means of taking care of a child, and then the doctor assessed that they qualified for abortions. (Ingrisch & Jeppesen, 2017)\textsuperscript{144}

Here Voda functions as a consequence-expert by relaying narratives of others’ experiences and being asked how this was experienced emotionally. The rest of Ingrisch’s questioning revolves around Voda’s knowledge about the experiences of others and how one goes about getting an abortion in the Faroe Islands, and though her political aspirations are mentioned again, when Ingrisch concludes and thanks her for being on the show, Voda’s primary status as source becomes that of the consequence-expert depicting the Faroe Islands.

Another example of this is Katrin Kallsberg, chief gynaecologist at the hospital in Tórshavn and member of the Faroese parliament since 2015, who participates via phone in the same show as Jacob Vestergaard and Victoria Voda (Ingrisch & Jeppesen, 2017). Kallsberg thus combines both the role of political representative and expert source. Kallsberg agrees with Voda that it “would be a very unwise way of handling it”, if Danish politicians enforced a liberal abortion law, since it would be considered a provocation and den færøske befolkning, at det er dem som tager stilling til det.”

\textsuperscript{144} Original: “Jeg kender to unge kvinder, som har fået abort cirka når de var 17-18 år, og der er de gået til lægen, og de har simpelthen sagt at de ved ikke hvem faren er, og de har taget narkotika, og de har ingen mulighed for at tage sig af et barn, og så har lægen vurderet at de kunne godt få en abort.”
in conflict with traditional conduct (Ingrisch & Jeppesen, 2017). Kallsberg then wishes to elaborate what was said earlier about the criteria for permitting abortion, which was just a quick run-through of the four criteria, where the first mentions dangers to a woman’s life or health. Kallsberg quotes the legislation which underscores that an assessment must take into account the full range of circumstances, including living conditions and not only physical or mental disease but the presence or risk of physical or mental weaknesses (Ingrisch & Jeppesen, 2017). This elaboration is rarely, if ever, included in the coverage I have analysed, and shows, as Kallsberg also mentions, why some consider the Faroese legislation more liberal than it might seem. It also emphasises her role as an expert source, being the one overseeing the medical area discussed.

Ingrisch does not ask Kallsberg any further questions about this, but instead asks whether Kallsberg herself, as the previous chair of the Faroese Council of Equality, is part of the 25% in favour of liberal abortion. Though this question is framed to quiz her as a representative, the question addresses her personal opinion, which again sets her up as a

145 Original: “AI: Skal danske politikere indføre fri abort på Færøerne?
KK: Ja, de har jo mulighed for det, men jeg vil give Victoria ret i det hun sagde, med at det ville være en meget uklog måde at håndtere det på.
AI: Hvorfor ville det være uklogt?
KK: Af flere årsager, blandt andet dem som Victoria var inde på, men også det at det ville blevet opfattet som en provokation. vi har jo igennem mange år haft en aftale om hvordan man tager de lovændringer på Færøerne, med at hvis der er nogle danske love som skal ændres, så er det også noget der skal godtages af det færøske lagting. Men jeg kunne godt tænke mig at supplere nogle af de ting der blev sagt lige før, hvis det er okay.”

146 Original: “For der blev sagt noget om, hvornår og hvordan man kan gøre for at få sit svangerskab afbrudt. Hvis vi kigger i loven, og den er jo gammel, den er fra 1956, og seneste ændring som også er indført her på Færøerne, den er fra 2009, men det der står i paragraf 1 stykke 1, det er at en kvinde kan få sit svangerskab afbrudt i følgende tilfælde. Når svangerskabets afbrydelse er nødvendig for at afværge alvorlig fare for kvindens liv eller helbred. Så kommer så det som er ligesom forklaringen, det er ved bedømmelsen af denne fare skal det være på grundlag af vurdering af samtlige omstændigheder, herunder de forhold hvorunder kvinden må lever, tage hensyn ikke alene fysisk eller psykisk sygdom, men også tilstedeværende truende fysiske eller psykiske svaerkelsenstilstande. Og det er den del, hvor man kan kalde den såkalde sociale, altså med truende sociale påvirkning af hendes fremtid, og lignende, eller boligforhold, og det er den paragraf som en del af dem der er mod abort, synes at den er alt for liberal.”
representation rather than a representative of the Faroe Islands. Kallsberg admits to, in fact, not being in favour of liberal abortion:

*I don’t know what percentile you should group me in, because I think that the current way it is practised in the Faroe Islands, where we ensure that all women have the right to have proper counselling on pregnancy and contraceptives, and then get the option of going to the doctor for a consultation on the possibility of abortion, and if they then fit those criteria, and then can get an abortion, I think that works pretty well.* (Ingrisch & Jeppesen, 2017)

It might come as a surprise that Kallsberg as a gynaecologist does not advocate self-determination regarding abortion, but perhaps her dual role as a politician might play into what she can say publicly. In a later interview, which took place after her period in parliament, Kallsberg states that her issue is with the Danish idiom liberal abortion (which in Danish connotes free abortion, as I noted in my introduction), not the legal norm of bodily autonomy which it states (Winsløv & Helmann, 2021).

**Can Faroese abortion narratives be heard?**

In all the Danish coverage of Faroese abortion rights I have been able to locate, there is only one article in a women’s magazine, which features a named Faroese person, who has applied for and/or had an abortion (Femina, 2022). The “ideal” consequence expert of the Faroese abortion is thereby sparsely represented, and mostly through anonymised narratives or second-hand accounts.

In Radio24syv’s 55 Minutter, we are introduced to “Anna”, as the first example of a personal testimony. Journalist Tinne Hjersing Knudsen describes her as:

*A young woman who had an abortion which was not legal in the Faroe Islands but would have been legal here at home in Denmark. A totally regular abortion, where the woman just did not want to become a mother at the time when she got pregnant. And*
she could easily get such an abortion in Denmark, but she could not in the Faroe Islands. And that is why she ended up lying and saying that she was mentally ill, to get the abortion. (Knudsen, 2018a)\textsuperscript{147}

Knudsen’s description might at first seem paradoxical, as she states that the woman got an abortion she technically could not have, without it being done at home or by a quack. Knudsen still calls the abortion “not legal” even though we can sense, and later hear, that it was conducted in a Faroese hospital, by medical professionals and based on their permission. The claim of illegality is because “Anna” had to lie about her mental state, but as she explains, her doctor “was really sweet and understanding” and made sure that “Anna” fitted the criteria to get an abortion (Knudsen, 2018a)\textsuperscript{148}. Despite there being no question that this is a case where the Faroese law is bent if not broken, “Anna’s” case shows that she had access to safe abortion with the help of her doctor. “Anna” explains how the doctor emphasised her mental state:

\begin{quote}
[O]f course she [the doctor] cannot lie, but you can lay it on thick or something. That I was really miserable about the situation, and I felt that I could not cope with it and that kind of thing. Which well, yeah, [she hesitates] is a lie [short laugh], but that is well, who is going to be able to say that it’s a lie. (Knudsen, 2018a)\textsuperscript{149}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{147} Original: “Ja, og i sidste uge, der var jeg altså oppe på Færøerne. Det var jeg blandt andet for at møde en ung kvinde, der har fået foretaget en abort, der ikke var lovlig på Færøerne, men som ville være lovlig herhjemme i Danmark. Altså en helt almindelig abort, hvor kvinden hun bare ikke ville være mor på det tidspunkt, hvor hun var blevet gravid. Og sådan en abort kunne hun jo sagtens få i Danmark, men det kunne hun altså ikke på Færøerne. Og derfor endte hun med at lyve og sagde at hun var psykisk syg for at få foretaget en abort.”

\textsuperscript{148} Original: “Jeg var ret nervøs for hvad for en reaktion jeg ville få hos lægen, altså tænkte jeg, fordi jeg har hørt fra andre at nogle gange siger lægerne nej simpelthen. Og det kan jo være deres egen overbevisning rent ideologisk eller religiøst, men min læge var virkelig virkelig sød og forstående, og hvis man skal have en abort, så skal man til en to-tre samtaler med lægen først, og jeg må også indrømme at jeg ombestemte mig en enkelt gang, hvilket er meget normalt.”

\textsuperscript{149} Original: “Ja, det var bare sådan lidt at køre lidt på det der med at man er lidt sensitiv. Altså jeg ved ikke, hun må selvfølgelig ikke lyve, men man kan godt smøre tykt på eller sådan. At jeg var virkelig ulykkelig over situationen, og jeg ikke følte at jeg kunne magte det, og de der ting. Hvilket jo, ja, det (tøver) er jo løgn

181
The exaggeration “Anna’s” doctor made may be out of proportion though they may be based on “Anna’s” actual feelings, but she makes a point about it being a lie. Knudsen and “Anna” discuss further the experience of being “practically being described as mentally ill”, which “Anna” found humiliating (Knudsen, 2018a). Knudsen heavily emphasises the criminal aspect, by pointing out:

[That it is actually an illegal way of doing it, the way you did it, because the doctor exaggerated and such. How do you feel about that now? That you had to lay it on thick, and that it actually was an illegal abortion, but it feels totally natural for you to decide what happens to your own body? (Knudsen, 2018a)]

Knudsen’s questions state the argument she wants to make, and frame the situation in terms of illegality, even if the only technical breach is the patient and doctor’s obligation to honesty.

There is seemingly a discrepancy between the central claim made by the journalist that “Anna’s” abortion was illegal, and the fact that she was granted one based on her own request and assistance from the medical personnel she contacted. “Anna’s” narrative emphasises care and acceptance from the doctor, and though she agrees with Knudsen’s framing, her story rather emphasises the availability of abortion, but with the personal risk of humiliation becoming an extra punishment in an already sensitive situation. The

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(griner), men det er jo, altså hvem skal kunne komme og sige at det er løgn. Altså.”

150 Original: “THK: Og hvordan var det at sidde overfor din læge der, og så høre hende — sammen så skulle I så finde en eller anden måde og overdrive din situation på, for at gøre dig syg, nærmest skrive at du er psykisk syg, uden at du egentlig er det i virkeligheden, hvordan var det?
A: Det var super grænseoverskridende, det var enormt ydmygende på en eller anden måde.”

151 Original: “Og du får så foretaget aborten, fordi din læge altså hjalp dig. Det er jo egentlig en ulovlig måde man har gjort det på, altså I har gjort det på, fordi lægen har overdrevet og sådan nogle ting. Hvordan er det at altså (tøver) hvordan har du det med det nu? At der ligesom skulle smøres tykt på, og at det egentlig var en ulovlig abort, men at det føles som helt naturligt for dig at bestemme over egen krop?”
overall argument that the Faroese abortion law is insufficient and damaging could easily have been made, without casting “Anna” as void of agency and procuring an illegal abortion. “Anna’s” story is told by Knudsen in terms which fit a basic narrative of abortion illegality, which can be necessary, but obscures the actual practice in the Faroe Islands and central aspects of the issue.

In 55 Minutter, Knudsen also interviews Barbara Gaardlykke Apol, former chair of Sosialistisk Ung, who has been public about being in favour of liberalising the Faroese abortion legislation (Knudsen, 2018a). Some years ago, all the Faroese youth parties organised a public debate about abortion rights, at which Apol advocated for liberalisation, and she explains:

And it has always been like, I always thought that, of course, we should have liberal abortion, it is odd that we don’t. And I never really actively questioned the fact that it is a super controversial subject in the Faroe Islands. But I found out later. So, I did this debate, and it went fine, until afterwards, where I like got a lot of threats, including about physical violence, and Bible quotes, where it says something about hell and... It got really extreme in the way it went like ok, this might have been a bit more controversial than I thought. Someone even put a letter through my letterbox, it was totally, totally crazy.” (Knudsen, 2018a)\(^{152}\)

Apol apparently had not met the anti-abortion perspective previously in the Faroe Islands, but she still did not expect that kind of response. The threats were intended to

\(^{152}\) Original: “Og det har sådan altid været — jeg har altid troet på at selvfølgelig skal vi have fri abort, det er underligt at vi ikke har det. Og aldrig sådan aktivt sat spørgsmålstejn ved at det er et superkontroversielt emne på Færøerne. Men det fandt jeg så ud af senere. Så jeg tog denne her debat, og det gik sådan fint, indtil bagefter, hvor ligesom jeg fik sådan en masse trusler og om fysisk vold og citater fra Bibelen, hvor der står et eller andet med helvede og... Det blev sådan meget ekstremt på den måde, hvor jeg ligesom blev sådan ’ok, det her var nok lidt mere kontroversielt end jeg egentlig havde troet’. Det var sådan set også nogen der puttede et brev i min postkasse, det var helt helt sindssygt.”

183
silence her, both journalist and source agree, and Apol was very upset by them, but explains how she contacted the producer of the show and made an interview where she talked about the backlash she had received to make clear how out of line it was:

Then the debate started, and people started speaking properly to each other, and that has apparently not happened before. And now I am like, when you think in hindsight, you always think, there hasn’t been a fair discussion about abortion before. (Knudsen, 2018a)

The two jokingly remark that earlier the discourse was about rape threats and sending Bible quotes about going to hell, and Apol makes a point that she has experienced a change, especially with the new liberal abortion movement and that “more dare stand up and say I am pro liberal abortion” (Knudsen, 2018a). The interview concludes by Knudsen emphasising that Apol must have been surprised about the reaction if she had not realised before that people were against liberal abortion, which Apol corrects saying, that she, of course, knew people were against it, but not that they would try to obstruct a discussion about it (Knudsen, 2018a).

153 Original: “Jo, min første tanke var selvfølgelig at det var så ubehageligt, og hvad skal jeg gøre med det her, men så kontaktede jeg en af dem - jeg ved ikke om man kan kalde det produceren for dem der lavede de her udsendelser med debatprogrammerne, og fortalte ham om det her. Og han spurgte så, om jeg havde lyst til at lave en samtale med ham, hvor vi optog det og lagde det ud på nettet. Bare for ligesom at vise - om jeg havde lyst til at fortælle min historie og sige at det her er ikke okay. Og det gjorde vi så, hvor vi snakkede om det, og så bagefter så blev der også mere - så begyndte debatten at starte op sådan rigtig, og folk begyndte også at snakke ordentlig til hinanden, og det har det åbenbart ikke været før. Og nu er jeg også sådan, at når man tænker og er bagklog, så tænker man selvfølgelig altid, det har ikke været sådan en rigtig saglig diskussion om abort før.”

154 Original: “THK: Det har bare handlet om at voldtage nogen i munden og sende bibelcitater om at komme i helvede.
BGA: Ja, det kan man godt sige, men, ja. Sådan har det sådan været siden, og nu er det ligesom meget, nu er der kommet bevægelser der støtter op omkring fri abort for kvinder, som der ikke har været før. Og så er fordelene også ved det, at nu er der flere der tør stå frem og sige at ’jeg er for fri abort’ i stedet for ligesom før, hvor jeg ligesom var den eneste der lige pludseligt ud af ingen ting kom op - så er det meget nemt at have en person. Hvor nu er der flere, som jo er supergodt.”

155 Original: “THK: Men hvordan oplevede du så den debat der var efterfølgende, som så startede - for du må
The interview with Apol shows the consequences of being vocally in favour of liberal abortion, but at the same time illustrates the potential of evoking change and how you can live a life in the Faroe Islands without assuming that the entire nation is vehemently against abortion. Apol’s public critique of the debate was, according to her, a step towards a better debate, which gave others the confidence to be vocally pro liberal abortion. Compared to “Anna’s” narrative, Apol is presented as in charge of her own situation, but similarly their stories emphasise the flexibility and difference of opinions in the Faroe Islands, showing that liberalisation is a norm as well.

_Landscapes as faces_

The use of vernacular sources in “Her er det er ikke fri abort” (En. No liberal abortion here) epitomises the topoi presented in the previous chapter on Place. The journalists have interviewed a total of seven Faroese women who have had abortions, and while one story frames the article, the remaining six are presented at the end of the article.

When scrolling through the digital version of the article, a photograph of a Faroese landscape appears: a yellow-green mountainside, intercut with small rivers is captured from a frog’s eye view, showing part of the overcast sky in the background. Scrolling further, a headline in white letters appear: “Abortion without a face: six women tell their story” (Winsløv & Helmann, 2021). The next six photographs are also of Faroese nature: the view of a fjord accompanies the story titled “Anonymous woman, 46 years old”; a rocky part of heathforegrounds a shot of the ocean horizon, alongside the story of “Anonymous woman, 33 years old”; fjord, mountain and sky are featured together with “Anonymous woman, 61 years old”; a small town is seen from a distance in fog, next to

jo have været overrasket over det vidst, hvis det aldrig var faldet dig ind at man kunne være i mod fri abort. BGA: Selvfølgelig, jeg vidste jo at folk var i mod fri abort, men jeg troede måske ikke at der ville være nogen der ville gå så langt for at ligesom forhindre at diskussionen skal komme frem. Så jeg blev jo meget overrasket over det.”
“Anonymous woman, 23 years old”; a small harbour with ships and industrial equipment is centralised in another photograph of a fjord surrounded by mountains, with “Anonymous woman, 53 years old”; and the final story from “Anonymous woman, 43 years old” is accompanied by a green pasture on a clear day. Their stories are eloquently told, and describe their emotions; their family’s and friends’ support or lack of the same when included in what was going on; them threatening doctors that they will go to Denmark if not granted an abortion in the Faroe Islands. The women are from the capital and small villages, are part of small Christian congregations and are drawn to the women’s rights movements of their time; they have had abortions recently or have kept their secrets for decades: the narratives are diverse, emotionally charged, clearly arguing for liberalisation and reflect the myriad of contexts and consequences the still current abortion legislation has. Their narratives perform a critique of the homogenising consequence of the Faroese abortion legislation, which posits the reasons for needing abortion as discrete and limited to medical, criminal, genetic and eugenic causes (T. Nolsøe, 2023). Their diversity is contrasted by one thing: the homogenous images of the Faroese landscapes, which like an avatar represents their individuality, as they represent the so-called abortions without a face.

The Danish sentence includes alliteration (abort uden ansigt), which might explain the choice of phrase, but the sentence is not explained further. The faceless anonymity is of course a prerequisite when confessing a taboo subject, and an emphasis of how shame pervades the topic, which cannot even be spoken of publicly. But I cannot help asking why their faces are replaced by photographs of nature. Why are generic images of the Faroese landscape, with fjords, mountains, ocean and ships, used as a stand-in for the deeply personal and conflicted stories these women have to tell? As a Faroese person, I can tell the subtle differences between the areas and the season or time of day the pictures are taken; I am quite sure that most photographs are taken on or close to the island of Streymoy, where the capital is. They might as well be from Scotland or New Zealand, or any other mountainous country, and if you are not able to recognise the place, it might just be a visual contrast to the flat landscape in Denmark.
These landscapes-as-faces are perhaps more practical than intentionally rhetorical from a journalist perspective, but I argue that they summarise the backyard metaphor, I analysed earlier. They also enact the reduction of Faroese identity to the setting it takes place in, which I analysed and discussed in my chapter on *Place*. It expresses the invention of a country through an “exchange of the human and the natural, the self and the other” (Mitchell, 2002, p. 5). Faroese civilisation is exchanged for an easily recognisable version of the Faroe Islands, namely its picturesque, naturalised images of geography; the uninhabited distant place is a collective and recurrent topos, which can be puzzling when the relationship between abortion stories and Faroese landscapes is not expressed.

**Concluding discussion: ethnographic authority as journalistic ideal**

In this chapter of analysis, I have explored how authority, ethos and agency are performed by journalists and ascribed to sources. My approach to ethos is, in addition to understanding ethos as the audience perception of the rhetor’s character and trustworthiness, also informed by the archaic meaning of ethos as abode or dwelling place and how rhetors and audiences are “being situated or placed in relationship to things and to others” (Hyde, 2004, p. xviii). This spatial dimension of ethos offers a view on how Danish journalism on Faroese abortion rights create rhetorical fora, where journalists and sources enact the political relationship of the Danish kingdom. With few other organised spaces for public deliberation, I have claimed that journalism has a special function in facilitating rhetoric about the Danish kingdom as forum for political deliberation.

I have emphasised how journalists in the artefacts feature their position textually through visually representing their questions, while others perform an omniscient role. The generic variety across the textual corpus does not allow for detailed exploration and evaluation of what norms are upheld and broken, but I have underscored the ideological inscriptions of both styles. Both imply an audience, while the emphasised presence might enhance the journalist’s reporting from their individual perspective, rather than a universal gaze. Explicating your position in the text can be an expression of adherence to
the ritual of strategic objectivity, but also acknowledge the status of the journalist, as narrator, orchestrator and authority of the text.

I then focus on source authority, and how sources are positioned. Firstly, through my taxonomy of representative, discursive and vernacular sources, which leads to a perspective on the difference between Danish and Faroese sources. The centrality of Danish representative sources in Radio24syv’s reporting and the general use of Danish expert sources emphasise the subject of Faroese abortion rights as something journalists consider to be a joint issue for the Danish kingdom, whilst Faroese sources are central in the vernacular category, and positioned as consequence experts or so-called ordinary people. Discussing Spivak’s juxtaposition of representational and representative agency, I point to how the journalists’ orchestration of this enactment in Danish media of Danish-Faroese politics again implies an audience which sees or will see Denmark as the imperial centre, and misses the opportunity of organising the conversation in a way which realises the actual distribution of autonomy in the Danish kingdom.

My third research sub-question addresses the issue of how agency is mediated in the textual corpus:

What position does the analysed coverage place journalists and sources in and offer its rhetorical audience(s), in terms of affecting the current situation and constituting the Danish kingdom?

By pointing out the difference in representational status, I do claim that the difference is intentionally used by journalism to negate the agency of Faroese sources, but rather that it is a pitfall which aught to be reflected upon during source selection and orchestration.

I will address the rhetorical audiences in my discussion chapter, but this final analytical chapter on authority offers an occasion to interrogate how other but related disciplines engage representation, sources and the interviewer’s ethos and agency. Journalism’s ethos of enabling civic participation, informing the public and adhering to professional standards can seem isolated if we insulate these principles to the professionals, who
identify as the press, reporters and journalists. But as much literature on journalism points out, the practice of observing and communicating observations is a practice shared by ethnography, as used by anthropologists and other social scientific and humanities based research fields. Anne Kirstine Hermann states that:

_Ethnography, in the most basic sense, comprises two interconnected activities: firsthand participation in an unfamiliar social world and the production of accounts of that social world, which draw upon the participatory experience_ (Hermann, 2020, p. 494)

As a journalist and scholar, Hermann’s definition addresses the similarity of journalism and ethnography, whose synergetic properties have been explored through the study and practice of _ethnographic journalism_ (Cramer & McDevitt, 2014; Hermann, 2016, 2020; Pedelty, 2010). Hermann points to the issue of omniscience which I also analysed, when journalists avoid showing themselves in articles and interviews, as “(...) the use of omniscient narrators produces realist tales with an objective tone that obscures how activities and meanings unfolded for sources and how the journalist came to understand them” (Hermann, 2020, p. 499). The consequence of removing the narrating authority, the rhetor or the journalist for the sympathetic sake of performing realism and objectivity is that it does just the opposite: stories are always told, and acknowledging that telling and detailing how the story has been gathered performs an ideal, which I claim should trump the, in any case, futile ideal of objectivity, namely perspicuity. Being able to see how observations become stories or news does not resolve all issues, but it is a step in the right direction by giving audiences access to the authorial perspective of the given journalistic artefact.

Though the specific genre of ethnographic journalism has much to offer regarding the arguments I wish to make, it primarily deals with journalistic practices with a certain degree of comparability to ethnography, i.e. spending an extended period of time amongst one’s interlocutors (a full year being the ethnographic ideal) and writing one’s observations in a literary or feature style reserved for certain publications and topics. I
rather want to emphasise the norms and qualities which ethnography can offer most, if not all, journalistic genres. As I have analysed a variety of genres, from news reports to broadcast debates and feature articles, they have all offered departure points for reflecting on how journalists position themselves towards their sources as an enactment of the ideological setting they are embedded within. Therefore, my argument is that all genres of journalism can potentially gain from ethnographic principles of authority, positioning and representation.

In the foreword to the 25th anniversary edition of James Clifford’s seminal book *Writing Culture*, Kim Fortun writes: “Authority comes not from being unquestionable but by acknowledging partiality” (Fortun, 1986, p. xv). *Writing Culture* discussed and critiqued the essential notions of representation, which anthropology through ethnographic practice had generated since its inception as colonial practice: being the imperial centres means of knowing and thereby controlling the colonies it explored, as Edward Said, David Spurr, Mary-Louise Pratt and many others focusing on the violence of colonial discourse have pointed out (McLeod, 2010; Pratt, 2007; Said, 1978; Spurr, 1993). Taking a page from this book, would therefore seem like a good idea for journalism reporting on issues in asymmetrical geopolitical relationships. James Clifford admits the complexity of acknowledging partiality as a scholar, “[b]ut once accepted and built into the ethnographic art, a rigorous sense of partiality can be a source of representational tact” (Clifford, 2010, p. 7). Jo Bech-Karlsen emphasises the same and cautions against what he calls hidden narrators, and favours the tradition of open narration in journalism (Bech-Karlsen, 2007). A definite contrast to the determent from using “I”, which the previously mentioned Hvad laver JEG her? (En. What am I doing here?) attempts to alleviate (Moestrup et al., 2022). While I cannot say if the notion of open narration or acknowledged partiality is necessary in all forms and genres of journalism, the type I have analysed calls for it. As Bech-Karlsen states, a lack of openness in narration obscures the narrative perspective; the position from which the text is authored from (Bech-Karlsen, 2007, p. 17). When this perspective nevertheless reveals itself in the argumentation, stylistic tokens and other impressions the intended and inscribed audience, and in my
final chapter I begin by discussing just that — the rhetorical audiences of Danish coverage of Faroese abortion rights.
Discussion: the rhetorical audience in Danish coverage of the Faroese abortion rights situation

Since I began the writing of this thesis, some events have heralded the possibility of changes to the Faroese abortion legislation. In June 2023, the Faroese Minister of Justice, Bjarni Kárason Petersen, declared in a public press release that “the outmoded law” and the “debate of the issue” underscores that a revision of the abortion legislation is due (Løgmálaráðið, 2023). A few days later, the Faroese Medical Association released a survey made amongst its members which showed that 89.1% of the respondents were in favour of liberal abortion rights, meaning that their patients should be able to decide whether to terminate a pregnancy within a given gestational limit (Nielsdóttir, 2023). I have yet to see any mention of these events in the media I have analysed examples from; perhaps it is due to a decreasing interest in the issue or perhaps the focus on the 50th anniversary for the implementation of liberal abortion rights in Denmark. Though the Faroese abortion situation is mentioned in articles about the historical Danish legal change, for example when journalist Line Vaaben describes the older versions of the Danish legislation (Vaaben, 2023), the direct issue and consequences of the current Faroese situation is not woven into the commemoration of where Denmark was in 1973 and is now regarding abortion.

Implying audience, constituting publics

The choices made by the orchestrating journalist, as implied author, reflect their perspective, and have been the focal point of my analysis and critical evaluation. Equally or perhaps more relevant in evaluation of discourse, as it points to the consequences of rhetoric, is the implied auditor, the second persona reflecting the author’s image of whom the author considers the audience to be or would have them become:

What the critic can find projected by the discourse is the image of a man, and though that man may never find actual embodiment, it is still a man that the image is of. This
condition makes moral judgment possible, and it is at this point in the process of criticism that it can illuminatingly be rendered. (Black, 1970, p. 113)

Offered through this projection of the implied author is “the network of interconnected convictions that functions in a man epistemically and that shapes his identity by determining how he views the world” (Black, 1970, p. 112). In other words ideology and a view of the world, which in relation to audience shows how rhetors see their audience, their place in the world, or what it should become. I have looked at journalism as medium which has the public as its audience and thus positions it in relation to the issue addressed.

Actual auditors look to the discourse they are attending for cues that tell them how they are to view the world, even beyond the expressed concerns, the overt propositional sense, of the discourse. (Black, 1970, p. 113)

Black’s second persona thus offers critical evaluation of the rhetor’s ideology and the potential effect their rhetoric holds. Black points to the rhetorical aspects of events and discourse that are far less explicitly deliberative than a simple view of persuasion might be, but therein lies its value. Through the deictic markers, I have traced a rhetorical strategy, which expresses a view of the Danish kingdom while it addresses Faroese abortion rights. I argue that they can chart the stylistic tokens and vectors of influence in the artefacts, which in total offer the audience a way of seeing the world and seeing themselves in it.

I claim that the view of the Danish kingdom and autonomy as presented by Danish coverage of the Faroese abortion rights situation emphasises the asymmetry of this geopolitical relationship, and implies a colonial argument of Danish society as more advanced on the civilisational hierarchy created between the Faroe Islands and Denmark and the Danish public as agential in a problematic sense. If the second persona I have analysed materialises, I claim it would by constituted by an ideology of Danes as colonisers versus the Faroese as colonised (Charland, 1987). Maurice Charland’s argument
about the constitutive potential of rhetoric employs Kenneth Burke’s concept of *identification* as describing how the existence of social subjects is a rhetorical effect (Charland, 1987, p. 133). Rather than considering audiences as already existing transcendent subjects, Charland combines Louis Althusser’s concept of *interpellation* with Burke’s notion of identification to describe how audiences are hailed into existence when responding to the discourses offering them positions to enact. Positions reflecting the implied audience of a given discourse: “Thus, to be interpellated is to become one of Black’s personae and be a position in a discourse” (Charland, 1987, p. 138). Charland thereby expands how the offer of subjectivity in a text can be embodied through material action, or how national identity and action can be considered the result of a discursive subject position. In order to be constitutive, the analysed rhetoric must successfully interpellate an audience (since “not all constitutive rhetorics succeed”), which then affirms its subject positions in the material world (Charland, 1987, p. 141).

Responses to the offers of subjectivity in the artefacts vary greatly, as my analysis has shown. Danish politicians repeatedly reject the journalists’ offer of being agentially superior to their Faroese counterparts, and the Faroese government and public’s autonomy regarding abortion legislation is emphasised time and again by the interviewed. As I have by stated, my perspective on discourse in this thesis does not focus on the creation of a Faroese colonial subject, but the representation in discourse that reflects a view of autonomy from the Danish centre. As journalists continue to either ask for Danish intervention, or express surprise about the current organisation of the kingdom by assuming that ultimate power is vested in the Danish part of the Danish kingdom, this perspective must be expected to resonate with the public as audience. Just as the depictions of the Faroe Islands as temporally behind, spatially distant and limited in bodily and national autonomy must be.

These depictions just happen to rarely resonate with a Faroese audience. An example of this is the aformentioned critique from the abortion rights organisation Frítt Val. Frítt Val has criticised attention from Danish journalists as “sensationalist” and “tabloid” journalism, which assumes that the Faroese need to be saved (Frítt Val, n.d.).
We often experience that Danish media covering the abortion issue in the Faroe Islands involve a single-minded focus on how conservative Faroese society is. In such cases the coverage risks becoming tabloid, and more about how shockingly backwards the Faroe Islands are, when it comes to abortion — sometimes even in a way which gives the impression that Denmark aught to interfere with Faroese matters to save citizens from the unfortunate circumstances. To that we wish to underscore that we see the fight for liberal abortion in the Faroe Islands as a fight which the Faroe Islands need to take on their own — not because of pressure from Denmark. (Fritt Val, n.d.)

Interference can be interpreted in many ways, which my analysis also has pointed out, and in recent years Fritt Val has called on the Danish government to remove costs for Faroese people seeking abortion in the Danish health system (as discussed in Tanholdt & Rosenkilde, 2022). Transnational solidarity can take many forms, and the critique of Danish journalism which reduces and essentialises the Faroese situation, is not a total cut of all ties to Danish actors. But it sheds light on how Danish address of Faroese issues might result in the inverse of what is intended.

**A second double bind: upholding the asymmetry you try to dismantle**

As sources underscore that it is in fact the Faroese government which has autonomy to legislate on abortion, and underscore their respect towards it, this implies the several

156 Original: “Vi oplever meget tit, at danske medier, som dækker abortspørgsmålet på Færøerne, har ensidigt fokus på hvor konservativt et samfund Færøerne er. I sådanne tilfælde risikerer dækningen at blive tabloid, og handler mere om hvor chokerende bagvendte Færøerne er i forhold til Danmark, når det kommer til abort – sommetider endda på en måde, hvor man får indtryk af, at Danmark burde blande sig i færøske forhold for at hjælpe borgerne ud af den ulykkelige situation. Til det vil vi understrege, at vi ser kampen for fri abort på Færøerne som en kamp, som Færøerne må tage på egen hånd –ikke på grund af pres fra Danmark.”
audiences at play. I analysed the dialogue of journalist at Radio24syv, Tinne Hjersing Knudsen, and Minister of Equality, Eva Kjer Hansen, whose discussion about Hansen’s rhetorical agency went round in circles, and how her previous silence was rephrased as respect for Faroese home rule. I pointed out how her reference to respect can be seen as an address to the invisible fourth persona, implied as ideologically in contrast to how journalists portray the Danish kingdom, and silenced by Hansen’s rejection of any practical right to try and affect Faroese matters.

If we compare contemporary Danish coverage to the period around 2003-04, when Danish politicians and activists were scolded for their encouragement to affect the Faroese situation, silence and expressions of respect are not surprising rhetorical strategies. Interpreted through the concept of Klaksvík Syndrome, which accounts historically for Danish political reluctance to engage in any form with Faroese issues, silence as an expression of respect seems like the diplomatically most available strategy, when the consequences of even engaging rhetorically are unpredictable.

Rebecca Adler-Nissen questions this strategy in her analysis of Danish-Faroese diplomatic relations based on participant-observation in the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Adler-Nissen, 2014, 2012). After participating in a semi-annual, high-level meeting between Faroese and Danish civil servants on all foreign affairs matters relating to the Faroe Island, Adler-Nissen describes the face-to-face “everyday management of Danish imperial legacy through postcolonial embarrassment” (Adler-Nissen, 2014, p. 72). While discussing pilot whaling, which is an internationally criticised local practice of the Faroe Islands, and that the Danish government officially supports and faces its own criticism for, a Danish representative breeches decorum by insinuating that the Faroese government should try to stop the practice. At, first the comment is met by silence, but when the Danish official repeats the question and adds that whale meat is bad for your health, the director of the Faroese Foreign Ministry replies and Adler-Nissen describes:

“Yes, that is true. We have found that there is too much mercury in the pilot whale.” The chief negotiator from the Faroese delegation pointedly looks straight into the eyes of the
Director of the Danish Foreign Ministry and explains, “I have eaten a lot of pilot whale in my life” (Adler-Nissen, 2014, p. 73)

The meeting participants break out in laughter at the Faroese director’s reply, jokes are made which allude to the Faroese delegation being mentally deficient due to the mercury intake and the Danish representative who initiated the conversation has no chance of continuing the topic: she is ridiculed for speaking as if the Danish government can tell the Faroese government what to do. Adler-Nissen posits this form of humour as instrumentalisation of postcolonial embarrassment, “i.e. the embarrassing situation wherein Danish negotiators lose face because the postcolonial relationship is openly articulated” (Adler-Nissen, 2014, p. 73). As another form of colonial and decolonial discourse, Adler-Nissen’s study attests to the relevance of analysing the implied and enacted notions of power in the Danish-Faroese relationship, and I find her argument about the additional conflict it engenders especially relevant for my case:

For Denmark to outright criticize pilot whaling would amount to rejecting Faroese self-rule. By defending the Faroese against the rest of the world, however, Denmark is precisely assuming its position as the responsible party; as a maternalistic colonial power acting on behalf of an adolescent colony that is unable to stand up for itself. So the circle is squared. The double move of defending a particular Faroese subjectivity at the same time constitutes the Faroe Islands as inferior and requiring assistance, as well as constituting the Faroe Islands as a single subject. (Adler-Nissen, 2014, p. 73)

To condone Faroese pilot whaling and keep silent about the Faroese abortion legislation are not the same thing. But both strategies present the Faroe Islands as unable to stand up for themselves, and thus perform the asymmetry they purport to dismantle. Even if critique would be called indecorous by Faroese politicians, there is a difference between arguing for legal intervention and voicing how Faroese legislation is problematic. International criticism is one of the many aspects of communication in international relations, and for the Danish-Faroese relationship to not present as asymmetrical, Danish criticism of the Faroe Islands would be a valid mode of diplomacy; one that positioned
the Faroe Islands as able to defend themselves and ultimately circumvented the paternalism of the Danish imperial legacy, since the Faroe Islands would be addressed as an equal.

The same applies to the legitimacy of Danish journalism covering the Faroese abortion rights situation: it is fair to critique, condemn and lament the Faroese situation, and present the current Danish legislation as one of several alternatives. International awareness of local reproductive and sexual rights and health issues is a central strategy in improving the conditions globally. But when this awareness predominantly employs rhetorical strategies, which I argue engender a colonial ideology of the Danish kingdom, it must be questioned if it serves the purpose intended or risks maintaining a problematic perspective instead.

**Ethnographic orientations towards interlocutors as audience**

Throughout this thesis I have mentioned ethnographic discussions and principles to illuminate the issues and potentials of Danish journalism which addresses the Faroese abortion rights situation. I realised that there was value in addressing the intersection of these professional practices through the practical experience of being contacted by both journalists and ethnographers during my PhD studies. Students of both disciplines find the Faroe Islands to be an interesting topic of inquiry, and having been a student myself, my advice and recommendations have been based on my ongoing reflection about my artefacts. At one point, when talking to an anthropologist, I had a realisation that I wish I had communicated to all the journalists: write something which would be interesting for Faroese people to read. By Faroese people I mean the interlocutors, sources or informants generating knowledge for and with you in the proverbial field; the wider public or the specific group you are exploring and/or interviewing; those who somehow fall into the category of people you are writing about. Write as if those you are writing about are reading along.
In this thesis, that principle epitomises the form of rhetorical agency which the Faroese abortion rights situation would benefit from: if this coverage implied a Faroese audience, i.e. local doxastic knowledge of the Danish kingdom, political agency and Faroese society, which posited the Faroese population as the immediate mediators of change, I would expect the rhetorical strategies to be very different to the ones I have analysed here.

Journalistic coverage would have to justify its synchronic comparisons further, and acknowledge the diachronic perspectives which complicates the contemporary discussion of abortion rights in the Faroe Islands. It would have to be informed by the history and current formation of the Danish kingdom’s distribution of political and legislative agency. It could not rest on the assumption that the Faroe Islands were governed from Denmark or are similar in every legislative aspect. Perhaps it would acknowledge the way nature and environment affects society, but without having Danish geography and demographics as standard. The first person pronouns would not assume a shared position with Danish politicians or a Danish public unreflectively. Neither omniscient nor distinct narrators would be able to speak from simplistic or uninformed views of what the Danish kingdom means to Faroese agency. And Faroese sources would not be interviewed only for the sake of making them legible to a Danish public, but to show new aspects of how bodily and national autonomy is enacted in the Faroe Islands and in the Danish kingdom.

Speculative as the above paragraph may seem, some journalists do just that. In an article titled “Der er et opgør i gang på Færøerne” (En. A showdown is on in the Faroe Islands), journalist Emil Bergløv writes about Faroese youth culture and the changes and revolts against the conservatism, which parts of my textual corpus have illustrated (Bergløv, 2022). Already in the first subheading and in the first person plural, we sense the voice of those interviewed: “This is where we need to be. This is where we can make a difference
and be part of a change” (Bergløv, 2022). The journalist then sets the scene for the article:

_The conditions for broad-mindedness are improving in the Faroe Islands, where a generation of youth are delivering a broadside to conservatism. The bars in Tórshavn are displaying their LGBT-friendliness, the pride has become a popular festival, and the young do not leave [the Faroe Islands]in trying to be fairly met at mental eye level._ (Bergløv, 2022)

This story about emancipation, agency and optimism was not the story they went after, the journalist explains. The main text begins with an encounter with a musician at a bar, named Terji Krossteig, who asks Bergløv and the photographer, Marcus Emil Christensen, if they are working. Yes, they reply, having just interviewed the acclaimed Faroese artist Tróndur Patursson, known for his glass art installations, oil paintings of abstract landscapes and friendship with the Danish Queen. Krossteig responds with a sneer and makes a disappointed face:

> “Yeah, that is what you all come here for. To write about the puffins, and the magnificent nature and our most famous artist, Tróndur Patursson. With all respect for him. But he is established,” he says.
> He fiddles with his beer, a big ring with skulls on his finger, the tattoos crawling out from under his shirt.
> “Why the hell is no-one writing an article about the underground, about all the young artists who are here, about all of them who left earlier, who are coming home again. Who writes that fuck you-article to all the stereotypes about the Faroese?”

157 Original: “’Det er her, vi skal være. Det er her, vi kan gøre en forskel og være med til at lave noget om’”
158 Original: “Frisindet får bedre og bedre kår på Færøerne, hvor en generation af unge har givet konservatismen en bredside. Barerne i Tórshavn er begyndt at skilte med at være LGBT-venlige, priden er blevet en folkefest, og unge rejser ikke længere væk i jagten på mental øjenhøjde.”
We could very well be those who did, we answer.
Terji Krossteig is in full flow and needs to finish.

"Why the hell is no-one going down to Sirkus on a Saturday night and encountering everything that is going on. Tórshavn is a contemporary and progressive city like Reykjavik. Yeah, or Copenhagen. I left with my parents during the financial crisis in the 90s, and I have moved back. I am not the only one", he says. (Bergløv, 2022)

And thus Bergløv and Christensen become those who write about emancipation, agency and optimism in the Faroe Islands, while conservatism is still very much acknowledged as a national norm. Bergløv and Christensen here perform what Anna Kirstine Hermann has called the temporal tipping point: “the critical point in an evolving reporting situation that leads to a new and irreversible development” (Hermann, 2020, p. 501). Hermann analyses ethnographic journalists who “invest time with their sources in order to adopt a new perspective, i.e. undergo reorientation”, and thus adds one more term to Ulf Hannerz’ division between regimentation and representation, when writing (about) time (Hannerz, 2012; Hermann, 2020, p. 502). Compared to the journalists whom Hermann analyses, Bergløv and Christensen have not spent the idealised year or more in the field and do not claim to have set out to enact ethnography as journalists, in the sense that ethnographic

159 “Ja, det er jo det, I alle kommer her op for. For at skrive om lundefugle og den storslåede natur og vores mest kendte kunstner, Tróndur Patursson. Al respekt til ham. Men han er jo etableret’, siger han.
Han rumster lidt med sin øl; stor ring med dødningehoveder på fingeren, tatoveringer kravlende ud under skjortekanten.
‘Hvorfor fanden er der ikke nogen, der skriver en artikel om undergrunden, om alle de unge kunstnere, der er her, om alle dem, der rejste væk tidligere, som kommer hjem igen. Hvem skriver den der fuck you-artikel til alle stereotyperne?’
Det kunne vi da egentlig godt være dem, der gjorde, svarer vi.
Terji Krossteig er sat i gear og har lige brug for at tale færdig.
journalism requires (Hermann, 2016; Pedelty, 2010), and the article is otherwise comparable to many of the articles I have analysed:

*The Baptist church has a strong foothold, and abortion is not liberal. But the difference now from only 10 years ago, is that there is a well-rooted resistance to conservatism with, for instance, the movement Frít Val, which works towards repeating the LGBT-environment’s success, only regarding the abortion issue.* (Berglov, 2022)

Berglov and Christensen have not gone native with the Baptist church, the LGBT+ environment nor the abortion rights movement to understand them. This is the only mention of the abortion rights situation, and the article is in that sense comparable to Weekendavisen’s “Annika skifti kyn” (Munk, 2018). Conservative Christianity, LGBT+ rights and abortion rights are compared and juxtaposed, but while Munk’s article primarily looks at the past which has led to the current, Berglov writes about how the current is unfolding and looks towards the future. The use of the first person pronoun separates the sources from the journalists and them from their audience, and the text addresses an issue a source has brought up.

Another article, which I will also emphasise as departing from the tendencies I have critiqued, is Information’s article “Færøernes 66 årige abortlov er igen til debat: ’Alt er galt med den lov’” (En. The 66 year old Faroese abortion law is again being debated: “Everything about that law is wrong”) (Drivsholm, 2022). The “again” in the title indicates some sort of historical perspective. The historical background is concisely described as: “When Denmark in 1973 got liberal abortion, the Faroe Islands did not follow along. The Danish realm’s smallest country decided to keep the Danish legislation from 1956” (Drivsholm, 2022).

[160 Original: “Baptistkirken er stærkt repræsenteret, og aborten er ikke fri. Men forskellen på nu og for bare 10 år siden er, at der er en rodfæstet modstand mod konservatismen med blandt andet bevægelsen Fritt Val, der arbejder på at gentage LGBT-miljøets succes bare inden for abortspørgsmålet.” ]
The three sources are Bjørk Sadembou from the anti-abortion organisation Pro Vita, Tordis Vang from the abortion rights organisation Frítt Val and Esther Weihe Jacobsen, a medical doctor, who is religious and in favour of liberal abortion. They are all represented by portraits, in different settings, and though one is taken outside and has parts of Faroese nature as background, it stands in stark contrast to the lack of faces in the textual corpus I have analysed; visual emphasis is on the person interviewed, not their setting. All of them are young, and they all represent vital differences in the Faroese debate on abortion rights. Especially Jacobsen, whose position can seem paradoxical if Christianity is considered irreconcilable with liberal abortion rights — but her presence proves that it is not, and adds a new perspective. She says: “If I want to be a bit provocative, I think: Maybe Jesus would consider liberal abortion to be a good thing. That is how I see it. As an active Christian you can have that interpretation” (Drivsholm, 2022). That is probably a rare comment in the Faroese debate on abortion rights, and adds nuance to the panel of debaters. A perspective that is actually unique in the Danish media’s coverage of the Faroese abortion rights situation.

Yvirskrift?
In essence, I consider this orientation towards the sources and their society as audience as a form of identification, somewhere between consubstantiality and eunoia: not delivering the stereotypes of the Faroe Islands is one way of acknowledging and including the Faroese audience as something other than different, other or divided from the Danish point of utterance. Expressing one’s own status as different from the voices being orchestrated is a way of explicating the reflections of representation and positionality, which discussions of ethnographic studies have emphasised as necessary. In practical terms, I have found the rhetorical employment of deixis fruitful for questioning the

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162 Original: “Hvis jeg skal være lidt provokereende, så tænker jeg: Måske ville Jesus synes, at det rigtige var fri abort. Sådan ser jeg på det. Som troende kristen kan man godt have den tolkning.”
elements which can be seen as a given in journalism. Time, place and authority address intersecting logics in abortion rhetoric and colonial discourse, and transported to a form of journalistic topoi, they could become tools guiding one’s own production. By asking why “I/them”, why “now” and why “here/there”, and comparing the routes which different answers will offer, the overlaps between abortion rhetoric and colonial discourse and their spatiotemporal hierarchisation of civilisation as means for ascribing agency can be an intersection journalists face and deal with.

**The final double bind**

Though my aim has not been to come to a definition of whether the Faroe Islands have been or are a colony, the question has haunted my drafts and my presentations throughout my time working on this thesis. After repeatedly responding as if I have been asked “but are the Faroe Islands a colony?”, I realised that it is I myself who keeps wondering. What would an answer provide?

It would not be the final legitimation of whether postcolonial theory is a fitting approach to discourse about the Faroese-Danish relationship, because theories on colonial discourse can and do make sense of the rhetorical dynamics and strategies I have analysed. A postcolonial perspective on Faroese literature has long been established as a productive approach to Faroese self-images, as Malan Marnersdóttir amongst others has demonstrated (Marnersdóttir, 2002, 2007, 2009). My thesis is an attempt to show the applicability of postcolonial theory on discourse from the imperial centre.

But does Danish colonial discourse make the Faroe Islands a colony? Colonialism is not something that *is*; it is something which is being done, performed, enacted and embodied, and as a rhetorician I am not necessarily occupied with the notion of something being beyond the words which constitute our world. The administrative paperwork which named Greenland as a colony and the Faroe Islands a dependency was also cultural ideology at work. Viewing both from a postcolonial perspective should not homogenise history and the lived experiences of Faroese and Greenlandic people, because
these were not the same. Complicating the definitions of colonialism and imperialism
does not result in a levelling of vastly different contexts, which I have sometimes feared it
would. Acknowledging the consequences of organising countries in the North Atlantic
Ocean in its current geopolitical relationship are relevant for contemporary biopolitics,
and should be a continuous point of exploration for making sense of critical differences in
an apparently homogenous and peaceful political relationship.

Acknowledging colonial discourse at work in the Faroese-Danish relationship does not so
much reveal the true nature of what the Faroese are or have been; it does not offer us a
place in the helpless binary of those colonised versus those colonising. As I have repeated
numerous times, colonial discourse talks about the Faroe Islands, but says more about a
Danish self-image, and it is this consequence which should be criticised and
problematised. With the ongoing discussions about racialised violence and other
consequences of Danish imperial rule in Greenland, the ethos of benevolent ruler is
destabilised and pushes against the image of Danish exceptionalism. The consequences of
Danish imperial rule in the Faroe Islands are not easily deciphered, because it does not fit
the general narrative of what imperial rule is, and squeezing Faroese history into that
mould might skew what we can learn from history. What we can decipher, as I have tried
in this thesis, is the tendency to position Denmark as the benevolent carrier of the
burden to save the Faroe Islands. A tendency I have also noticed in historical accounts of
the Danish kingdom as colonial power, such as Danmark og kolonierne (M. V. Pedersen et
al., 2017).

In the first chapter of the first volume, historian Uffe Østergaard defines and discusses
which Danish territories qualify as colonies and uses the Faroe Islands as an example
illustrative of the complex cohesion of the Danish kingdom and how the regions are hard
to define, since the Faroe Islands do not qualify as a former colony (Østergaard, 2017, p.
36). Under the heading “The Faroe Islands — from monopoly to self-assertion”,
Østergaard explains the Royal Danish trade monopoly in the Faroe Islands and how it has
been subject to critique figuring Denmark as an oppressive power:
Nationalists and economic liberalists today agree to cast odium on the trade monopoly. But one must ask oneself what the alternatives would be for the islands in the under-resourced Danish-Norwegian autocratic state, which in the 17th century even had to fight for its life against Sweden? Without monopoly on the trade, the result would easily have been the total seclusion of the islands in the North Atlantic, which then would be subject to Basque and Dutch whalers and North African pirates, who once in a while found their way, especially to Iceland. It is highly doubtful that they would have taken greater care of the local population than the autocratic kings, who — despite their negligence — still considered the Faroese and Icelandic inhabitants as subjects and — admittedly modest — objects of taxation. (Østergaard, 2017, p. 41)

Through the rhetorical device of counterfactual history, Østergaard legitimises the monopoly trade by stressing its obligation to supply the Faroe Islands with goods. The main argument seems to be warranted by the Danish monopoly being the lesser of two evils — in fact, it probably secured the survival of the Faroese inhabitants, who despite being neglected were considered of some, or at least modest pecuniary value to their sovereign. The two interposed remarks in the final sentence refer to the dereliction of duty and meagre profits, which are both syntactically and rhetorically understated: they seem almost not worth mentioning, as they are done so in passing — the consequences of how the trade was handled are as inconsequential as the Faroese people, who ought to count themselves lucky that the hard-pressed Danish-Norwegian state even bothered, to put it bluntly. At a later

63 Original: “Nationalister og økonomiske liberalister er i dag enige om at lægge monopolhandelen for had. Men man må spørge sig, hvad alternativerne ville have været for øerne i den ressourcesvage dansk-norske eneveldige stat, der i 1600-tallet ovenikøbet måtte kæmpe for sit liv mod Sverige? Uden monopol på handelen kunne resultatet let være blevet en total afbrydelse af alle forbindelser til øerne i Nordatlanten, som derved ville have været overladet til baskiske og hollandske hvalfangere og nordafrikanske sørøvere, der af og til fandt vej, særligt til Island. Det er stærkt tvivlsomt, om de ville have taget større hensyn til lokalbefolkningen end de eneveldige konger, der — alle forsømmelser til trods — dog opfattede indbyggerne på Færøerne og Island som undersåtter og — indrømmet beskedne — skatteobjekter.”
point, Østergaard again returns to what he considers unjust criticism of the Danish kingdom stating, “It is not always easy being a benevolent colonial power” (Østergaard, 2017, p. 53).

The quote gives an impression of how the author (speaking on behalf of a past Danish state) fashions himself and reflects an understanding of the Danish kingdom. This textual construction of the self simultaneously reflects the author’s understanding of his audience or what he would have them become, echoing a sense of shared common ground with his reader. Inscribed in the text, its argumentation and stylistic tokens is an offer to its reader to acknowledge themselves as or accept the ideology informing it, which rests on an asymmetrical valorisation of the parties of the geopolitical relationship which is expressed rhetorically. The way we speak of empires often offers our listeners positions as either superior or subordinate; even if it is much more complicated than that.

This is where another double bind starts to kick in. Gayatri Spivak’s reflections on how to stay with the complexities of enacting theoretical knowledge in the world one inhabits and studies pointedly encourage us to abandon the impulse to find the final answer, to fix a solution, to simplify the complex (Spivak, 2013). Moving through a double bind is not aimed at resolving the complex questions we ask, which should rather remain and be acknowledged as aporias:

*Neither an assertion masquerading as a question nor a question that the rhetor will answer, this figure expresses a doubt, an unresolved point. The asker cannot answer it, or wishes to suggest an answer without specifying, or wants to plant a suspicion.*

(Fahnestock, 2011, p. 299)

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164 Original: “Det er ikke altid nemt at være en velmenende kolonimagt.”
To finish on my own double bind; I do not want to answer the question of whether the Faroe Islands are or have been a colony, but I want to remain within the unease of exploring how we discuss it.
Conclusion

In this thesis I have analysed contemporary Danish coverage of the Faroese abortion rights situation as a rhetorical intersection of biopolitics and geopolitics. Using abortion as an analytical prism, I have shed light on how the Danish-Faroese relationship is discussed in an example of discourse on the Danish kingdom, where two forms of autonomy seemingly are at stake: the bodily autonomy of Faroese people seeking abortion and the national autonomy of the Faroe Islands as a self-governing country within the Danish kingdom. Often presented as a Danish key issue, liberal abortion rights are viewed as a Danish national value in the textual corpus, making the Faroese lack of liberalisation a visible marker of difference between the otherwise comparable nations. Stating that journalism has a special role in facilitating discourse and deliberation in a geographically vast area, by creating forums where journalists, sources and audiences are positioned towards each other as enactments of their political setting, I have focused on how autonomy is discussed and agency is ascribed to the implicated actors.

I set out to answer the following research question:

*How does contemporary Danish journalism report on Faroese abortion rights and how is this rhetoric embedded within the asymmetry of the geopolitical relationship of the Danish kingdom?*

By emphasising the argument that abortion rhetoric, used a diagnostic of a society’s health, can be a modality for exerting power over competing biopolitical regimes, I have sought to expand this point to encompass discourse about Faroese autonomy in the Danish kingdom (Stormer, 2010, 2015). I have analysed the journalistic construction of the when, where and we in the textual corpus in order to engage and emphasise the comparable logics of colonial discourse which also seeks to exert power through discourses of civilisational hierarchisation (Spurr, 1993).
My analytical strategy has therefore been a rhetorical approach to deixis, in which I have employed *Time, Place* and *Authority* as theoretical and critical concepts for engaging this rhetorical intersection (Prasch, 2016).

In the chapter on *Time*, I have analysed temporal discourse with a focus on kairotic events; the rhetorical occasioning of discourse in journalism, where the appropriate and possible means of acting are presented. I claim that the analysed artefacts overemphasise synchronic events, which occasion the coverage, but isolate the Faroese present from the Danish kingdom’s history, and ignore previous but comparable situations, which sources and audiences could be responding to. While the journalistic framing and advocacy for action was not informed by a historical perspective on the Danish kingdom’s policy and the Faroese position within it, some sources acknowledged this long history and used the moment to address political conventions which might resonate with an informed audience, such as the Faroese public. Kairotic events, therefore, express the temporal blinders for journalists attempting to establish synchronic parallels to global events, while remaining unaware of diachronic parallels within the Danish kingdom.

I further analyse the use of chronological time, as it is used in the analysed artefacts to emphasise civilisational development and temporal difference between the Faroe Islands and Denmark. Whilst my analysis of temporal discourse as kairotic events showed how journalism on Faroese abortion rights isolates its contemporary coverage of abortion from its context in the Danish kingdom, temporal discourse as the construction of chronologies is used to argue for Faroese difference and slowed development. Conservatism illustrates why reproductive and sexual rights have not advanced at the same pace and through the same trajectory as the Denmark, ultimately depicting the Faroe Islands as behind on the route to civilisation.

These aspects of the textual corpus and what were addressed in my first research sub-question:
How is civilisational development in the Faroe Islands inferred and contrasted to Denmark and how can this convergence in the structural logics of abortion rhetoric and colonial discourse be productively approached by scholars and journalists?

Even if many artefacts are occasioned by international restrictions on abortion rights, the governing logic is that civilisational development leads to liberalisation over time; the temporal standstill in the Faroe Islands is thereby what has halted healthy developments. Though the Danish legislation was paradigmatic at its time of implementation, and is based on an ideal norm of relocating abortion from being a criminal act to being a civil right, global events underscore the fact that change is not necessarily towards a liberal future. If we consider rhetorical action as a means for effecting change, it necessitates the acknowledgement that agency does not always enact rhetors’ intentions and can have protean consequences. When the history and political norms of the Danish-Faroese relationship are not taken into consideration, the push for liberalisation can result in a conservative backlash.

The history and political norms of the Danish kingdom are throughout the analysed artefacts underemphasised by journalists, which is why I argue that it is not merely the spatiotemporal logics of abortion rhetoric which bring forth the tensions of development ideology and civilisational decline. The discourse of what the past and present construction of the Danish kingdom means for abortion rights and advocacy, and how it is lacking in terms of accuracy and actual knowledge about Faroese autonomy, undergirds contemporary coverage of Faroese abortion rights. Acknowledgement and reflexive awareness of how geopolitical context affects biopolitical discussions has informed abortion policies and practices has been central in abortion scholarship in recent years (De Zordo, 2023; De Zordo et al., 2017). It should be equally present when analysing and producing the coverage of reproductive and sexual rights in contexts across political and national borders such as those within the Danish kingdom.

In the chapter on Place, I argue that the analysed artefacts reflect a view of the Faroe Islands straddling the position of being alike and apart from a Danish self-image, as the
Faroe Islands are expected to be similar but deemed other. A recurrent metaphor in parts of the coverage is the notion of the Faroe Islands as Denmark's backyard, which I claim illustrates the ideological confusion of the rhetoric of the Danish kingdom: it mirrors the Danish term rigsfællesskab (literally imperial community) by both constituting a collective, a joint piece of land, but underscoring Danish superiority as in charge of its subordinate areas. The naturalised image of the Faroe Islands is repeated throughout the visual elements of the artefacts as well, where photographs of nature and landscape figuratively and literally replace pictures of Faroese society and sources.

I have claimed that the backyard metaphor serves as a dominant representation of the Faroe Islands as a place, with two topoi further highlighting the colonial nature of this discourse. Firstly, the Faroe Islands are compared to so-called developing countries, and negatively associated with other distant, colonised and orientalised nations with diverse abortion laws. This rhetorical mode reinforces the power imbalance between Denmark and the Faroe Islands, positioning the latter as inferior. The second topos involves inferring Faroese culture from its natural surroundings, linking religion, scepticism towards abortion, and foregrounding it through verbal and visual depictions of the relationship between Faroese mentality and the surrounding mountains, weather and sea. Though the topos of nature is present in Faroese national self-images, I have underscored the difference between exotification of one self and of others in national identity discourses (Moberg, 2021).

Based on the argument that Danish collective identity discourses are structured around the Danish Constitution’s idea of a perfect fit between state, nation and people, which make arguments about Faroese autonomy disturbing (Adler-Nissen, 2014), I critiqued how journalists leave out vital details in how the Danish kingdom is organised: it both reveals a lack of knowledge and expectation that it is shared by the audience, and attests to the active forgetting and remembering of the Danish imperial past. Expressing surprise about a complex subject can be a way of establishing commonground with an equally uninformed audience, but I emphasise that in this case, the mediators of change are not unaware of how Faroese autonomy works.
These aspects were addressed in my second sub-question:

How is autonomy regarding bodies and nations, as both the individual bodies of Faroese people and the national body politic of the Faroe Islands, represented in contemporary Danish journalism?

As my analysis points to rhetorical modes defined as colonial discourse in the analysed artefacts, I have qualified why a postcolonial approach to Faroese-Danish discourse is relevant. Furthermore, and in relation to my overall focus on the rhetorical intersection of biopolitics and geopolitics, the negation of Faroese bodily autonomy and national autonomy risks expressing a logic of anti-abortion rhetoric (Stormer, 2000); where the pregnant body and women as citizens, deemed irrelevant or purged from the deliberative context, are left void of agency in anti-abortion rhetoric, the Faroese body politic is circumscribed by depictions of the natural environment’s agency and the Danish government’s responsibility for Faroese abortion legislation.

In the chapter on Authority, I have explored how ethos and agency are performed by journalists and ascribed to sources. The spatial dimension of ethos offers a view on how Danish journalism on Faroese abortion rights creates rhetorical fora (Hyde, 2004), where journalists and sources enact the political relationship of the Danish kingdom.

I have emphasised how journalists in the artefacts feature their position textually through visually representing their questions, while others perform an omniscient role, and I have underscored the ideological inscription of both styles. Both imply an audience, but the emphasised presence might enhance the journalist’s reporting as their perspective, rather than a universal gaze. Explicating your position in the text can be an expression of adherence to the ritual of strategic objectivity, but also acknowledge the status of the journalist, as narrator, orchestrator and authority of the text (Booth, 1983; Campbell, 2005; Clifford, 1988).
I then focus on source authority, and how sources are positioned. Firstly, through my taxonomy of representative, discursive and vernacular sources, which leads to a perspective on the difference between Danish and Faroese sources. The general use of Danish sources emphasises the issue as something journalists consider to be a shared matter for the Danish kingdom, whilst Faroese sources positioned as consequence experts or so-called ordinary people speak to the difference between representational and representative agency (Spivak, 1988). As Faroese vernacular sources speak about their experiences, their limited autonomy is augmented by journalists, and I question if their story can be heard when embedded within the colonial discourse which negates Faroese bodily and national autonomy.

I point to how this enactment in Danish media of Danish-Faroese politics again implies an audience which sees or will see Denmark as the imperial centre, and misses the opportunity of organising the conversation in a way which realises the actual distribution of autonomy in the Danish kingdom. Most sources refute this inscribed ideology, which is evident through the many interviews, where journalist and source fundamentally approach the subject of Faroese autonomy differently. I argue that the dissonance lies in the dual audiences, where journalists address the expectations of a politically uninformed Danish audience, while political silence is strategic towards a Faroese audience as a form of fourth persona (Morris, 2002).

I thus approach my final sub-question:

> What position does the analysed coverage place journalists and sources in and offer its rhetorical audience(s), in terms of affecting the current situation and constituting the Danish kingdom?

Before I discuss the rhetorical audience of the analysed artefacts in the final discussion chapter, I seize this perspective to discuss reflections on positionality from ethnography (Clifford, 1983, 2010; Fortun, 2010). For journalism of the type I analyse — which goes to lengths to comment on cultural norms, juxtaposing an *us* and a *them* and advocating for
interaction between the audience culture and represented culture — acknowledging partiality, in different ways, can add to the ideal of perspicuity I claim that ethnography and journalism could share.

If the artefacts are understood as an offer to the Danish audience as public to see their position in the Danish kingdom as imperial superiority, the rhetoric I have analysed could seem like an appropriate strategy. If, on the other hand, it is understood as an attempt to affect the Faroese abortion rights situation in a way which pushes for liberalisation, I would categorise it as misinformed at best, but generally problematic. It does not address the Faroese body politic as mediators of change, and thus expresses a view of the Danish kingdom as both colonial and detached from actually ongoing politics. This detachment is central to acknowledge, and underscores the necessity of understanding colonial discourse as persuasive language, as well as rhetoric which can constitute a Faroese and a Danish public — the former being the focus of this thesis, while the latter can be a productive avenue for further research.

Contemporary Danish journalism on Faroese abortion rights lacks the intersectional sensitivity for issues that postcolonial theory amongst others has evolved; partially gained from the experiences and failures of ethnographers and journalists who ventured into the world as their backyard, and in that way taught us more about themselves than their object of study.
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Summary: Autonomy’s double bind

This thesis explores the rhetorical intersection of biopolitics and geopolitics in the form of Danish media coverage of the Faroese abortion rights situation. Expanding Nathan Stormer’s theory on abortion as a sign of pathology or marker of civilisation in order to encompass the cross-national and imperial discourse of the Faroese position in the Danish kingdom, it is argued that this case sheds light on the colonial logics of journalism which address reproductive and sexual rights issues in the Faroe Islands.

Transporting Allison Prasch’s rhetorical theory of deixis to a situation defined by mediated rhetoric, the analysis is organised into three chapters focusing on *Time, Place* and *Authority*, which address how temporal discourse, place-based rhetoric and participating rhetors’ authority is discussed and connects rhetorical audiences to the political system of the Danish kingdom. The overall conclusion is that journalism on the Faroese abortion rights situation addresses a Danish public, rendering the relationship between the countries as imperial, since the Faroese body politic is negated as audience and in terms of both bodily and national autonomy.

It is argued that the analysed artefacts enact a forum for deliberation on politics in the kingdom rarely found elsewhere and not in physical form, and this focus on the discursive dimension of the Danish kingdom underscores how the Faroese position is represented as colonial in a manner which argues for an approach to colonial discourse as separate from the material circumstances it usually is attached to. Separate in the sense, that the issues this thesis reveals lie in the rhetorical application of this discourse, which ultimately defeats the purposes it could enact — securing bodily autonomy and respecting national autonomy — but instead it creates a double bind in that the problems lie at a communicative level. These problems at the communicative level, are emphasised by the structural logics of abortion rhetoric, general discourse of the Danish kingdom and the dynamics of journalism, but can be amended by including ethnographic principles in practices of representation and positionality.
Resumé: Selvbestemmelsens dilemma

Denne afhandling undersøger det retoriske krydsfelt mellem biopolitik og geopolitik i form af danske mediers dækning af den færøske abortsituations. Ved at udbygge Nathan Stormers teori om abort som sygdomssymptom eller civilisationstegn, og for at omfatte den tværnationale og imperielle diskurs om Færøernes position i det danske kongerige, argumenteres der for at denne situation belyser den koloniale logik i journalistik der omhandler reproduktive og seksuelle rettigheder på Færøerne.

Overført til en situation defineret af medieret retorik bruges Allison Praschs retoriske teori om deixis til at organisere analysen i tre kapitler, der fokuserer på Tid, Sted og Autoritet, og undersøger hvordan temporal diskurs, stedsbaseret retorik og de deltagende retorers handlekraft bliver diskuteret og knytter det retoriske publikum til det danske kongeriges politiske system. Den overordnede konklusion er at journalistik om den færøske abortsituation henvender sig til en dansk offentlighed og gengiver forholdet mellem landene som imperielt, da en færøsk offentlighed som publikum samt det færøske statslegemes kropslige og nationale autonomi negeres.

Der argumenteres for at de analyserede artefakter udgør et forum for deliberation om det danske kongeriges politik, der sjældent finder sted i fysisk form. Dette fokus på den diskursive dimension af det danske kongerige understreger hvordan den færøske position repræsenteres som kolonial på en måde der plæderer for en tilgang til kolonial diskurs som adskilt fra dets materielle omstændigheder, og som den normalt knyttes til. Adskilt i den forstand at det problem som denne afhandling påpeger knytter sig til den retoriske udøvelse af denne diskurs, som i sidste ende undergraver det formål den kunne opnå — at sikre kropslig autonomi og respektere national autonomi — men i stedet etablerer et dilemma der er skabt på et kommunikativt niveau. Disse problemer på det kommunikative niveau fremhæves af abortretorikken’s strukturelle logik, den generelle diskus i det danske kongerige og journalistiske træk, hvilke kan imødekommes ved at inddrage etnografisk principper i praksis af representation og positionering.
Samandráttur: Sjálvæðistvíðstöður

Henda ritgerð greinar retorisku umskaringina av biopolitikki og geopolitikki ígjøgnnum eina kanning av, hvussu danskir midlar viðgera føroysku abortstöðuna. Við at menna ástøðið hjá Nathan Stormer um abort sum sjúkueyðkenni ella tekin um siðmenning, í eini roynad at umfata tvørtjóðarliga og imperiella diskursin um ríkisrættarliga stöðu Føroya, verður grundgivið fýri, hvussu hendan stöðan lýsir kolonialan logikk í tíðindaflutningi um reproduktiv og seksuell rættindi í Føroyum.

Við útgangsstöði í retoriska ástøðinum hjá Allison Prasch um deixis, sum er flutt til eina viðgerð av miðlaðum retorikki, er greiningin býtt í þrjúggjar partar, sum leggja dent á Tíð, Stað og Myndugleika. Partarnir viðgera tíðardiskurs, staðargrunndaðan retorikk og myndugleikan hjá teimum luttakandi, og hvussu greinaðu dómini knýta retoriska áskoðaran til politisku skipanina í danska kongaríkinum. Høvuðsinðurstöðan er, at tíðindaflutningur um føroysku abortstöðuna vendir sær til ein danskan almenning og endurgever sambandið millum londini sum imperielt, tá ein føroyskur almenningur sum áskoðari verður settur til síðis og kropsliga og tjóðskaparliga sjálvæðið hjá føroysku ríkiseindini verður undirmett.

Víst verður á, hvussu tey greinaðu dómini skapa ein pall fýri kjakið um politikkin í danska kongaríkinum, sum sjáldan kemur fýri og ikki finnr fysiskt stað. Hesin dentur á diskursivu síðuna av danska kongaríkinum undirstrikar, hvussu føroyska stöðan verður myndað sum kolonial á ein hätt, sum talar fýri eini tilgongd til kolonialan diskurs sum sundurskildan frá materiellum umstöðum, sum vanligt er. Sundurskildur á tann hätt, at trupulleikin, sum henda ritgerð visir á er knýttur at retorisku nýtsluní av hesum diskursi, sum í roynad og veru máar undan tí endamáli, íð kundi verið rokkið — sum er at tryggja kropsligt og tjóðskaparligt sjálvæði — og í staðin skapar eina tvístøðu í samskiftinum. Hesin samskiftistrupulleikin er styrktur av strukturella logikkinum í abortretorikki, generella diskursinum í danska kongaríkinum og eyðkennum við tíðindaflutningi, men kann bøtast um við at brúka etnografiskar grundreglur, tá arbeitt verður við umboðan og positionering.