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National Identity in Greenland in the Age of Self-Government

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Introduction

Greenland is undergoing significant changes in its relations to Denmark and its general position in the world. On June 21st 2009, a Self-Government arrangement will substitute the Greenlandic Home Rule, established 1979. The implementation of Greenlandic Self-Government is part of the process of decolonizing the relations between Denmark and Greenland which have been and still are, in many ways, characterized by domination. In a newspaper interview, Jonathan Motzfeldt, the former chairman of the Home Rule, talked of what he thought was the most important aspect of the Self-Government negotiation process: “That we are recognized as a people according to international law. The Danes would not allow that with the Home Rule negotiations in the 1970s. But now, we have succeeded. The Self-Government agreement recognizes us as a people with legal rights. Maybe this is an expression of a political mentality change among the Danes. They have probably gained a greater sense of the feelings which unite people. Political recognition is determinant for our self-respect” (own translation, Motzfeldt, Politiken, 2008, November 22).

In this paper, I analyze some of the national processes involved in the development of Greenland as a post-colonial nation, seeking to advance its possibilities of greater self-determination. My examination of Greenland revolves around the question of what it means for a ‘nation’ not to have an independent ‘state’. Such an examination must be tied to the relations between Greenland and Denmark. In my analysis, I question how Greenland emerged as a nation. This calls for a historical analysis of Danish colonialism which determines present day relations between Greenland and Denmark. The emergence of Greenland as a nation is connected to conceptualizations of Greenlandic national identity. The question of identity has been debated in Greenland throughout the last centuries. Thus, in my analysis, I question how conceptualizations of Greenlandic national identity reflect the colonial history and continued Danish dominance, the encounter between an Indigenous and a colonizing people, traditionalism, and new pressures for re-interpreting “Greenlandicness”. In this context, I furthermore

question the ways in which Greenland, as a post-colonial nation, is represented in Denmark. I analyze how Denmark is involved in the production and reproduction of images of Greenland *in* and *for* Denmark which position Danes as superior to Greenlanders. In this way, the essentialized images of Greenland as the Other reflects a “disguised” reproduction of colonial relations. My analytical questions are set in the empirical context of Greenland’s decolonization process.

I argue that the process towards greater Greenlandic self-determination requires critical analysis of the national processes involved in the development of Greenland as a post-colonial nation, as well as identification of power relationships and their history. The current implementation of Self-Government in Greenland constitutes a political moment that invites a rethinking and re-visioning of the (post-)colonial relations between Greenland and Denmark. My paper therefore speaks to both Greenlanders and Danes.

My analysis is based on three months of field research in Greenland in the summer of 2008. I spent two months in Greenland’s capital, Nuuk, as a guest student at Ilisimatusarfik (the University of Greenland), and one month in the smaller towns of the Greenlandic West-coast. During these three months, I was able to research literature on Greenland, conduct interviews, and study first-hand manifestations of national processes. At the time of my field research, the Danish-Greenlandic Self-Government Commission presented their proposal on Greenlandic self-governance that spurred new debates.

At the same time, my research is also based in the Danish context. Within the last year, the affairs of Greenland have increasingly surfaced in Danish public and political debates. This has exposed a general lack of awareness about Danish colonial history and revealed Danish hegemonic attitudes towards Greenland. From my experience, Danish national narratives ignore Denmark’s history as a colonial power and its consequences. For example, when I was taught about colonialism in primary and secondary school, I mainly learned about the colonial empires of Britain, France, the Netherlands, and Spain. However, little was said about Denmark’s role as a colonial exploiter in Greenland, Iceland, the Faeroe Islands, the West Indies, India and Africa. In fact, I learned that Denmark had been a “benign” colonial power in Greenland; we did not enslave the Indigenous population, and we did not implement physical punishment. I

learned that Denmark helped Greenlanders to alleviate the miseries of tuberculosis and poverty, even though I did not learn how these phenomena were related to Danish colonialism. I did not learn about Danish colonial policies, the complications arising from these, or the very exploitative and problematic nature of colonialism. I argue that these silences and inaccuracies in Danish national narratives constitute a major gap in the everyday consciousness of Danes, and remain to be challenged.

In a theoretical context, my analysis applies an inter-disciplinary approach, drawing on theories on political economy, nation-state formation, national identity, post-colonialism, and critical studies of “development” (see the description of my chapters for specific references).

The first chapter, “History of Greenland and Denmark Relations: The Forgotten Colonialism”, contextualizes present day inter-relations between Denmark and Greenland in a historical analysis of Danish colonialism in Greenland, the integration of Greenland into the Danish Realm, and the decolonization process up to the establishment of the Home Rule. I analyze the emergence of modern Greenland in a political economic perspective, drawing on world-systems theory (e.g. Wallerstein, *World-systems Analysis: An Introduction* 2004) and dependency theory (Frank, *The Development of Underdevelopment*, 1966).

The second chapter, “Perspectives on National Identity in Greenland”, analyzes different conceptualizations of “Greenlandicness” in Greenland. It discusses the ways in which the criteria of territory, language, ethnicity, indigeneity, tradition, and values are perceived by Greenlanders to constitute ‘Greenlandic forms of life’. I analyze Greenlandic national identity as a concept that has emerged along with the historical processes in which a global system of nation-states has been founded, drawing on the studies of Michael Billig (*Banal Nationalism*, 1996) and Anthony D. Smith (*Nationalism*, 2001).

The third chapter, “Representation of Greenland as a Form of Eskimo Orientalism”, analyzes the essentialized images of Greenland in Denmark as a process of Othering, reproducing colonial relations. I discuss the creation of “Greenland images” in Danish colonial history, as well as in the present-day media and recent literature on Greenland. This study is informed by post-colonial theory of Orientalism, mainly

referring to the work of Edward Said (*Orientalism*, 1979).

The fourth chapter, “Self-Government in Greenland”, describes and discusses the Self-Government agreement. I provide a discussion of the challenges to and possibilities of greater self-determination in the framework of the Greenlandic Self-Government arrangement. Here, I refer to critical studies of development.

With this paper, I hope to contribute to new dialogues both in Greenland and in Denmark, relating to the practice of Greenlandic self-determination and to a revisioning of the relations between Denmark and Greenland based on mutual respect.

History of Greenland and Denmark relations: The Forgotten Colonialism

Historical Amnesia Revisited

[...] anyone who has thought that Greenland and Denmark, today, relate to each other as two equal nations should think twice. Because, Denmark does not consider Greenland as equal – because we, among other things, have never been aware that we have actively partaken in a colonial project (own translation, Sjølie, 2008, February 2)

This is a statement by Tone Olaf Nielsen who was co-curator of the post-colonial exhibition and conference project on *Rethinking Nordic Colonialism*. Hansen and Nielsen, curators of the conference, argue that history continues to structure the Nordic societies today. They call the absence of the colonial history in Nordic collective memory “The Forgotten Colonialism” and “Nordic Amnesia”. The general lack of awareness concerning the fact that Denmark has actively partaken in a colonial project accommodates the perpetuation of colonial relations which “continu[e] to make [themselves] very much felt in the region’s former colonies” (Hansen & Nielsen, 2006, February). Gaining an understanding of the present day relations between Denmark and Greenland therefore necessitates an analysis of the colonial history.

Furthermore, I suggest that contextualizing present day relations between Greenland and Denmark in a historical framework is not only critical to Danish education, but also to the concepts of national identity and self-governance within Greenland today. As Petersen has put it, “if an idea is adopted by the colonized people themselves – both civil servants and other - it would then justify the colonization itself and also the presence of a colonial civil service. It would create a people who had lost belief in their own capacity. It would create a people that were thankful to be colonized” (Petersen, 1995: 122). The Greenlandic social anthropologist, Aviâja Egede Lyng, stressed in her presentation paper, *The Best Colony in the World*, at the conference on

Rethinking Nordic Colonialism that it is crucial to re-vision the colonial history within Greenland in order to gain understanding of Greenlandic identity and nationalism (Lynge, 2006). In her opening remarks, she stated:

We have always been taught we were one of the best colonies in the world. No slavery, no killings. We learned it through Danish history books, and from Danish teachers. With the books telling us how fantastic a colony we were – books about primitive Eskimos, books written from Euro-centric, economic, or self-justifying angles – we haven't really looked beyond this historical oppression [...]. We went directly from being a colony into becoming a part of Denmark. We learned to be Danish and we learned to be thankful. Why, then, should we have had a reason to decolonise? And why should we have a reason to ask questions about the 250 years of colonial presence? (Lynge 2006: 1).

For the reasons discussed above, I argue that engaging in the present political moment in Greenland-Denmark relations necessitates an investigation of the centuries of colonial presence in Greenland and the emergence of Greenland as a post-colonial nation.

Theoretical Framework of the History of Greenland and Denmark Relations

According to Barndt, engaging in a process of “naming the moment” should involve historical-structural analysis which “helps us identify the underlying power relationships and the deeper contradictions that determine the structure of our society in the long term” (Barndt, 1989: 8). In the rest of this chapter, I will engage in a structural analysis of Denmark-Greenland history, identifying some of the major political, economic, and socio-cultural forces involved in the historical emergence of modern Greenland.

In general terms, my analytical framework is informed by world systems theory (e.g. Immanuel Wallerstein, 2004), and dependency theory (e.g. Andre Gunder Frank, 1966). In this framework, the current states of affairs in “developing” countries are analyzed as results of a world-historical process in which the development of the “first world” ('developed market economies') is closely related to a process of subordinate development of the former. Frank called this phenomenon “development of

underdevelopment” (Frank, 1966). Over the past centuries capitalism spread and turned other areas into dependent satellites of the metropolitan centre. This process has been led by the main goals of seeking capital profits and accumulating capital. According to Wallerstein, those profits are generated by primary producers and appropriated through legal sanctions by capitalists. Wallerstein termed this relation an “unequal exchange” between core countries (Frank’s metropolis) and the periphery (Frank’s satellites). According to these theories, the current social, economic and political conditions of “less developed countries” are not explained as outcomes of the persistence of an “original” state, but as a consequence of historical capitalism (Leys, 1977: 92-93; Wallerstein, 2004: 12; Gunder Frank, 1966: 106). Importantly, Frank’s and Wallerstein’s work has challenged unquestioned beliefs in modernization, stages of growth, and traditional vs. modern society debates (Leys, 1977: 93; Wolf 1982: 23). One should be aware of certain shortcomings of a purely dependency/world-systems theoretical lens, which has been criticized for being unclear about the concepts of “development”, “exploitation”, and “imperialism” (Leys, 1977). Frank and Wallerstein have also been criticized for omitting the specificities about the range and variety of populations affected by the capitalist world system (Wolf, 1982: 23). On this note, it should be mentioned that there are ways in which the emergence of modern Greenland deviates from dependency/world-systems explanations (notably, Greenland is today not characterized as a “less developed country”). As all histories, Greenland’s history is complex and cannot be thoroughly assessed through a solely historical materialistic approach (or core-periphery analysis). Nonetheless, in a framework of world-systems theory it is possible to employ a uni-disciplinary approach, looking at a phenomenon over long periods (*longue duree*) as well as large spaces (Wallerstein, 2004: 17-19). I argue that an analysis informed by these theories allows an identification of the historical and 'transitive' relationships between Greenland and Denmark; they allow an investigation of how colonialism, as a consequence of capitalist expansion, has led to relations of inequality and dependency. Through this lens, we are able to recognize the ways in which Greenland’s state of affairs is relational to Denmark’s and vice versa, and that this relation can be viewed as one with core-periphery characteristics.

It should be noted that the main objective of my analysis is to narrate those

histories which are generally unknown, unavailable, or ignored. Thus, despite my inspiration from certain theories, my historical analysis does not attempt to squeeze historical processes into a tight framework and it therefore maintains a somewhat descriptive character. This chapter seeks to synthesize a number of academic resources in order to voice the silenced historical realities and legacies. This serves as a starting point for further analysis.

Greenland before 1953

Around 2,500 B.C Inuit tribes from Arctic America first settled in the most northerly part of Greenland, Peary Land. Larger and smaller Inuit groups from Northern Canada continued to settle in Greenland until about 1000 A.D. Greenland's relationship with Northern Europe began in the Viking Age in 989 when Norse peoples from Iceland settled in the Southern parts of Greenland, near present Nuuk and Qaqortoq. The Inuit had not yet settled in these areas. The Norse settlements were independent societies until 1261 when settler communities in Iceland and Greenland agreed to pay taxes to the Norwegian king. Greenland became part of the possessions of the Danish crown in 1380 when Denmark and Norway became a double monarchy, forming one kingdom soon led under the rule of Denmark (Sørensen, 2007: 11; Petersen, 1995: 119). However, as Sørensen writes, "[...]the possession of Greenland added little to the king's power because the Norse population there died out about 1500 following a period of 100 years out of all contact with other parts of the realm" (Sørensen, 2007: 11). The Danish kings did not realize the extinction of the Norse peoples in Greenland until centuries later. Even though Danish kings continued to regard Greenland as one of their inherent dependencies under indisputable Danish sovereignty, contact was not re-established until 1721 when the Norwegian Lutheran missionary, Pastor Hans Egede, arrived in Greenland. He had heard about the Norse people's settlements in Greenland and was concerned that they had turned heathens after the many years in isolation from the outside world. However, he did not find any Norse peoples but instead encountered Inuit peoples. Determined to christianise the Inuit, he settled and established a mission and trading station near present Nuuk (Sørensen, 2007: 11; Nutall, 1992: 17).

In this way, the re-colonization of Greenland began in the 1720s. In many ways, the colonization of Greenland appeared to be rather peaceful. Petersen has argued that this was partly due to the fact that the Inuit communities had no organization above the household level and therefore lacked anyone who might be interested in defending his power (Petersen, 1995: 119). The mission undermined the social position of the *angakut* (shamans) and the weak structure of authority within Greenlandic communities (Petersen, 1995: 119; Nutall, 1992: 17; Sørensen, 2007: 12; Loukacheva, 2007: 18). In 1726, the Danish government assumed responsibility of trade. Trade stations were set up in order to diminish the competition from Dutch whalers and tradesmen in the waters of Greenland. Danish control over the Greenlandic territory was further ensured by the establishment of The Royal Greenland Trading Company (KGH) in 1776, and until the Second World War, Denmark practised state monopoly on trade and investment in Greenland which secured the Danish state the possible colonial profits (Sørensen, 2007: 11; Nutall, 1992: 17; Petersen, 1995: 119). Thus, private capital investments were highly limited. Greenland was physically secluded and any access to Greenland required a special permission by the Danish state. Dahl even argues that the colonial enclosure of Greenland from the world was stronger than in other European colonies (Dahl, 1986: 13). World-systems theory explains that one of the main objectives of colonizing powers was to secure that no other relatively strong state in the world-system would gain access to the resources or the markets of the colony, or at most minimal access (Wallerstein, 2004: 56).

In Loukacheva's words, Danish colonialism was a situation in which “[t]he Inuit were becoming wards of the Norwegian-Danish Crown and were administered by traders and missionaries” (Loukacheva, 2007: 18). Sørensen (2007) has argued that there was a latent antagonism between the two services of trade and mission. The missionaries did not tolerate many Inuit traditional practices, such as shamanism which was considered heathen. Thus, they showed a preference to interfere in the local ways of life. At the same time, the Trading Company encouraged the hunting tradition because its primary profits came from buying whale and seal products (blubber) from local hunters in order to sell it in Europe as ‘petroleum’ to lighten up the streets. As a result, the Danish state pursued a paternalistic colonial policy (Sørensen, 2007: 12), also characterized as a policy of “positive isolation” or “economic paternalism” (Nutall, 1992: 17; Loukacheva,

2007: 21). The paternalistic and protectionist character of Danish colonial rule was justified by a Rousseausque conception of “the Noble Savage” – a conception which held that Native Greenlanders, as “free children of nature”, should remain “uncorrupted” and protected from European civilization (Nutall, 1992: 17; Thomsen, 1996: 268) The Danish Instructions of 1782, ‘the Instrux’, clearly reflects these characteristics of Danish colonial policies. The instructions described the ways in which relations between mission and trade station members were to be regulated, as well as laying out rules for proper behaviour towards the Inuit (Sørensen, 2007: 12; Petersen, 1995: 119; Loukacheva, 2007: 21). The ‘Instrux’ prohibited marriages between Danes and Greenlanders and allowed only the king's officials to have contact with Greenlanders (Loukacheva, 2007: 21). Furthermore, ‘the Instrux’ stated that the Danish staff should “[...] meet the inhabitants with love and meekness, come to their assistance whenever they can, set a good example, and take care that they come to no harm in any way”. Furthermore, “[s]hould anything indecent be committed by the Greenlanders, like either theft or various coarse vices, then the merchant must advise them in a most indulgent way to abstain from it. Should this fail, or should the felony be very coarse indeed, they should be punished according to the circumstances and the character of the crime” (qt. in Sørensen, 2007: 12). It was also the role of the Danish colonizers to offer provisions in times of epidemics and famine (Sørensen, 2007: 12).

As Petersen has commented, the Instrux was pre-occupied with expressing the purpose of economic exploitation, mainly the trade of hunting products (Petersen, 1995: 119). As Dahl and Viemose emphasize, Greenland was colonized as a consequence of the European mercantile expansion of trade with the primary goal of gaining economic profits. Danish colonization was further stimulated by the prospect of finding valuable minerals. The economic motifs behind Danish colonization have often been rejected with excuses of idealistic “good-will” on behalf of the Danes (Dahl, 1986: 13; Viemose, 1997: 7). This view has been supported by the argument that Greenland was a “deficit colony”. Official reports by the Greenland Commission in 1950 state that Danish expenses were higher than the revenues during the colonial period. However, these calculations did not include the tax revenues from a private cryolite mine established in 1850 in Ivittuut, South-West Greenland (Dahl, 1986: 15-16). The mine extracted cryolite for more than a

hundred years (Petersen, 1995: 120), but the tax revenues have generally been underestimated or “forgotten”. Nonetheless, Dahl has shown that if these numbers are included in the calculations, the colonization of Greenland was until 1949 a surplus enterprise (Dahl, 1986: 14-16). Having said this, the colonial profits were in general moderate because of the focus on trade of whale and seal products which were restrained by ecological limits. Furthermore, the specific mode of production of seal hunting limited the ability of capital control; the catch was dependent on the individual hunting method and individual control of the means of production (Dahl, 1986: 16). However, the population was much more affected by Danish colonial policies towards the trade of hunting and fish products than those of the cryolite mine in Ivittuut. As the cod appeared in the 1920s, due to climate changes, with a subsequent rise in demand for fish in the global market, the Danish colonial policy changed to encourage fishing. This resulted in the abandonment of many traditional hunting camps, as Greenlanders were drawn to the inner fjords to find jobs in the fishing industry (Nutall, 1992: 18). In accordance with Wallerstein’s arguments, the Danish colonizers decided on what kinds of production were to be pursued and favoured in the colony, and they legitimized their assumption of authority with self-justifying arguments, as is evident above. In short, this grounded a core-periphery relation in which surplus-value began to flow from Greenland (the periphery) to Denmark (the core) under the control and monopoly of Danish rule (Wallerstein, 2004: 12 & 56).

It should be noted that while the industrial capital expansion superseded the capitalistic mercantile era, Greenland’s international relations were still dominated by mercantile capitalism until the 1950s. Thus, Greenland was not a settler colony. Before 1950, very few Danes had moved to Greenland; in 1938, only 2,2% of the total population were Danish (Dahl, 1986: 16-17). Petersen points out that some groups in Denmark denied that Greenland was a colony because of the administrative bodies that were set up for the internal governance of Greenland. In 1860, local councils, *Forstanderskaberne*, were established to administer social aid and to act as a kind of justice system. *Forstanderskaberne* were replaced by local, elected municipal councils, and two regional “provincial councils” in 1920. The existence of these councils is, however, not sufficient to deny the colonial status of Greenland. Their budget and power

were limited, and as Petersen writes: “Like other councils that were found in several “overseas” colonies, they had certain well-defined tasks but no competence to decide their future” (Petersen, 1995: 120). Nonetheless, the establishment of *Forstanderskaberne* was significant to the national and geographical unity of Greenland. In 1950, the two councils were merged into one National Council (Dahl, 1986: 17). Thomsen emphasizes that in addition to the political institutions, the establishment of cultural institutions had a significant role in the creation of Greenlandic national unity (Thomsen, 1998: 26). It is for example noteworthy that the majority of the population was able to read and write in Greenlandic since the beginning of the 20th century. The Danish colonizers created the Greenlandic script in the quest to “bring enlightenment” by establishing a school system taught in Greenlandic. Furthermore, two teachers’ colleges were established in the 19th century, and the newspaper *Atuagagdliutit* was printed in Greenlandic and widely distributed. Thomsen furthermore states that “[t]he “national” identity that now began to replace the bonds of kin and settlement, and to supplement local identity, can thus to a great extent be said to have been created in and by the colonial administration” (Thomsen, 1996: 267). As Dahl argues, the developments towards an actual Greenlandic nation is a contrast to the experience of Inuit peoples in Canada and Alaska (Dahl, 1986: 17).

Cloaked Colonialism and New Pressures for Decolonization

The Second World War drew Greenland into ‘the modern world’. Boel and Thuesen argue that the limited presence of Denmark during the war (due to the German occupation) and the presence of the United States in Greenland (in terms of military and supplies of goods) had significant impact on the emergence of nationalist movements in Greenland (Boel & Thuesen, 1993: 34-35). The historical processes which followed the war lay the ground for growing ethnic consciousness and nationalist movements in Greenland. Two subsequent developments fuelled Greenlandic political mobilization. On one level, Greenland’s dependency on the world market was strengthened with the industrialization of the fishing industry (Thomsen, 1998: 39; Dahl, 1986: 19). On another, a neo-colonial period was launched in which Greenland was more than ever governed politically, economically, intellectually, and physically by Denmark (Petersen, 1995:

121).

As the United Nations pressured for decolonisation of the European colonies in the post-war period, Greenland's colonial status was formally abolished in 1953. Instead, Greenland was annexed as a Danish county. Notably, there was a referendum on the annexation in Denmark, but not in Greenland (Petersen, 1995: 120). It was the goal of Danish policies in Greenland to develop the living conditions of Greenlanders as equal members of the Danish state. Some even began to refer to Greenland as "North Denmark" and Denmark as "South Denmark" (Thomsen, 1998: 40). Despite the Danish discourses of creating "equal footing", the relation between the two countries was unquestionably still characterized by a colonizing power and the colonized. As Sørensen states, "[...]colonization was strongest after Greenland's colonial status was abolished in 1953" (own translation, Sørensen, 2007: 18). Thus, the period up until the establishment of the Home Rule in 1979, Denmark-Greenland relations should be analyzed in a colonial framework. Extensive modernization policies, formulated in Copenhagen, were implemented in Greenland in the 1950s and 1960s. As previously stated, Denmark practised state monopoly on trade and investment in Greenland until the Second World War. The G-50 policies (Greenland Commission's policies from 1950) lifted the monopoly on trade of The Royal Greenland Trading Company (KGH) in order to open the country for private initiatives and capital, but this development strategy failed to attract sufficient private capital. Thus, the strategy was changed with an industrial program in 1959 and the new G-60 policies, and the Danish state began to intervene directly in production. In fact, as Dahl has argued, this entailed that KGH "for the first time in the 250-year long colonial period dominated[...] the whole process from the catch of the products to the moment they were sold in Denmark and other countries. At the start of to the 1970s Greenland had become an export dominated society and the main part of the export production was managed by the state" (own translation, Dahl, 1986: 21). According to Dahl, Greenland changed from being a relatively homogenous society based on hunting and fishing to a society strongly dependent on the world market and the export of fish. Greenland became a periphery society controlled by and dependent on Denmark (Dahl, 1986: 24-25). In other words, the character of the relation between Greenland and Denmark was core-peripheral as explained by Wallerstein; Denmark

practiced extensive control of production and monopoly on Greenlandic products (Wallerstein, 2004: 12 & 93). However, it must be noted that Denmark did not necessarily gain huge economic profits, but arguably enjoyed geo-political benefits, a strengthened position in world politics, as well as the continuing prospects of finding valuable minerals.

The modernization period was marked by policies of “*Danization*”. The industrialization of Greenland entailed forced concentration and resettlement programmes. Many Greenlanders were therefore forced to move to the bigger towns and this had dire consequences for the local hunting cultures. The strategies of economic activities and organization was planned in Copenhagen and introduced by the Danish staff in administration (and education). As Petersen argues, modernization made Greenland economically more dependent on Denmark than ever before. The Danish state paid for it and it was realized by imported Danish manpower (Petersen, 1995: 121). Discriminatory privileges, legalized by a “birth-place-criterion”, were given to Danes: e.g. better housing opportunities and higher wages (Kleivan, 1969: 216-217; Petersen, 1995: 121). The Danish population in Greenland therefore rose from app. 4% in 1950 to app. 20% over the next decade. In this period, they not only occupied the higher positions, they also came as workmen (Thomsen, 1998: 41). The Danish privileges were justified by the argument that the Danes working in Greenland “had come in order to help the Greenlanders” and this idea, arguably, never disappeared (Petersen, 1995: 121). As Thomsen argues, modernization entailed a decrease in cultural distances between Greenlanders and Danes: their living conditions had never been so similar (Thomsen, 1998: 40). The period “may be characterized in cultural terms as a period of overwhelming adoption of Danish cultural items and institutions”, as Kleivan writes (Kleivan, 1969: 109). Yet, the differences had never been so accentuated, and they were further emphasized by the fact that social boundaries followed ethnic boundaries (Thomsen, 1998: 41). The structural change of Greenland and the oppressive nature of integration and modernization (characterized by assimilation policy, birth-place criteria, undermining of the Greenlandic language, the growing Danish physical presence in leading positions etc.) led to a growing Greenlandic consciousness of belonging to a distinct ethnic group (Dahl, 1986: 25).

This was the context for the nationalist movements and an awakened Inuit political awareness of the 1960s and 1970s. The young Greenlandic elite who had been educated in Denmark became radicalised; they spearheaded the anti-colonial, anti-imperialistic mobilization against the Danish administration. This was the first strong wave of Greenlandic nationalism. Particularly, the left-centre party Siumut (“Forward”) played a crucial role in mobilizing the Greenlanders against Danish rule. Siumut and the other Greenlandic political parties (particularly Atassut, centre-right, and Inuit Ataqatigiit, leftist) pressed for Home Rule negotiations, and a Home Rule commission of Greenlandic and Danish politicians was established. After many negotiations (with particular difficulty on the area of mineral resources), a Home Rule law was agreed upon. 73% of the Greenlandic population voted yes to the establishment of Home Rule in 1979. As Dahl has pointed out, the Home Rule inherited the post-colonial economy, a general good standard of living, and a system of social security – but also an “over-developed” administration which was dependent on Danish know-how and incapable of reproducing itself (Dahl, 1986: 107-128). Even though Home Rule made regional self-governance “with national characteristics” (ibid: 128) possible, it did not change the possibility of Danish influence through block grants and foreign policy. Denmark also retained control over defence, mineral resources, and many public institutions (Dahl, 1986: 107-128; Lyng, 2008: 56). Thus, Greenland’s Home Rule has to some extent ensured the continuity of Danish imperial power. However, Dahl also stresses that Home Rule made way for new expressions (in everyday life, attitudes, manifestations, and union work) of pride and self-confidence not seen in Greenland’s earlier history. “When the country’s new flag (side by side with the Danish flag) was raised on the national day of the self-governed Greenland, June 21 1985, the national identity got its symbolic expression” (own translation, Dahl, 1986: 158).

Nutall has argued that the period of fighting for greater autonomy nurtured the feelings of “*kalaaliussuseq*” (identity as Greenlander) (Nutall, 1992: 20). Emphasis on ethnic distinctiveness grew and self-awareness concerning Inuit origin, culture, history, and futures emerged. According to Lyng, the 1970s were characterized by a search for pride, self-consciousness and acceptance as an equal ethnic group (Lyng, 2008: 56). After 1979, a period of “*Greenlandization*” was launched which focused on

expanding the use of the Greenlandic language, extending support to the Greenlandic cultural life, replacing Danish workers with Greenlanders etc. (Dahl, 1986: 129-149). The policy formulations since the establishment of the Home Rule have been, to a great extent, characterized as “*Greenlandizing*”.

My analysis has shed light upon how the historical processes of Danish colonialism, neo-colonialism, and core-peripheral relations are crucial to gain an understanding of present-day relations between Denmark and Greenland. It is not possible to view Greenland’s current state of affairs as the persistence of an “original state”. Greenland’s current dependency on Danish block grants and Danish know-how should be understood in the light of these historical processes. Samir Amin has used the term of “blocked development” about this kind of situation where many years of colonialism and neo-colonialism has caused dependency and underdevelopment. He argues that in these situations fundamental structural changes are needed in order to obtain independence (qt. in Dahl, 1986: 24). In this light, I argue that awareness about the colonial history of Denmark and Greenland is crucial for the redefinition of Greenland-Denmark relations, as well as for the practice of Greenlandic self-governance.

Perspectives on National Identity in Greenland

“Who is the most Greenlandic?”

The question of “Greenlandicness” has been debated in Greenland throughout the last centuries, and still is. I argue that the concern with national identity in Greenland occurs for various reasons that have to do with the historical and colonial processes by which the Inuit populations of Greenland have been incorporated into the present global grid of sovereign nation-states, the dependency on Danish labour skills and block grants from the Danish state, increased integration in a globalizing world, and the continuous challenges to self-determination. Today, the question of “the definition of a Greenlandic” is often accentuated and debated in Greenlandic newspapers and public forums. Last summer, a group of students from Nuuk, who were involved in a theatre comedy, satirically titled their performance: *Who is the most Greenlandic?* They ‘humourized’ the popular images

and understandings of ‘the Greenlander’ as solely the kayak hunter or the fisherman. The national identity debate also seems to be particularly significant to the young generations who have grown up in modern Greenlandic society and engage different interpretations of “Greenlandicness” than their parents.

Furthermore, I argue that the national identity debate is particularly important to the specific political moment in which Greenland will begin to practice increased self-governance. During the public hearing on the Self-Government proposal by the Greenlandic-Danish Self-Government Commission in Nuuk on the 18 June 2008, I noticed that the public was not only concerned with the legal, institutional, and economic dimensions of self-governance: a few questions to the commission by the public also referred to how the definitions of Greenlandic identity tie into the practice of increased self-determination.

With the implementation of Self-Government, Greenlanders will be recognized as a people according to international law. The preamble of the bill on Self-Government states: “In recognition of the Greenlandic people as a people with the right to self-determination in accordance with international law, this law is based on the wish to advance equality and mutual respect in the partnership between Denmark and Greenland” (own translation, Rasmussen, 2009). Following this statement a new question surfaces: *who* constitutes the “Greenlandic people”? As Ole Spierman (Professor at the University of Copenhagen) stated at a public lecture at Ilisimatusarfik (the University of Greenland), it will be up to the population of Greenland to define the meaning of “*the Greenlandic people*” (for example, in relation to future considerations of Greenlandic citizenship). This process of defining “the people” inevitably entails a discussion of the interpretations of “Greenlandicness”. I thus argue that the present study of the ways in which national identity is conceptualized is useful and necessary to the processes of negotiating greater self-determination.

In this chapter, I will discuss the ways in which national identity is conceptualized in Greenland. First, I will contextualize the concept of Greenlandic national identity in a historical and theoretical framework. My theoretical framework is mainly informed by Anthony D. Smith and Michael Billig, who have written extensively on social identity formation in relation to nationalism and national identity. In the

following sections, I will discuss various conceptualizations of Greenlandic national identity as they relate to territory, upbringing, language, Inuicity (Inuit identity), traditions, and values. In this chapter, I will draw on Greenlandic and Danish scholarly work, as well as my own research and interviews during my studies in Greenland, summer 2008.

The Concept of Greenlandic National Identity in a Historical and Theoretical Framework

In order to gain an understanding of the concepts of national identity in Greenland, it is useful to contextualize it with concepts of the nation-state and nationalism. Arguably, Greenlandic national identity as a concept has emerged along with the historical processes in which a global system of nation-states has been founded. As Walter C. Opello and Stephen J. Rosow (2004) have shown, the idea of the state has been transmitted by imperialist European states to non-European parts of the world. In this way, the Inuit peoples of Greenland acquired the state as an institutional artifact of colonialism, as I have also discussed in my previous chapter. Opello and Rosow argue that nationalism “re-formed the state as it had appeared in Europe and transformed the world of colonial empires into the present global grid of sovereign nation-states” (Opello & Rosow, 2004: 191). They argue that the concept of the nation is not natural or primordial but a more or less conscious creation which has been closely connected to the needs of the territorial state. The state has therefore been “nationalized” through the creation of a sense of nationhood and a common national identity, enabling states to increase their politico-military power (Opello & Rosow 192-193).

In Greenland, the concept of a Greenlandic nation was transferred to the local populations by Denmark; it emerged through the specific colonial administration by which the decentralized populations gained a sense of unity (see chapter 1). During the wave of anti-colonial nationalist movements of the 1960s and 1970s, the argument that Greenlanders were a distinct people with the right to self-determination was instrumental in political mobilization. Thus, the view that Greenlanders constituted a nation with a distinct national identity gained foothold. Through these historical processes, and in particular with the establishment of Home Rule, the Greenlandic community has come to

share the characteristics of what defines a nation. According to Anthony D. Smith, a nation is “a named human community occupying a homeland, and having common myths and a shared history, a common public culture, a single economy and common rights and duties for all members. [...] It is not necessary for a nation [...] to possess a sovereign state of its own, but only to have an aspiration for a measure of autonomy coupled with the physical occupation of its homeland.” (Smith, 2001: 13-14). For these reasons, it is possible to conceptualize the Greenlandic community as a nation where the concept and discourse of national identity carry specific importance.

There have been numerous studies of collective identity. According to scholars such as Fredrik Barth (1969), Benedict Anderson (1996), and Eric J. Hobsbawm (1990), the concept of identity is primarily defined as a social construction. In this view, identity concerns the ways in which people relate to another group and other persons. Importantly, these views reject the perennialist idea that nationhood, or national identity, is a type of *universal, disembedded* and *recurrent* collective identity (Smith, 2001: 49-51). These studies have led to the recognition that collective identity and personal identity are socially constructed and manifested in dynamic processes (Dorais qt. in Bjørst, 2008: 33). Oosten and Remie have argued that concepts of cultural and ethnic identities of Inuit peoples are used and manipulated to pursue specific interests within a wider political arena such as hunting rights and political autonomy (Oosten & Remie, 1999: 3). Furthermore, Dorais argues that the employment of a national narrative is particularly important to ethnic communities pursuing self-determination over a defined territory (Dorais qt. in Bjørst, 2008: 34). In the specific context of Greenland, concepts of national identity have been utilized with the struggle for self-determination and the right to independence.

Smith suggests that a working definition of national identity can be conceptualized as “the continuous reproduction and reinterpretation of the patterns of values, symbols, memories, myths and traditions that compose the distinctive heritage of nations, and the identifications of individuals with that pattern and heritage and with its cultural elements” (Smith, 2001: 18). Specific attention should be given to the relationships between the collective and individual levels of analysis, and between continuity and change (Smith, 2001: 18). Furthermore, Michael Billig has argued that the

concept of national identity is problematic in itself as it often suggests that it is a sort of primordial inheritance. 'Identity' as a 'watchword of the times' has often come to mean something abstract, which exists apart from forms of life (Billig, 1995: 60-65). As Billig argues, "an investigation of national identity should aim to disperse the concept of 'identity' into different elements. And 'identity' is not a thing; it is a short-hand description of the ways of talking about the self and community. Ways of talking, or ideological discourses, do not develop in social vacuums, but they are related to forms of life. In this respect, 'identity' if it is to be understood as a form of talking, is also understood as a form of life" (Billig, 1995: 60). On this basis, I seek to investigate how 'forms of life' constitute Greenlandic national identity. My study of the conceptualization of "Greenlandicness" therefore refers to the ways in which criteria of language, ethnicity, territory, indigeneity, tradition, and values are perceived to constitute 'Greenlandic forms of life'.

Kalaallit Nunaat: The Land of Greenlanders

Attachment to the land is one dimension of national identity that is often mentioned as an important characteristic of "Greenlandicness" in popular discourses. The idea of being attached to the land has undergone processes of transformation by which locality has been complemented with nationality. In recent years, the idea of "attachment to the land" is increasingly understood as something related to place of birth, upbringing, living with the Greenlandic nature, and solidarity with the country – and it is not necessarily conceptualized as a principle of descent.

Prior to colonization, the peoples of the Arctic were primarily identified with the place or region to which they belonged by adding '-mioq'. For example, a person from Arsuk was called 'Arsumioq'. Arsuk means "the little beloved place". Thus, an 'Arsumioq' means a 'person of the little beloved place'. East Greenlanders were called 'Tunumiut' ('the inhabitants of the backside') by West Greenlanders. In the beginning of the Danish/Norwegian mission in the eighteenth century, the population of the West coast of Greenland referred to themselves as Inuit (human beings) and "Kalaallit" (Greenlanders). Originally, "Kalaallit" was used by the Old Norse peoples to denote the Inuit (Bjørst, 2008: 121). It was not until the end of the nineteenth century that

“Kalaallit” was used as a common basis of identification. In 1861, the Greenlandic newspaper *Atuagagdliutit* (AG) began to use the term as a name for all local populations of Greenland (Thomsen, 1998: 27-28). In this way, the geographical area of what is today Greenland was named *Kalaallit Nunaat*: the Land of Greenlanders.

Greenland has always been, and still is in many ways, a decentralized society. However, with the processes of increased centralization and urbanization throughout the last century, the identification with a local geographical area has been complemented by a national identity attached to the Land of Greenlanders, *Kalaallit Nunaat*. It is my impression that the aspect of feeling attached to the land, and living in and with Greenlandic nature is today perceived as an essential aspect of “Greenlandicness”. This arguably stems from the many centuries in which Indigenous Greenlanders have lived in close relation with the natural environment. Despite the ways in which these values are connected with Indigenous identities, I argue that in recent years the idea of attachment to the land as a national characteristic is also being re-interpreted as something that is acquired through place of birth, upbringing, and solidarity with the land. A Native Greenlander told me that, today, she thinks that a Greenlander is a person who lives in Greenland. She did not always think like that but today she does. Søren Søndergaard Hansen, who moved to Greenland from Denmark in 1983 and is the judge in Greenland’s Court (*Grønlands Landsret*) stated that every individual can decide whether they are a Greenlander or a Dane, because it is not a juridical question yet. He said: “You can be Greenlandic at heart, if you are born here and have grown up here and feel solidarity with the country” (own translation, S. Søndergaard, personal communication, June, 2008).

However, the concept of national identity is more than either a juridical question or a matter of self-identification. As previously mentioned, the concept of “Greenlandicness” is constituted by different elements of what is perceived to be “forms of life”. The emphasis on place of birth and residence, upbringing, attachment to the land, and self-identification in recent discourses arguably reflects new movements towards renegotiating and redefining national identities in Greenland in more inclusive terms. However, there are other elements of “forms of life” which constitute the interpretation of “Greenlandicness”. They complicate, and in some cases fixate, everyday conceptualizations of Greenlandic national identity. Some of these elements will be

discussed below.

The Kalaallit as the Inuk and the Dane as the Qallunaat

Today, Greenlandic national identity is often voiced as more of a cultural, political, territorial, and linguistic concern rather than a distinctively ethnic one (see Nutall, 1992). This may be an accurate observation as Greenlandic identity is undergoing challenging re-definitions due to a growing diversity in the larger towns, particularly in Nuuk. Nonetheless, I argue that ethnicity often takes a determining role in the conceptualization of “Greenlandicness”. The concept of ethnicity is complex, and it also involves considerations of culture, language, and myths; ethnic identities are socially constructed and their formulations are un-fixed, dynamic, and changeable. However, in everyday life, ethnic identities in Greenland are largely perceived to be fixed and unchangeable, which is manifested in the distinction between Danes and Greenlanders. In other words, the concept of the Greenlandic nation takes on an ethnic feature, conditioned by the constant demarcation between Greenlanders and Danes. During my field research in Greenland, I observed that this often leads to a perceived impossibility in *becoming* Greenlandic. Søren Porsbøl said in an interview I conducted in May 2008 in Nuuk:

I will never become a Greenlander. It is not possible to become a Greenlander, when you are not born here and have not grown up here – and when it [Greenlandic] is not your mother tongue. [...] I do not feel that I would be accepted as a Greenlander. I am accepted as a human being and as a colleague, but I will probably never be considered a Greenlander.

(own translation, S. Porsbøl, personal communication, May 2008)

At the time I conducted the interview, Søren Porsbøl worked as the Deputy Head of Inerisaavik which is Greenland’s Institute for Educational Pedagogy (Institut for Uddannelsesvidenskab). Porsbøl is from Denmark but moved to Greenland in 1973. He informed me that he is married to a Greenlander with whom he has a daughter. During the interview, he expressed that he feels well integrated in Nuuk where he has a large network of friends.

Porsbøl's statement reflects the process of ethnic identity formation in Greenland, which is conditioned by the distinction between migrant Danes and Indigenous Greenlanders. According to Porsbøl, an upbringing in Greenland and speaking Greenlandic as mother tongue are essential 'requirements' in order to be considered a Greenlander. However, there are very few Danes who have grown up in Greenland and speak Greenlandic either as mother tongue or second language. Porsbøl's 'requirements' are thus fulfilled predominantly by Indigenous Greenlanders. Taking into consideration these unspoken dimensions of his statement, Porsbøl implies a synonymy between being Greenlandic and being Indigenous. In effect, there is a perceived impossibility in *becoming* Greenlandic.

A number of scholars writing on Greenland have argued that through the colonial history of ethnic stratification a dichotomy of 'the Kalaallit' (the Greenlander) and 'the Dane' is constructed (see Bjørst, 2008; Kleivan, 1969; Lynge, 2008; Oosten & Remie, 1999). Kleivan, who has written on the formulations of a Greenlandic ethnic identity in 1969, employs a Barthian approach to explain how the boundaries between two groups condition and define their ethnic identities (Barth 1969; Kleivan 1969). Kleivan argues that the decreasing cultural distance between Danes and Greenlanders in the aftermath of the formal political integration of 1953 did not imply that Greenlanders would assimilate into the Danish ethnic group and adopt its identity – as was often presupposed (Kleivan, 1969: 109-110). He writes that “[t]he traditional content of the Greenlandic identity, admittedly, is not being maintained through the overwhelming changes in culture and total circumstances; but the dichotomy of Greenlander and Dane is maintained and new diacriteria are emerging for the Greenlandic ethnic identity” (Kleivan, 1969: 210). Kleivan refers to the feeling of “*white dominance*” and Greenlandic inferiority which persisted after the formal abolition of Greenland's status as a colony. He states that as Greenland was integrated into Denmark in 1953, Greenlanders were per definition equal citizens with Danes. However, there was a discrepancy between the legal charter (which defined the relations between the two ethnic groups as based on equality) and reality by which Greenlanders still experienced social and economic inferiority (Kleivan, 1969: 217). In effect, Kleivan writes, “[...t]here is no doubt that this has contributed greatly to strengthen consciousness and cohesion in the Greenlandic

ethnic group [...and] served to dichotomise two ethnic groups” (Kleivan, 1969: 218-219).

Kleivan’s arguments resonate with the current situation in Greenland. In order to understand the relation between the minority of Danes and the majority of Indigenous Greenlanders, it is crucial to bear in mind the dominant position of Danes in the Greenlandic labour market. Danes generally occupy the higher positions in the public sphere in which the language in use is primarily Danish. However, Danes do not dominate the political arena, as internal politics has been steered by Greenlandic politicians since the establishment of Home Rule in 1979 (Trondheim, 2002, 200-202). Due to the fact that Danes often occupy elite positions in Greenland, Trondheim has argued that Danes constitute a “minority-majority” – a minority-majority which the majority of the population has to adapt to (Trondheim, 2002, 190-191). For such reasons, Greenlanders and Danes may live more alike than ever before, but Greenlandic attempts to demarcate the differences are stronger (Bjørst, 2008 16-18).

Furthermore, the dichotomy between the Dane and the Greenlander has taken on specific characteristics that imply a synonymy between “Greenlandic” and “Indigenous”. In many ways, the ethnic feature in the concept of the Greenlandic nation is rooted in the politicization of Inuit identity during the struggle for greater self-determination. As Dorais argues, Inuicity (Inuit identity) in Greenland was previously manifested in language and customs but as an effect of acculturation and the establishment of Home Rule, Inuicity is today rather manifested in the distinction between two nations, two entities: Denmark and Greenland (Dorais, 1996: 28-29). Dorais’ arguments imply that in the specific case of Greenland, identity as Inuit is primarily embodied in the dichotomy of the Kalallit and the Dane. Therefore it is possible to suggest that Inuicity has been nationalized, and the distinction between Greenlanders and Danes has also become a distinction between Inuit and “Qallunaat”. “Qallunaat” has been used by Arctic peoples to refer to Europeans, since the first encounters. “Qallunaat” is still used in both Inuktitut and Greenlandic and can be translated as “*white people*” (Oosten & Remie, 1999: 5-6). In Greenland, “Qallunaat” has come to mean “Dane”. Thus, being “Kalallit” is perceived as synonymous with being Inuk by which the Dane has become “Qallunaat”. This has, arguably, led to the perceived “impossibility” of *becoming* a Greenlander.

Nonetheless, it is crucial to recognize that there are also many challenges to rigid perceptions of what is meant by “Greenlandic”. During my field research, I observed that there are current attempts to recognize and emphasize how ethnic boundaries are increasingly becoming blurred and unfixed, specifically due to the many inter-personal, inter-ethnic relations within Greenland. The visual artist Julie Edel Hardenberg has recently published a book with a series of photos which challenge the notions of heterogeneity in Greenland titled “The Quiet Diversity” (Hardenberg, 2005). I will argue that “the quiet diversity” and the subsequent pressures for recognizing “the quiet diversity” enable re-interpretations and re-negotiations of dichotomous perceptions of national identities.

The Role of Language

Greenlandic and Danish are currently the two official languages in Greenland, but Greenlandic is positioned as the “principal language”. However, Greenland is required to assure that it is still possible to use Danish in work places and institutions. According to the Self-Government report, Greenlandic will become the official language after the implementation of Self-Government in June 2009 (Grønlandsk-dansk Selvstyre-kommission, 2008: 12). Today, Greenlandic is widely spoken and used – and seems in no way endangered. However, expanding and strengthening the use of Greenlandic is still a central political and public concern due to the strong presence of Danish, particularly, in higher educational institutions and in the bureaucratic administration. The Greenlandic language therefore occupies a very strong position in debates on Greenlandic identity. Nonetheless, the role of language is rather complicated, as the use of Greenlandic and Danish cross over in different contexts and situations. Some younger Greenlanders, especially those of mixed origins, do not master Greenlandic. Some are fully bilingual. As Petersen states, the majority speaks fluent Greenlandic but little Danish (Petersen, 1995: 293).

The use of language takes on specific characteristics which are important to the definitions of national identity. On the one hand, it seems that *speaking* Greenlandic is aligned with *being* Greenlandic. Speaking Greenlandic allows one to be included in the social life of Greenlanders. On the other hand, Danish is often given a higher social status

and is considered necessary for a ‘successful life’ – even though mastering Danish, and not Greenlandic, often excludes one from being considered part of the nation (Trondheim, 2002). I will argue that in the same vein as Trondheim argues that Danes constitute a “minority-majority” (a minority-majority which the majority of the population has to adapt to), the Danish language also constitutes a “minority-majority” language. There are no requirements of Danes to acquire Greenlandic language skills – and there may also be little motivation to learn the language on behalf of many Danes. In effect, the majority is expected to be able to speak the minority’s language: an expectation which comes from outside and from within. Speaking Danish is also related with a “higher status”; it gives better education opportunities in Denmark, it is widely used in the public administration due to the presence of Danish workers etc. It seems that speaking Danish is not only perceived as a necessity, but also the only way to ‘get somewhere’.

This is arguably a reflection of the effects of the 1950s school policies by which school classes were divided; in each school there was an A class (where the lessons were taught in Greenlandic) and a B class (where all lessons were taught in Danish, except from lessons in Greenlandic and Christianity). In some recorded comments from school principals, it is evident that they viewed the students in the A class as being less intelligent (qt. in Nielsen, 1999: 281). The A class later became known as “the Black School”. Meanwhile, the educational level may very well have been higher in the B classes due to access to better educated (and better paid) Danish teachers etc. Many parents therefore preferred to send their children in a Danish speaking class due to the higher educational levels (Nielsen, 1999: 280-281). I argue that this caused a divide between those who mastered Danish and those who did not. After the establishment of Home Rule and the focus on Greenlandic identity in the 1970s, language became a target for the *Greenlandization* reforms. The Home government assumed responsibility for education and aimed at preserving and extending the use of Greenlandic in educational, institutional, and administrative settings (Tobiassen, 1995: 35 & 61). However, as I have been explained, the divide between school classes persisted in an attempt to teach Greenlandic to the non-Greenlandic speaking students, so that they later on would integrate with the Greenlandic-speaking classes. The project failed and instead reinforced

the division. Within the last decades, new language policies have ensured that school classes are mixed. Teachers are therefore required to be able to teach all courses in both Greenlandic and Danish. Everything is (or should be) translated into both Greenlandic and Danish (e.g. newspapers, news programmes, magazines) and in official settings, there are always interpreters (Grønlandsk-dansk Selvstyre-kommission, 2008: 12).

Despite the new efforts to strengthen both the position and the use of Greenlandic, there is still a considerable number of Greenlanders who do not master the language fully. As Bjørst points out, this group experiences difficulty in being accepted as Greenlanders (Bjørst, 2008: 38). She refers to an interview by Lisbeth Valgreen who had interviewed a Danish-speaking Greenlandic:

I have gone through this identity crisis – what am I? Why are they all saying that I am a stupid Dane, and when I look at my Greenlandic family whom I have had the most contact with[...] then I am Greenlandic, and in Denmark I found out (that there) I am definitely not a Dane (own translation, qt. in Bjørst, 2008: 38)

I have heard similar stories from Greenlanders, who do not speak Greenlandic, who have experienced social exclusion because they are not considered Greenlanders – and in some ways, they do not consider themselves Greenlandic. They may also experience anger from the older generations. Meanwhile, it seems that the preference of using Danish in everyday life among the young generations is strengthening. This may be a result of the connection between speaking Danish and better future opportunities, as well as the extensive use of Danish in administrative and institutional settings. In fact, there are young Greenlanders from Greenlandic speaking families who do not speak Greenlandic fluently.

Arguably, there are different movements in the positioning of language in relation to definitions of Greenlandic national identity. On the one hand, the Greenlandic language is taking a central role in defining “Greenlandicness”; new policies to strengthen its use are being formulated and implemented. Those Greenlanders who do not speak Greenlandic fluently are experiencing difficulties in being considered part of the

nation. On the other hand, Danish is still related with a higher social status and there is a tendency of young Greenlanders to prefer speaking Danish. This is a challenge for a self-governing Greenland.

The Real Greenlanders and the New Greenlanders

During my field research in Greenland, I observed a discourse of “*loss of identity*”. This discourse reflects a concern that Greenlanders in a modern “Danized” Greenland have lost their sense of ‘*Greenlandicness*’. As Bjørst states, this is a central problematic in the conceptualization of Greenlandic identity. In her interviews, a young song writer, Daani Lynge, said:

There are two types of Greenlanders today. Those who care about ‘the Greenlandic’ and would like to be [Greenlandic], and those who keep it as an image. There are some who keep it alive as hunters... And those who wear ties, they only keep it as an image and want to build Greenland in their way. It is not good. We are losing our souls. This is unfortunate[...]. Most people have lost their soul, me too[...]

(own translation, Bjørst, 2008: 38-39).

Even though the interviewee has lived his whole life in Greenland and is fully bilingual, he feels that he is not ‘fully’ Greenlandic because he has lost the ‘Greenlandic soul’. The interviewee expressed that he wishes to connect to something authentic found in the time before the Inuit were mixed with other peoples. Thus, discourses about *Greenlandicness* often refer to ‘old’ traditions of, for example, hunting and kayaking. In effect, it may seem difficult to be both *Greenlandic* and *modern* (Bjørst, 2008). As is evident in Daani Lynge’s words, this may be a considerable problematic for many young Greenlanders who have grown up in modern Greenland with an everyday life that is relatively distant from the traditional ways of life.

Thomsen has also discussed this problematic in her article *Between Traditionalism and Modernity*. She holds that the conceptualization of “Greenlandicness” in many ways contrasts today’s reality. She argues that since the 1960s everything

modern has been set apart from what is perceived “Greenlandic”. Thus, modern Greenland is understood as being “Danish” and not “Greenlandic”. In this way, Greenlanders have to defend choosing to use a computer rather than a kayak. The “real Greenland” is often associated with the smaller settlements, Thule, and East Greenland – areas that are less modernized (Thomsen, 1996: 265). This proposition resonates with my own experiences in Greenland. When I returned to Nuuk after spending a month in smaller villages, I was asked if I had seen “Greenland” because, as was explained to me, “Nuuk is not Greenlandic”.

Thomsen argues that the traditionalist discourse is a result of “culture preserving” Danish colonial policies. She assesses how the Danish colonial administration created an image of the Greenlander as a kayak hunter only because the colonial engagement was dependent on Greenland’s supply of hunting products (Thomsen, 1996: 266). “Greenlandicness”, as related to hunting life, has been the dominant images since the colonial period. Early writers on Greenland (e.g. Rink and Rasmussen) represented the Greenlanders as either the authentic happy hunter who became the “Good Greenlander”, or the semi-civilized inauthentic and lazy wageworker who became the “Bad Greenlander”. They created an image of Greenlanders as “free children of nature [and] whatever sour in the world of the Eskimo came with civilization” (Thomsen, 1996: 268). Thomsen shows that the identity debate changed with the modernization policies after the Second World War. It became possible to be a “good Greenlander” even if one was not a hunter – but it was based on an assimilation strategy in which the Greenlanders were to learn from the Danes in order to reach “the Danish stage of evolution” as quickly as possible (Thomsen, 1996: 270). During the nationalist movements of the 1960s and 1970s, young Greenlanders used the romanticized images of the good, happy, and peaceful Eskimo in the political struggle for independence. The past became the symbol of Greenland’s self-sufficiency – and “Greenlandicness” became excluded from modern society (Thomsen, 1996: 270-273). As Thomsen argues, the modern world came to “belong” to the Danes. Thomsen writes: “[t]he problem is simply that they are ideologically imprisoning themselves in mythical conceptions of their past” (Thomsen, 1996: 274).

Bjørst holds that the cultural policies of the Home Rule, as part of a nation-

building project, reinforce an essentialized discourse of what the “real” Greenland looks like (Bjørst, 2008: 49-54). She refers to this statement of *Kulturredegørelsen* (Statement on Cultural Policy) from 2004:

The objective and the content of a new cultural policy will, to a considerable extent, be based on a public consciousness of our history so that the people live with, and have awareness of, the spiritual and mental values, and strengthen both spiritually and as a people in relation to working towards self-governance. The Home Rule will prepare a plan of action for the coming years taking as a starting point the particular characteristics of the Inuit in the international context and our own identity as Greenlanders (own translation, Direktoratet for Kultur, Uddannelse, Forskning og Kirke, 2004: 5).

Bjørst argues that Greenland’s cultural policies reinforce static and stereotypical ideas of what is Greenlandic and are therefore more exclusive than inclusive. Thus, such policies complicate aligning “modern” and “Greenlandic” (Bjørst, 2008: 50-54). This is highly problematic as individuals in Greenland, especially the younger generations, are struggling to identify as Greenlanders. Instead, a conception of “loss of identity” becomes dominant.

However, Thomsen also points out that traditionalism is under pressure by renewed discussions stressing that modern is also Greenlandic. The traditionalist conceptualization of Greenlandicness is also being redefined. As Emil Abelsen, Minister of Economic Affairs in 1991, has stated: “What is really Greenlandic is not, as the traditionalists claim, the maintenance of subsistence hunting and the settlements, but mobility and the ability to go where the subsistence potential is” (qt. in Thomsen, 1996: 266). This statement may reflect a change in perspective on Greenlandicness. At the same time, I will also argue that traditionalist conceptions of Greenlandic national identity are not only pressured by ‘renewed (political) discussions’ but also by younger generations who are increasingly relating to global mainstream culture (Rygaard, 2002). The younger generations travel abroad and go on exchange programmes; many study at universities in

Denmark. Video games, skateboarding, pop music, and foreign movies are becoming an integrated part of the every day lives in Greenland. However, this does not necessarily reflect a sense of “losing identity”. As Rygaard suggests, “[t]he young people in Greenland eagerly grab at the temptations of the global world. This is shown in their media habits, their interests, and their desire for consumption. But at the same time, they have their feet planted in their local culture reflecting their hopes and dreams” (own translation, Rygaard, 2002: 182). In these ways, young Greenlanders are not necessarily actively or directly re-defining the conceptualization of Greenlandicness, but challenging it by “re-living” it. As a result, new visions may follow that challenge traditionalist claims about “real Greenlandicness”. In the newspaper *Atuagagdliut* (AG), Maliina Abelsen wrote a reader’s comment to the Greenlandic politician Lars-Emil Johansen:

“The Home Rule’s children are growing up. And you have done a good job, for I am from a generation of young Greenlanders who do not at all doubt that ‘we can do this’ as long as we remember solidarity and each other. A generation that is not sitting in the corner to discuss how the [Danish] construction workers in the 1970s got their jobs because of their ethnicity. We have responsibility that such a policy does not repeat itself [...]. To make sure that you get the jobs, the titles, and the leading positions because you are the best and not because you are of a certain ethnicity, do not speak up for yourself, or belong to a certain party. In relation to our history, we have a choice. We can chose to accept the time we are living in, to learn from history and move forward[...]” (own translation, Abelsen, 2008, June 17, p. 17).

Thus, parallel to the traditionalist conceptions of Greenlandicness, it seems that there is also a pressure from the younger generations to reinterpret “what it means to be a Greenlandic” in terms that are less focused on “something authentic found in the time before the Inuit were mixed with other peoples”. There is a wish to learn from history but with the aspiration to “move forward”, as Maliina Abelsen expresses it. In these ways, defining Greenlandic national identity is a dynamic process that constantly undergoes

redefinitions and change. Nonetheless, the emphasis on “authenticity” and “realness” has also led to fixed and static conceptions of Greenlandicness and a subsequent perception of “loss of identity” among young Greenlanders. As I will discuss in my next chapter on Eskimo Orientalism, this is not merely an internal problematic of Greenlandic society; the images of “real Greenlanders” are also kept alive in Danish representations of Greenland.

In conclusion, I argue that the various criteria of territory, upbringing, language, ethnicity, indigeneity, tradition, and values that are perceived to constitute ‘Greenlandic forms of life’ are interrelated and interchangeable. Furthermore, different aspects of Greenlandic national identity are utilized according to the situation. In today’s Greenland, it seems that there are pressures of re-interpreting the conceptualization of “Greenlandicness” in more inclusive terms than previously. As the youth organization of the Greenlandic political party IA (Inuusuttut Ataqtigiiit) stated last year, they will focus on integration rather than Greenlandization with the message: “There is room for everyone” (own translation Kleeman, 2008, April 21). In this light, the conceptualization of Greenlandic national identity is a dynamic process. At the same time, conceptions of “Greenlandicness” are also often constituted in dichotomies between the Kalaallit and the Qallunaat, Indigenesness and non-Indigenesness, “real Greenlanders” and “modern Greenlanders” which fixate the discourse on national identity. Moreover, it is crucial to consider the ways in which the “minority-majority” position of Danes and the Danish language influence this discourse – and challenge Greenlandic self-governance. Nonetheless, the transition to Greenlandic Self-Government may spur new debates on ‘Greenlandic forms of life’.

The Representation of Greenland as a Form of Eskimo Orientalism

Greenland Images

“What is so special about being a Greenlander is that we all the time have to represent our country. As the Danes only know about the stereotypes which are either “the drunk Greenlander” or “the noble savage”, they will never get to know the core – the real so to say. It is very tiring in the long run” (own translation, Nikolaj Gedionsen, 2008, July 25, p. 31)

This is a statement by a young Greenlander, Nikolaj Gedionsen, who was interviewed for an article in the Greenlandic newspaper, *Sermitsiak*. In the article, he tells about his experiences of moving to Denmark in order to study at university. Gedionsen’s statement exemplifies how certain images and thoughts of Greenlanders prevail in the relation between Greenlanders and Danes, Greenland and Denmark. As Gedionsen suggests, Danish knowledge about Greenland is inhibited by stereotypes. Thomsen has shown that throughout its colonial history Denmark has created images of Greenland images *in* and *for* Denmark in order to maintain control (Thomsen, 1996). In this perspective, the reproduction of “Greenland images” arguably influences Greenland-Denmark relations and therefore requires a critical interrogation. While responses and criticisms to “Greenland images” surface in Greenland, they are largely non-existent in Denmark. A Danish newspaper article, *Grønlands valg for fremtiden* (Greenland’s voting for the future) by Mogens Lykketoft¹ and Julie Rademacher (Social Democratic members of the Danish Parliament and ‘Grønlandsudvalget’), exemplifies the ignorance towards Denmark’s role in the creation of “Greenland images”.

In the article, Lykketoft and Rademacher encourage Greenland to make peace with the past and let the present be the starting point for the future of self-government. They write: “If Greenlandization becomes an idealization of the past and the people who

¹ Mogens Lykketoft is Foreign Policy Spokesman for the Danish Social Democrats. He was Minister of Finance, 1993-2000, Minister of Foreign Affairs, 2000-2001, and Prime Minister candidat in 2005

represent it, then you will exclude a big group of Greenlanders in their own society. The Greenlandizing discourse is creating an image of real Greenlanders as Greenlandic-speaking people of nature with kayaks and kamikker (sealskin boots); and the reality does not look like that” (own translation, Lykketoft & Rademacher, 2008, December 9). In an attempt to provide a “critical” yet hopeful perspective on Greenlandic Self-Government, Lykketoft and Rademacher end up solely blaming the Greenlandizing discourse. The article reflects a general lack of awareness concerning Denmark’s historical engagement in representing Greenlanders in certain ways, in Denmark’s own interest. The authors do not mention how discourses of Greenlanders as “Noble Savages” or “Greenlandic drunks” are produced and perpetuated in Denmark today. They do not mention how the two Greenlandic members of parliament were recently reduced to people who “*all of a sudden have come down here from the ice cap*” by Søren Pind, MP for *Venstre* (the Liberals), when they did not support the Danish government’s proposal of deporting refused asylum seekers residing in Danish asylum centres (own translation, emphasis added, Rehling, 2008, February 15). Furthermore, the article reflects the configurations of power relationships, embedded in the exercise of writing such an article. The authors take out a patent on “Greenlandic reality” and take on the role of “advising” Greenland on how to act on that “reality”, ignoring the perspective from which they write. In fact, the article may reflect Denmark’s political interest in employing a new image of a self-governing Greenland: A Greenland in which the colonial history is forgotten and the Danish presence and language are accepted and embraced.

For these reasons, I hold that an interrogation of the ways in which Greenland is represented in Denmark and the power relationships embedded in “Greenland images” is critical to the employment of self-government. In this chapter, I suggest that Greenland-Denmark relations can be analyzed as a form of Eskimo Orientalism. This is contextualized with an analysis of the creation of “Greenland images”. Thereafter, I will exemplify Eskimo Orientalist discourses in the Danish media and in a new popular Danish publication on Greenland.

Eskimo Orientalism in a Theoretical framework

The process, by which Danish knowledge about Greenland is being reduced to images of

“Noble Savages” or “Greenlandic drunks” can be conceptualized as a form of “Eskimo Orientalism”. This concept stems from the work of Ann Fienup-Riordan who has termed the essentialised images of Alaskan Eskimos in American movies as “Eskimo Orientalism” (Fienup-Riordan, 1995). She thereby applies Edward Said’s post-colonial theory on Orientalism in the context of the Arctic.

In his work *Orientalism*, Edward Said (1979) describes the ways in which Western scholars, ‘Orientalists’, have created dominating discourses about the Orient. He argues that the West, the Occident, has fabricated recurring images of ‘the Other’ (the Orient). “In addition, the Orient has helped define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience” (Said, 1979: 1-2). Orientalism concerns the collective notion of “us” Europeans against “those” non-Europeans by which the idea of European identity and culture as superior has gained in strength. The concepts of the Orient and the Occident are therefore not inert facts of nature, but man-made entities. As Said writes, “as much as the West itself, the Orient is an idea that has a history and a tradition of thought, imagery, and vocabulary that have given it reality and presence in and for the West” (Said, 1979: 5). The phenomenon of Orientalism therefore deals with the constellation of ideas about the Orient despite any correspondence – or lack of correspondence – with a “real” Orient. The created Orient is thereby reduced to essentialized images of the Other. As Said explains, Orientalism is not merely a necessity of imagination; the relationship between the Occident and the Orient is a relationship of power and domination. It is not an “airy European fantasy”. The creation of “Otherness” is a will to possess and control. Orientalist discourse is a sign of European-Atlantic power over the Orient and is tied to enable and ensure the durability of socio-economic and political institutions (Said, 1979: 5-6).

In *Eskimo Essays*, Fienup-Riordan describes how Yu’pik Eskimos in Alaska have been objects of representation. For example, non-Natives have exerted a dominant image of the Eskimo as “naturally peaceful” until corrupted by civilization. She argues that such popular perceptions of “the Eskimo way to life” have had dramatic consequences, not only for the ways in which modern Eskimos depict themselves but also for what non-Natives imagine them to be. She writes that “[o]ur ideas about Eskimos help create the framework they are forced to reside in” (Fienup-Riordan, 1990: 124). She

holds that students of the Arctic have focused on sketching out the “facts” of Eskimo life rather than discussing how these may be best represented. (Fienup-Riordan, 1990: xiv-xv). Fienup-Riordan argues that “[t]he representation of Eskimos concerns the construction of the self from the raw material of the other, the appropriation of ‘natural man’ in the production of American culture” (Fienup-Riordan 1995: xi)².

A number of scholars writing on Greenland have used the concept of Orientalism when describing the representations of Greenland in Danish movies and literature (Thisted, 2002; Bjørst, 2008). In the new book *En Anden Verden: Fordomme og Stereotyper om Grønland og Arktis* (Another World: Prejudices and Stereotypes about Greenland and the Arctic), Bjørst employs the concept of Eskimo Orientalism, focusing on the representation of Greenlanders by people working in the cultural sphere in and outside Greenland (e.g. cultural policies, art, museums, and popular culture). In this book, she demonstrates processes of Othering and Greenlandic internalisation of the imagined and constructed Inuit (Bjørst, 2008). Importantly, she argues that Said’s Orientalism as a theoretical paradigm can be used in the context of the Arctic. The Arctic explorers resemble the Orientalists. However, one should be aware of the specific context that differentiates the Arctic from the Orient: colonialism in the Arctic did not involve large-scale wars and there are no independent nation-states in the Arctic. Nonetheless, like the East, Greenland has experienced the same processes of colonization and the movement towards independence after the Second World War. Throughout this course of history, Orientalism has persisted as a disguised form of colonialism (Bjørst, 2005: 15-16).

In this framework, it is possible to analyze the relation between the Arctic and the West, Greenland and Denmark, as a form of Orientalism. Despite my inspiration from Fienup-Riordan and Bjørst, I will not focus on the internalization of the created “Greenland images” in Greenland, as this has already been discussed in the previous chapter. A crucial aspect of the study of Orientalism deals with the power relations embedded in Orientalist discourses. Thus, the concept of Eskimo Orientalism not only concerns individual identity formation, stereotypes, prejudices, or “the ways in which we

² It should be noted that the term Eskimo is today only used about smaller groups of Native peoples in Alaska and Siberia who still wish to be called eskimos. At the Inuit Circumpolar Conference (ICC) in 1977, it was decided that the name ‘Eskimos’ was to be replaced with ‘Inuit’, as ‘eskimo’ was considered a degrading term. ‘Inuit’ is the plural of ‘Inuk’ which means human being (Bjørst, 2008: 120-121)

see each other”. In Said’s words, Orientalism is not merely a necessity of imagination; “Othering” is a will to possess and control. In this sense, Eskimo Orientalist discourses in Denmark are also tied to a political reality. In the context of extending Greenlandic self-determination and establishing a “more equal cooperation between Greenland and Denmark” (own translation, Lykketoft & Rademacher, 2008, December 9), a critical analysis of Orientalism in the relationship between Denmark and Greenland today is therefore crucial. This not only requires an analysis of the historical creation of “Greenland images”, but also the creation of “Greenland images” in Danish media coverage and publications on Greenland today. As Spivak writes: “Post-colonial studies, unwittingly commemorating a lost object, can become an alibi unless it is placed within a general frame. Colonial Discourse studies, when they concentrate only on the representation of the colonized or the matter of the colonies, can sometimes serve the production of current neo-colonial knowledge by placing colonialism/imperialism securely in the past, and/or by suggesting a continuous line from that past to our present” (Spivak, 1999: 1)

The Creation of Greenland images

Since the beginning of the colonial period, polar explorers, traders, and colonial administrators have placed Greenlanders in the history of the West. As Bjørst points out, Inuit have for historical reasons not had a chance to write their own history and have thus entered world history through Europeans in, for example, expedition literature and diaries. In this way, the West has for approximately three hundred years spoken *for* the peoples of the Arctic and represented them in certain images. The dominating images of Inuit in the West therefore spring from the West’s historiography of the Arctic. These images are still strong in Western, and above all in Danish, consciousness (Bjørst, 2008: 7-9).

Trondheim has pointed out that since the beginning of the Danish colonization of Greenland, anthropologists have debated Greenlanders’ position in the world. In the beginning, the representation of Greenlanders was not a positive one (Trondheim, 2002: 199). Ole Høiris has shown that descriptions from the eighteenth century (by Hans Egede and C. Bastholm) represented Greenlanders as coldhearted, stupid, unhygienic, and

amoral. They needed discipline, religion, law, and order (qt. in Trondheim, 2002: 207; Thomsen, 1996: 268). However, this image changed somewhat during the nineteenth century – especially with the writings of Knud Rasmussen – to a depiction of Greenlanders as non-violent, free children of nature (Trondheim, 2002: 199). The images of Greenlanders were aligned with Rousseau’s description of people as ‘pure’ in a state of nature, who are subsequently corrupted by civilization (Fienup-Riordan, 1990: 14; Thomsen, 1998: 30). Knud Rasmussen’s writings were based on tenets of evolutionism; Greenlanders, as free children of nature had to ascend to the ladder of culture and become adults. At the same time, Greenlanders were represented as victims who had been corrupted by external influences of ‘civilization’ (Thomsen, 1996: 268).

As I have previously pointed out, the Danish representations of Greenlanders have been used to both legitimize and ensure the colonial interests. The image of the ‘good Greenlander’ as solely the ‘happy hunter’ was used to legitimize protectionist policies and ensure Danish profits from trade with hunting products. In this way, the constructed images have also changed along with the colonial interests. With the increased industrialization of fishing in the beginning of the twentieth century, Danish representations of Greenlanders changed. The ‘good Greenlander’ was not solely depicted as a hunter. Part of the assimilation strategies of the modernization period (beginning in the twentieth century and increasingly taking effect in the 1950s and 1960s) was employing the idea that Greenlanders were to learn from the Danes in order to reach ‘the Danish stage of development’ (Thomsen, 1996: 270; Thomsen, 1998: 37). The creation of ‘Greenland images’ is therefore also tied to enabling and ensuring the durability of socio-economic and political institutions.

Trondheim argues that these discourses have strongly influenced contemporary representations of Greenlanders and Danes (Trondheim, 2002: 199). On the basis of older and more recent texts, she has summarized these representations:

- a) According to Danes, Greenlanders are...
 - uncivilized, primitive, and fortuitous
 - kind, helpful, tolerant but lazy and ineffective
- b) According to Greenlanders, Danes are...

- power-hungry, dominant, supercilious
- efficient, hard-working, competitive
- materialistic, stingy, individualistic

Trondheim's summary does not only sketch out the stereotypical images of 'the Dane' and 'the Greenlander', it also reflects a process of 'Othering'. As Bjørst argues, Denmark has throughout history used Greenland to mirror what Denmark was *not*. Greenland has thereby become a form of 'Otherness' that both attracts and appals Danes (Bjørst, 2008: 9). She argues that the dominating collective discourses on the Arctic in the West can be described as a pendulum. The pendulum swings between a positive narrative of the Arctic as a paradise on earth with artistic, Native, happy inhabitants living in harmony with nature and a negative narrative of the Arctic as a human wilderness where the Indigenous culture is disappearing, burdened by social problems as a consequence of modernization and globalization (Bjørst, 2008: 112). I argue that Bjørst's 'Arctic pendulum' resonates with the contemporary representations of Greenland in Denmark. Thus, there seems to be continuity of the 'Greenland images' of 'free children of nature' or 'victims corrupted by civilization' that dominated the colonial period. This may explain Gedionsen's meeting with the Danish stereotypes of 'the drunk Greenlander' and 'the Noble Savage'.

As I have argued, it is crucial to note the configurations of power in the process of Othering. Embedded in 'Greenland images' is a notion of a parent-child relation. As Boel and Tuesen express it, "Denmark was represented as a mother in relation to Greenland, as a woman who protected her small children against all kinds of dangers[...]" (own translation, Boel & Tuesen, 1993: 38). In this sense, the Danish representations of Greenland that swing from essentialized negative and positive images also position Danes as superior to Greenlanders. This resembles Said's explanation of Orientalism. He writes: "In a quite constant way, Orientalism depends for its strategy on this flexible positional superiority, which puts the Westerner in a whole series of possible relationships with the Orient without ever losing him the relative upper hand" (Said 1979: 7). Today, the parent-child metaphor becomes apparent in the discourse that Denmark is 'helping' Greenland, particularly in relation to the yearly block grants. When Lars Emil Johansen last year suggested that money in Greenland ends up to Danish firms and

Danish workplaces, Jesper Langballe from the Danish People's Party criticized him for "talking badly about the nation which has helped Greenlanders so much" (own translation, qt. in Sermitsiak, 2008, June 13, p. 19). I argue that the idea of the 'Danish favour' is not only restricted to the Danish political right wing, it is an idea that imbues Danish discourses. For example, in an article, *En fri koloni* (A free colony), about Greenlanders' right to self-determination, Emil Rotbøll writes: "Greenland is continuing to be extremely dependent on Denmark, and they should be happy about the Danish aid [block grants]" (own translation, Rotbøll, 2008, November 27). Thus, the image of Denmark as a sort of generous parent that helps Greenland puts the Danes 'in a whole series of possible relationships without ever losing the upper hand'.

Representation of Greenland in Danish media: An Overview

Considering the political and historical step of implementing Greenlandic self-government, one might expect a considerable amount of Danish media coverage. However, the coverage has been surprisingly limited.

I suggest that only certain interest areas in Greenland receive considerable media attention. In my research, I found that the majority of articles about Greenland focus on travel expeditions, the Arctic nature, climate changes, and social problems. In this way, the Danish media coverage to a large extent resembles the 'Arctic pendulum', as is explained by Bjørst (Bjørst, 2008: 112). The Danish media tends to swing between two narratives: a positive narrative about the overwhelming Arctic nature or a negative narrative about the social problems in the everyday life of Greenlanders. I furthermore suggest that both narratives are increasingly influenced by a 'catastrophe syndrom'. This is reflected in the two narratives which have dominated the Danish media coverage of Greenland in 2009: 1) the disappearing beautiful Arctic due to climate changes and 2) poverty and neglect of Greenlandic children.

In August 2008, I researched articles about Greenland in the Danish national newspapers. Here are some typical headlines: "Enormous waves – a dangerous phenomenon in Greenland", "Greenland is marked by climate changes", "The small Ice Age", "Warmer, thank you", "Air planes to Greenland", "Epidemic of suicides in Greenland", "Greenland's youth is the world's fattest", "Greenlanders are accused of

whale fraud”, “Gays are bullied in Greenland”, “Greenland hit by sex scandal”, “The curse”³.

The Danish documentary *Flugten fra Grønland* (The Escape from Greenland) from 2007 by Poul-Erik Heilbuth at DR (Denmark’s national radio and TV) exemplifies the essentialized images of Greenland which dominate Danish media. I have extracted a part of the description of the documentary from DR’s website: “Beautiful Greenland is maybe not that beautiful after all. The country is struggling with massive social and human problems that threaten to destroy its society” (own translation, DR1, 2007, October 31). The documentary gained much public attention, and there were both negative and positive responses. Bjørst argues that the response to the documentary shows that a thaw is surfacing in the ways in which Greenlanders are represented. Greenlanders would not accept one-sided and faulty images of Greenland (Bjørst, 2008: 8). As an example, Sörine Gejl from Qassiarsuk in Greenland arranged a demonstration in Copenhagen against the documentary. On a flyer she had written that the documentary was manipulative and did not represent the ‘real Greenland’ (Sermitsiak editors, 2008, March 4). Bjørst points to an increasing tendency of Greenlanders to engage in a dialogue on how Greenland is best represented. She writes that Greenland and Inuit have gained a voice in local and global debates, but she also points to the general lack of knowledge about Greenland outside of Greenland (Bjørst, 2008: 8).

Considering the media coverage of Greenland in Denmark, it seems fair to suggest that the production and reproduction of essentialized “Greenland images” prevail in contemporary Danish representations of Greenland.

The “wake-up call” by “Greenland enthusiast”

While there are currently many responses in Greenland and from Greenlanders to Danish “Greenland images”, critical responses in Denmark are largely non-existent. I hold that Bjørst’s publication of *En Anden Verden: Fordomme og Stereotyper om Grønland og Arktis* (Another World: Prejudices and Stereotypes about Greenland and the Arctic) in 2008 is the only recent Danish publication – available to the Danish public – that

³ It should be noted that these are only extractions from a body of articles. However, they may reflect a general tendency.

provides a critical perspective on the representation of Greenland. I will argue that in the same vein as the Danish media, Danish “educational” literature on Greenland resembles the Arctic pendulum. I refer to a recent publication by Marianne Krogh Andersen (2008), *Grønland – almægtig og afmægtig* (Greenland – powerful and powerless), as this book has received much public attention. In this book, Andersen attempts to describe the Home Rule, Nuuk and the settlements, Greenland in relation to Denmark, and Greenlandic possibilities of independence with both ‘enthusiasm’ and ‘criticism’ (Andersen, 2008: 8). In one and the same sentence, Andersen states that she is focusing on the contrasts of natural richness and social problems in an attempt to provide a nuanced depiction of Greenland. I will argue that Andersen’s book is precisely not giving attention to nuances, in its quest to focus on contrast. In effect, the depictions swing from positive narratives about the rich Greenlandic nature and survivalist Greenlanders *and* negative narratives about the social problems in the everyday life of Greenlanders. In this way, the book contributes to the re-affirmation and re-production of essentialized “Greenland images”, as is evident in an appraisal review in the Danish newspaper, Politiken:

The land of Greenlanders, yes. And the paradoxes: two million square kilometres with the number of inhabitants like Randers. Overwhelming beauty and brutal poverty. Joie de vivre and skyrocketing numbers of suicides. Hospitality and national chauvinism. Welfare and dazzling class barriers. Drum dance and hymns. Revivalist meetings and shamanism. Balls and netdating. Sledge dogs and four-wheel drive. Longing for independence and a billion big block grant. Seal blubber and canned ravioli. Solidarity and nepotism. Kindness and affect-violence. Child-care and care failure. Midnight sun and pub’s darkness. Outdoor life and low life expectancy. Social destitution and oil billions hidden under the ocean, the ice, and the granite (own translation, Graugaard, 2008, May 17).

Furthermore, in Andersen’s book, the current relations between Denmark and Greenland are explicitly and uncritically described in terms of the parent-child metaphor – not far from the Arctic Orientalists in the nineteenth century. I have extracted two passages from

the book to exemplify Andersen's Orientalist discourse:

The image of baby Greenland on father Stauning's knee is eloquent. Because Greenland is a weird mixture of spoiled and neglected. Neglected, because the development was so destructively fast that people in Greenland could not follow and because Denmark (because of a gnawing conscience) did not dare to put demands on how the big amount of Danish money should be targeted to development, education and independence (own translation, Andersen, 2008: 29).

In an attempt to provide a 'critical' perspective on Greenland-Denmark relations, Andersen later on writes:

"The conflict between Greenlanders and Danes reminds us of the conflict between teenagers and parents. When will *we* learn not to patronize Greenlanders as children, noble savages, drunks, parasites or just someone who needs help? When do *they* learn not to take everything for granted, that *we* yearly send almost four billion DKR to Greenland? When do *they* acknowledge that the block transfers to Greenland could be used on so many other things, such as hospitals and schools in Denmark? When do we drop our colonial cloaks and begin to talk to each other as grown ups who each can make demands on each other?" (own translation, Andersen, 2008: 30)

Andersen in the same sentence encourages Danes and Greenlanders to "drop the colonial cloaks" while reaffirming "the colonial cloaks" in 'us and them' dualisms, and worse, in a 'teenager vs. adult' metaphor. Despite this problematic discourse, Andersen's book has been received as a "splendid book" which "creates a trustworthy framework for critical analysis of the Home Rule's current situation" (own translation, Graugaard, 2008, May 17). The newspaper Politiken has highly recommended the book to its readers with these final comments: "We are situated in an important period of time in Denmark's and

Greenland's ambivalent coexistence and Marianne Krogh Andersen's portrait of the modern Greenland is a wake-up call. It is an interesting and challenging read about an interesting and challenging country" (own translation, Graugaard, 2008, May 17).

It is highly worrisome that Andersen's discourse on Greenland is received as a trustworthy, educational, and critical "wake-up call", but nonetheless symptomatic of the representation of Greenland in Denmark as a form of Eskimo Orientalism. As Søren Rud writes in a newspaper chronicle, the degrading comments by Danish politicians towards the Greenlandic representatives and the essentialized images of Greenland in the media reflect that "Denmark and Greenland are in a post-colonial situation in which the reckoning with the mental backlog from the colonial period is not finished" (own translation, Rud, 2008, February 21, Politiken). He argues that the decolonization process is not completed with an abolition of the official colonial status. Notably, post-colonial studies and theory have, largely, not been used in Danish academia in relation to Denmark's own colonial history. I argue that interrogation of the ways in which Greenland is represented in Denmark and the power relationships embedded in "Greenland images" is critical to the current political moment of advancing "equality and mutual respect in the partnership between Denmark and Greenland", as is stated in the pre-amble to the bill on Self-Government (own translation, Rasmussen, 2009).

Self-Government in Greenland

New Prospects for the Future

In recognition of the Greenlandic people as a people with the right to self-determination in accordance with international law, this law is based on the wish to advance equality and mutual respect in the partnership between Denmark and Greenland. Accordingly, this law is based on an agreement between Naalakkersuisut [the home government] and the Danish government as equal parties (own translation, Rasmussen, 2009).

On the National Day of Greenland, June 21st 2009, a Self-Government agreement between Denmark and Greenland will substitute the Home Rule Act. As is stated in the pre-amble to the bill on Self-Government above, Greenlanders are recognized as a people in accordance with international law and thereby gain the right to self-determination. This means that any future decision about Greenland's full independence will be the decision of the Greenlandic people. In this way, the self-governance agreement is extending Greenland's legal rights to practice greater self-determination.

In this light, Greenlandic self-governance is a new step towards a more independent, self-determining Greenland. Nonetheless, obtaining Greenlandic self-determination is an on-going process. I will argue that the Self-Government agreement reveals both considerable challenges and opportunities in the decolonization process. Importantly, it is a political moment that calls for a critical analysis of the various aspects that will influence Greenlanders' prospects for ending colonial legacies of foreign domination. The implementation of self-governance therefore deserves an explicit description, above all for the many Danes who are not aware of its existence or scope. Furthermore, the implementation of self-governance requires an analysis of its limitations and its possibilities. I think that the question of Greenlandic self-governance involves and ties together my analyses of "the forgotten colonialism", national identity, and Eskimo Orientalism in the previous chapters, while it also offers new aspects to consider for the

practice of Greenlandic self-determination. Hopefully, the observations provided in this chapter will contribute to new dialogues on how Greenland will work towards its future. Due to the fact that Self-Government is yet to be practiced, my last sections will have a speculative character.

From Home Rule to Self-governance: an overview

With the establishment of the Home Rule in 1979, Greenland gained executive and legislative authority for self-governance in a number of domestic areas. After twenty years of Home Rule, most responsibility areas that were listed in the Home Rule Arrangement have been transferred from Denmark to the Greenlandic parliament. These include Greenland's internal administration, direct and indirect taxes, the established church, fishing in the territory, hunting, agriculture and reindeer breeding, labour market affairs, education and cultural affairs, vocational training, other matters relating to trade, health services, housing, and environmental protection (Grønlandsk-dansk selvstyre-kommission, 2008: 3). Greenland continues to receive block grants from Denmark. In 2007, the block grant was 3.202 billion DKR in direct grants and a Danish expense of 850 million DKR on areas administered by the Danish state (Finansministeret, 2008). Under the Home Rule, the Danish parliament and administration have retained control over some areas of government, for example, the judicial system, mineral resources, defense, and foreign policy. The Home Rule Arrangement did not mention Greenland's right to sovereignty (Grønlands Hjemmestyre, "Fakta om Selvstyre", 2008). As Jens Dahl has shown, under the Home Rule, Denmark maintained its control of mineral resources and created a Greenlandic dependency on Danish know-how. Dahl stresses that Home Rule made regional self-governance "*with national characteristics*" (Dahl, 1986: 128) possible, but it did not prevent Danish influence through block grants and foreign policy. In this way, the establishment of Home Rule, to some extent, ensured the continuity of Danish control, as I have also discussed in my first chapter. On the other hand, Dahl suggests that Home Rule was a historical necessity; it has secured political and national mobilization which was a step towards greater independence for the Greenlandic population (Dahl, 1986).

In 1999-2000, the Home Rule government set up a Greenlandic Self-

Government Commission to revise Greenland's position in the Danish Commonwealth. As a result, the Greenlandic parliament recommended in 2003 the establishment of a Greenlandic-Danish Self-Government Commission. In June 2004, the Danish prime minister and the chairman of the Home Rule signed the terms of reference. The Self-Government Commission consisted of both Danish and Greenlandic politicians with the advise from a number of experts. The commission ended their work in June 2008 by submitting their report to the Danish government and the Home Rule government (Grønlandsk-dansk selvstyre-kommission, 2008: 4). On November 25th 2008, 75% of the Greenlandic voting population voted yes to the implementation of Self-Government (Grønlands Hjemmestyre, "Folkeafstemning om Selvstyre", 2008). As a result, the Self-Government arrangement will substitute the Greenlandic Home Rule on June 21st 2009.

Self-governance is not a declaration of independence. Greenland is still under the Danish Commonwealth. The legal framework of the Self-Governance Act is both the Danish Constitution and the right of the Greenlandic people to self-determination according to international law. Discursively, the status changes from "Home Rule" ('hjemmestyre') to "Self-Government" ('selvstyre') – a differentiation of words that no one previously distinguished. The framework of Greenlandic Self-Government opens up new political and legal possibilities. Overall, it constitutes a new arrangement regarding the future taking over of more areas of domestic governance. The Self-Government Agreement includes 30 areas over which a self-governing Greenland can gain authority. The areas are divided into List 1 and List 2. List 1 includes five areas which Greenland can assume immediately: workplace injury insurance, remaining areas within the health care system, traffic regulations and control, property laws, and diving regulations. List 2 includes areas that will be handed over after negotiations with the Danish government, for example prison services, justice administration, criminal courts, and, importantly, mineral resources (Rasmussen, 2009). There are five areas of responsibility that cannot be transferred to Greenland under Self-Government: The Danish constitution, citizenship, Supreme Court, foreign/defense/security policy, and currency and monetary policy. However, the report spells out that there will be extended cooperation between Greenland and Denmark in matters pertaining to the Danish authorities (Spierman, 2008).

The implementation of Self-Government is therefore a gradual takeover of new

areas of governance as economic and administrative conditions allow. Thus, Greenland will finance the areas of authority that are being transferred. However, the Danish block transfer is maintained at the 2007-level (adjusted for price and wage development) but will be reduced gradually with the possible revenues from Greenland's mineral resources (Grønlandsk-dansk selvstyre-kommission, 2008: 8). Importantly, the Greenlandic-Danish Self-Government Commission reached an agreement on mineral resources that had been a cause of much dispute during Home Rule negotiations. The Home Rule Act formulated a compromise that disfavoured Greenlandic interest, and it was unclear what would happen in the case of oil extraction (Dahl, 1986). According to the Self-Government agreement, Greenland will receive the first 75 million DKR per annum from mineral resource activities. The additional revenues will be shared by Denmark and Greenland, but Denmark's share will go to the reduction of the block grants. During the first five years of self-governance, the Danish government and the Greenlandic Self-Government authorities will cooperate on tasks relating to mineral resources. After this five-year period, it will be for the Greenlandic Self-Government to decide whether to renew the agreement. In case the block grants are reduced to zero DKR, Denmark and Greenland will start negotiations on their future economic relations (Grønlandsk-dansk selvstyre-kommission, 2008: 8).

Furthermore, with the implementation of Self-Government, Greenlandic will become the official language. This will not exclude the use of Danish with respect to public matters and it will not exclude education in Danish in the school system (Grønlandsk-dansk selvstyre-kommission, 2008: 12). Most importantly, Greenlanders are recognized as a people according to international law with the right to self-determination. Even though Greenland maintains its status under the Danish Commonwealth, the framework of the Self-Government act does not exclude Greenland's legal possibilities of declaring full independence (Grønlandsk-dansk selvstyre-kommission, 2008: 13). As the campaign material issued by the Greenlandic Home Rule states, self-governance is something between Home Rule and an independence declaration of Greenland (Grønlands Hjemmestyre, "Fakta om Selvstyre", 2008).

New Dependencies?

The Self-Government agreement sets up a new legal framework that extends Greenland's possibilities for greater self-determination. Aqqaluk Lynge, Greenlandic vice-chair of the Inuit Circumpolar Council, states that the agreement is a very unique example to the rest of the world. After the referendum, he said to KNR (Greenland's national public broadcasting corporation): "Danish and Greenlandic politicians have been able to agree on recognizing a former colony as a people with the right to use their language and culture, and proper conditions concerning the administration of resources have been established" (own translation, KNR, 2008). According to Lynge, Greenlandic self-governance is an important step towards more equal and respectful relations between Greenlanders and Danes. Despite the legal advances, I will argue that there are considerable limitations to the practice of self-determination within the framework of the Self-Government agreement.

As is evident, the entire framework of Self-Government depends on economic growth. The transfer of areas of authority to Greenland is dependent on Greenlandic ability to finance them. The English summary of the Self-Government report states:

Provided the growth rate of the Greenland economy continues, an unchanged [Danish] Government subsidy in real terms to Greenland will mean that revenue from the Government will continue over time to constitute a declining proportion of total national income. Greenland will, consequently, become less dependent on Government transfers in relation to the total Greenland economy and thus more economically self-sustainable (Grønlandsk-dansk selvstyre-kommission, 2008: 8).

In this light, the prospects of Greenlandic economic self-sustainability and independence from the Danish block transfers are based on growth of the Greenland economy. According to calculations presented at the public hearing on the Self-Government proposal on 18 June 2008 in Katuaq (Cultural Centre of Greenland) in Nuuk, the dependency on the Danish grants will be reduced to 18% in 2030 if Greenland's economy continues to grow at its present rate. Thus, the process towards economic 'self-

sustainability' and 'independence' may be longer and more challenging than expected. Furthermore, I hold that the Self-Government agreement does not propose any actual strategies for obtaining growth in such a linear progression. The only explicit source of economic growth, mentioned in the Self-Government agreement, is mineral resources. Thus, the prospects of economic self-sustainability are heavily reliant on the prospects of exploiting mineral resources. Particularly, the expectation of oil extraction underlies this proposition – but the extent of any actual Greenlandic oil reserves is not known yet. Nonetheless, in the framework of Self-Government, the quickest way to independence appears to be heavy industrialization of Greenland's raw materials, and oil extraction.

The prospects of finding oil reserves have had a central role in public debates on Greenlandic Self-Government, and caused new worries and hopes. During my field research, I got the impression that most people in Greenland would support the extraction of oil in case it becomes a reality. During the public hearing on Self-Government on June 18th in Nuuk, Line Barfoed, Danish MP for "Enhedslisten" (Danish leftist party) and member of the Self-Government Commission, suggested that a self-governing Greenland should consider very carefully whether oil extraction is in fact desirable, taking into account the environmental consequences. A member of the public responded to her, stressing the need to extract oil in order for Greenland to develop and decrease its dependency on Denmark. However, another member of the public also expressed worries that the Self-Government agreement does not account for the environmental impacts following oil and mineral extraction. In this light, the Self-Government agreement's reliance on oil extraction may pose a major challenge to Greenland that as a hunting and fishing society is dependent on environmental sustainability; environmental degradation may have serious consequences for both the economy, sectors dependent on eco-systems, and every day life of Greenlanders. Nonetheless, in response to the worried member of the public, Lars Emil Johansen stressed that Greenland should not "shut the door to the economic possibilities" because they are crucial for Greenlandic self-determination.

Thus, the present framework of Self-Government restricts Greenland's prospects of further independence to the economic abilities of fostering rapid growth. Lars Emil Johansen wrote in a newspaper article "Klimaaftale: I den arktiske tranlampes skær" (Climate agreement: In the gleam of the Arctic train-oil lamp) in December 2008:

From next year, the block transfer will [remain at the 2007-level, adjusted for price and wage development] and it will be up to Greenland to obtain the new economic means that will secure continued growth and the opportunity for greater independence, as was the goal with the Self-Government agreement. We will have to concentrate on industrializing, especially in relation to the exploitation of raw materials[...]s. But also in relation to other areas by which Greenland has opportunities to step into a new economic and industrial direction that will lead us to the level of other modern societies. And the possibilities in Greenland are many if we are allowed to exploit them in the same way as the more industrialized countries have already done (own translation, Johansen, 2008, December 23, p. 11).

Johansen's article was directed to the upcoming Copenhagen Conference on Climate Change in November 2009. He expressed his concerns about the restrictions that climate change agreements might put on Greenland's abilities to industrialize further. The statement reflects the new conditions on the road to Greenlandic independence: concentration on industrialization, particularly in the area of mineral resources. In this light, I hold that the Self-Government agreement has left Greenland at a vulnerable starting point for increasing Greenlandic self-determination. The Self-Government agreement's weight on rapid economic growth may limit new visions and public debate concerning the ways in which Greenland will work towards its future. As Juaaka Lyberth, former director of Katuaq (Cultural Centre of Greenland), wrote in *Tidsskriftet Grønland* (the journal Greenland) in March 2008, the Home Rule has already determined Greenland's politico-economic strategies of 'development' with limited public debate and opportunities for public involvement in the decision-making process. This has been exemplified in the agreement between the Home Rule and Alcoa Aluminum in exploring the possibilities of establishing aluminum smelters in Greenland. Lyberth argues that the Home Rule has engaged in one-sided communication; it has provided information but not established adequate opportunities for public influence on the decisions, for example in a

referendum on the question of aluminum. Lyberth argues that intensified exploitation of raw materials is leading to massive changes concerning the traditional use and right to land and water, as well as the Greenlandic settlement patterns. In the event of Self-Government, Lyberth requests extended public debate and engagement in the coming changes (Lyberth, 2008).

The question is then whether the conditions of Self-Government allow for critical thinking and public debate concerning the ways in which Greenland will work towards its future? This question remains to be answered in the coming years. In any case, I will argue that an uncritical approach to industrial development and ‘modernization’ – through which Greenland is expected to reach “the level of other modern societies”, as expressed by Lars Emil Johansen – may be risky to the practice of Greenlandic self-determination. As is evident in the experience of decolonizing nations in the ‘developing’ world, the conditions of independence relegated them to the production of primary products (Amin, 1996: 210). This furthermore entangled the newly independent nations into a web of new dependencies on world prices of primary commodities, foreign investment, conditional loans etc. that in effect forced them to ‘open up’ their countries for foreign exploitation – and thereby, lost part of their economic sovereignty.

It is however crucial to note that the conditions of Greenlandic independence operate within another time frame than the newly independent countries in the post Second World War period. As pointed out by Jens Dahl (1986), Greenland also went through some of the same processes during the establishment of Home Rule as other post-colonial social formations. Gorm Winther, who discusses power and democracy in Greenland, has stated that today the new elite in Greenland represents several layers of both the early radical elite, and a techno-structure of both Danes and highly educated Greenlanders. He argues that within this new class, there are ideological contradictions extending from proponents of prolonging a ‘Statist’ society to a neo-liberal market society (Winther, 2007: 1). As it is beyond the scope of this chapter to discuss the class formations in Greenland, I will merely point to the new tendencies of neo-liberal tenets in Greenland that may have gained in strength in the period up to the implementation of Self-Government. During my field research, I noticed a neo-liberal jargon in newspaper

articles and among the younger generations of Greenlanders. Many expressed wishes to *open up* Greenland for foreign capital, as a means to detach Greenland from Denmark's monopoly on influence.

It seems that there is an increased tendency to think, especially among younger generations, that Greenland should foster economic growth based on a neo-liberal development paradigm in order to become economically independent. It may even be feasible to suggest that neo-liberal ideology is utilized as a sort of "post-colonial paradigm" to gain self-determination. In other words, a neo-liberal agenda may advance as a form of economic nationalism. As E. Helleiner and A. Pickel (2005) have pointed out in their book *Economic Nationalism in a Globalizing World*, economic nationalism does not need to be associated solely with protectionism. In their view, neoliberal reform agendas of e.g. lifting trade barriers and encouraging foreign direct investment can also be understood as a form of economic nationalism (Helleiner & Pickel, 2005). As Pickel states in *Explaining (with) Economic Nationalism*: "Rather than being opposite economic liberalism[...], economic nationalism is better understood as a generic phenomenon that can accommodate almost any doctrinal content, including economic liberalism" (Pickel, 2002: 36). In this framework, neo-liberalism in Greenland can be seen as a national economic strategy with the purpose of advancing the current political main objective: national independence.

In this context, it is crucial to consider the ways in which neo-liberalism, as a form of economic nationalism, may have dire consequences for Greenland's process of gaining greater self-determination. As I have suggested above, uncritical approaches to economic development have, in the experience of newly independent countries, led to new dependencies. Winther writes: "(I)t is important to understand that the concept of self-governance cannot be based on a supply side, a neo-classical or a neo-liberal development paradigm. This would just be like substituting one type of dependence based on the unilateral transfer incomes from the Danish State with another type of dependence founded on the dominance of Danish and foreign trans-national corporations" (Winther, 2007: 23). I would further argue that it is necessary to take specific caution towards the new types of dependence that a neo-liberal development paradigm may bring. In the light of the experiences of the last few decades, neo-liberal

policy measures have proved fatal to economic sustainability on a global scale, specifically in the Global South. Wallerstein states that in a historical perspective neo-liberal development strategies have not been matched by economic success (Wallerstein, 2008). Hart-Landsberg explains that developing countries, in the effort to attract finance to offset existing deficits (pressured by the IMF and the World Bank), deregulated their capital markets, privatized economic activity, liberalized trade, relaxed foreign investment regulatory regimes, and cut back public spending. In short, the international regime advocated export-oriented growth and foreign direct investment as answers to the economic deficits of developing countries. Nonetheless, as Hart-Landsberg points out, the post-1980 neoliberal era has in fact been marked by slower growth, greater trade imbalances, deteriorating social conditions (Hart-Landsberg, 2006), and soaring global inequality. As a result of these policy measures, developing countries became dependent on developed countries, foreign direct investment, and multi-national corporations. In this way, the neo-liberal development policies responded to the interest of transnational capital and became another mechanism of control. Pierre Bourdieu has argued that: “The neoliberal programme draws its social power from the political and economic power of those whose interests it expresses: stockholders, financial operators, industrialists, conservative or social-democratic politicians who have been converted to the reassuring layoffs of *laissez-faire*, high-level financial officials eager to impose policies advocating their own extinction because [...] they run no risk of having eventually to pay the consequences” (Bourdieu, 1998). In these ways, the neo-liberal development paradigm has led (post-colonial) countries into new dependencies on a, generally anonymous, global market steered by the interests of transnational capital, and actors primarily interested in maximizing profit. In general, neo-liberalism has long been deemed a failed development paradigm by a number of economists and critics. In the light of the current economic crisis, the critique of neo-liberalism is now widely accepted and across the political spectrum.

In conclusion, I will point to a statement that Lars Emil Johansen made during the public hearing on the Self-Government proposal: “As long as we are dependent on other peoples’ money, we are also subordinate to their power”. Implicitly, he stressed that Greenlandic self-determination will only be obtained through a detachment from Danish

block transfers. This is undoubtedly a valid observation. Nonetheless, I will also argue that the framework of the Self-Government act restricts Greenland's prospects of independence to Greenland's ability of fostering rapid economic growth. In this way, the Self-Government agreement has also been an 'easy way out' for Denmark as it has not entailed any re-structuring of the 'over-developed state' that was Greenland's colonial inheritance at the establishment of the Home Rule (Dahl, 1986). Additionally, the need for Greenland to foster rapid economic growth may lead to the employment of neo-liberal policy measures (as a new national ideology) that can lead to new dependencies on profit-maximizing players in the global market, confining Greenland's practice of self-determination considerably.

New possibilities

In addition to these complications of the Self-Government framework, there are also promising possibilities following the enactment of Greenlandic self-governance. First and foremost, the self-government negotiations have been a major step in redefining the relations between Denmark and Greenland. As Aqqaluk Lynge pointed out, the Self-Government agreement does reflect an agreement between Danish and Greenlandic politicians that Greenlanders constitute a people with the right to practice their language and culture. Furthermore, they have been able to agree on the administration of resources, implicitly recognizing Greenlanders' right to the raw materials of their territory (KNR, 2009).

Hence, with the Self-Government agreement, Greenland has set an example for Indigenous self-governance. Duane Smith, President of the Inuit Circumpolar Council Canada, writes in a congratulatory letter posted on the Greenlandic Home Rule's website: "We in Canada see this event as a major step by a circumpolar region of people gaining significant control of its rights and livelihood which is now seen by other groups and Inuit throughout the circumpolar Arctic as hope and opportunity for their chance to gain better control of their own destinies. Your fight is our fight and although you may be a public government, it is made up primarily of Inuit to govern an area inhabited by Inuit for Inuit" (Smith, 2008, November 26). The Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC) is an international non-government organization that represents approximately 150,000 Inuit of

Alaska, Canada, Greenland, and Chukotka in Russia (ICC, n.d.). In this light, Greenlandic self-governance is also a step in the international movement of the Circumpolar North for Inuit to gain more control over their territories. As Greenland is a member of ICC, Greenlandic self-governance will therefore also be part of the promotion of Inuit rights and interests on an international level.

Duane Smith also states in her letter that Greenland's referendum turning out in favour of Self-Government expresses a collective "desire to follow a path in which all Greenlanders will take more control of their own lives and map out their own future" (Smith, November 26, 2008). Accordingly, the enactment of Self-Government invites invigorated dialogue and debate about how Greenlanders wish to 'map out their own future'. Moreover, it invites for new considerations of who will be part of this process. Greenlanders are now recognized as a people according to international law, while they are simultaneously recognized as an Indigenous people. This leaves the Greenlandic nation in a unique situation. I will argue that this situation provides new opportunities as both their rights as a 'people' and their rights as an 'Indigenous people' can be utilized for obtaining greater self-determination. These two positions can give Greenlanders many advances in terms of legal and political rights. Greenlandic politicians utilized their rights to greater self-determination as a 'people'. At the same time, they collaborate with and support other Arctic nations and Indigenous peoples across the world in what can be termed an international movement towards Indigenous sovereignty (Niezen, 2000). Being recognized as an Indigenous People also grants Greenlanders rights in accordance with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. For example, the UN Declaration acknowledges Indigenous peoples' rights to the dignity and diversity of their cultures, traditions, histories, and aspirations which shall be reflected in education and public information (Article 15). It acknowledges Indigenous peoples' rights to their own means of subsistence and to engage freely in their traditional and other economic activities (Article 20), as well as their right to the conservation and protection of the environment and the productive capacity of their lands (Article 29) (United Nations, 2007). These are just a few examples of the continued relevance of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in the context of Greenland.

Furthermore, I would argue that the ability to utilize both positions may give

rise to new conceptualizations of “the Greenlandic people”, “Greenlandic national identity”, and “Greenlandicness” that are less concentrated on determining “*who is the most Greenlandic*”. In other words, the recognition of Greenlanders as a people may allow new interpretations of Greenlandic national identity that is less focused on dichotomies of traditional vs. modern, past vs. present, and Greenlandic vs. Danish. This does not have to give way to the importance of Inuicity in the processes of identity formation in the lives of Greenlanders. As Fienup-Riordan states, in the context of the Yup’ik Eskimos of western Alaska, “Like other indigenous peoples the world over, they are engaged in a complex process of invention, innovation, and encounter. Contrary to the view that would see them as either traditional or modern, many Yupiit are, in the words of Chevak’s Tangik Theatre (1989), striving to be both: ‘With the strength that comes from education and knowledge, we learn to deal with the future, at the same time, we stand firmly planted in our cultural roots’ ” (Fienup-Riordan, 1990: 231).

As has previously been mentioned, the implementation of Self-Government is also a new possibility to redefine the relations between Danes and Greenlanders, Denmark and Greenland. Greenlandic and Danish politicians have stated that the Self-Government act is “based on the wish to advance equality and mutual respect in the partnership between Denmark and Greenland” (Rasmussen, 2009). I argue that advancing equality and mutual respect requires critical analysis and identification of power relationships and their history. As I have explained in my chapter on “The Forgotten Colonialism”, Danish amnesia concerning Denmark’s colonial history justifies the reproduction of images of Denmark as a solely good-willed welfare state in equal and “benign” relations to its former colonies. In effect, this serves to perpetuate colonial relations. Furthermore, the Orientalized representations of Greenland in Denmark reproduce the notion of the parent-child metaphor which position Danes as superior to Greenlanders. Particularly, the notion of “*the Danish favour*” distorts the reality of Denmark-Greenland relations. These forms of “disguised colonialism” inevitably surface in the political relations between Denmark and Greenland, as well as in the daily lives of Greenlanders and Danes. Thus, the ‘wish to advance equality’ as is stated in the Self-Government pre-ambles also requires awareness about and critical education in Danish colonialism and disguised colonialism.

In discussing some of the limitations to and possibilities of Greenlandic self-governance, I wish to point out that negotiating Greenland's self-determination is an ongoing process. A self-governing Greenland is facing major challenges to the *practice* of self-determination. In the framework of Self-Government, Greenland's prospects for gaining greater independence is dependent on Greenland's abilities to foster rapid economic growth. However, the Self-Government agreement does not propose any actual strategies of obtaining growth; it is heavily reliant on Greenland's prospects of extracting mineral resources. As I have argued, an uncritical approach to industrial development and 'modernization' may be extremely risky to the practice of self-determination, and may lead to new dependencies on world prices of primary commodities and foreign investment, as was the experience of newly independent countries in the 1950s and 1960s. Furthermore, the practice of Greenlandic self-determination requires a critical approach to the neo-liberal discourse that is seemingly gaining foothold in some groups of the Greenlandic community. In the experience of the post-1980 decades, neo-liberalism as a development paradigm has failed; it led to increased dependency on a global market controlled by multi-national corporations and profit-seeking actors. In this light, the emphasis on rapid economic growth in the framework of the Self-Government agreement may negatively affect the practice of Greenlandic self-determination.

Nonetheless, as Dahl suggested in 1986, the establishment of the Home Rule was a historical necessity; it secured political and national mobilization which was a big step towards greater independence for the Greenlandic population (Dahl 1986). In my view, the same applies to Greenlandic Self-Government. However, the process of negotiating Greenland's self-determination requires attention, caution, and critical thought. We may find inspiration in the words of Arturo Escobar: "The task of critical thought is "to learn to what extent the effort to think one's own history can free thought from what it silently thinks, and so enable it to think it differently" (Foucault 1985: 9). Consequently, the product of critical thought should be a history of our present, of those discourses and practices that made us what we are, shaped what we think, determined what we see and feel, a history, in short, which clears the way so we may help bring into being, through our reflection, those things that have never been thought or imagined"

(Escobar, 1992: 22).

Conclusion

In this paper, I have analyzed some of the national processes involved in the development of Greenland as a post-colonial nation, seeking to advance its possibilities for greater self-determination. I have examined how Greenland emerged as a nation, showing that this cannot be set apart from a historical analysis of Danish colonialism. The colonization of Greenland has been analyzed in a theoretical framework informed by world-systems theory and dependency theory. In this framework, I have investigated colonialism as a consequence of Danish capitalist expansion and shown that Greenland's current state of affairs is in large part a function of its relationship with Denmark. This relation can be viewed as one with typical core-periphery characteristics. The colonial period, beginning with the mission in 1720s, until the Second World War was marked by a Danish paternalistic colonial policy of "positive isolation". Denmark maintained a state monopoly on trade and investment in Greenland which secured the Danish state colonial profits. The Royal Greenland Trading Company (KGH) encouraged the hunting tradition because its primary profits came from buying whale and seal products from local hunters. Danish colonial rule was justified by a Rousseausque conception of "the Noble Savage" which held that native Greenlanders, as "free children of nature" should remain "uncorrupted" and protected from European civilization. The paper has shown that Danish colonization was pre-occupied with the purpose of economic exploitation. The establishment of local, regional, and later on national councils for internal administration in the twentieth century played a significant role in creating Greenlandic national unity.

The historical processes which followed the end of the Second World War fuelled Greenlandic nationalist movements and political mobilization. When Greenland's official colonial status was abolished in 1953, Greenland was instead annexed as a Danish county – and a neo-colonial period was launched. Extensive modernization policies (later characterized as "*Danization*"), formulated in Copenhagen, made

Greenland economically more dependent on Denmark than ever before. Furthermore, a Danish workforce was imported and discriminatory privileges were given to Danes in Greenland. This gave rise to a nationalist movement and an awakened Inuit political awareness in the 1960s and 1970s, leading to the Home Rule negotiations. The Home Rule, established in 1979, inherited a post-colonial economy, and an “over-developed” administration dependent on Danish know-how and financial resources. Home Rule made regional self-governance with national characteristics possible, but it did not change the possibility of Danish influence through block transfers and foreign policy; to some extent it ensured the continuity of Danish imperial power. The Home Rule also nurtured the feelings of “*kalaaliussuq*” (identity as a Greenlander) and made way for new expressions of pride and self-confidence. The policy formulations since the establishment of the Home Rule have, to a great extent, been characterized as “Greenlandizing”. In these ways, my historical analysis of the emergence of Greenland as a nation shows that the current state of affairs cannot be seen as the persistence of an “original” state, but as a consequence of historical developments. The continuing dependency on Danish block grants and the current Greenlandic “over-developed” state are colonial inheritances.

The emergence of Greenland as a nation is connected to specific conceptualizations of Greenlandic national identity. I have discussed the ways in which the criteria of territory, language, ethnicity, indigeneity, tradition, and values are perceived to constitute ‘Greenlandic forms of life’. Greenlandic national identity as a concept has emerged along with the historical processes in which a global system of nation-states has been founded. The concept of the nation is not natural or primordial but a more or less conscious construction which is closely connected to the needs of the territorial state. In the context of Greenland, the Inuit peoples acquired the state as an institutional artifact of colonialism, and the concept of a Greenlandic nation was transferred to the local Inuit populations by Denmark. Through these historical developments, the Greenlandic community has come to share the characteristics of what defines a nation. Thus, the question of “Greenlandicness” has been debated in Greenland for a long time. The national identity debate seems to be particularly significant to the young generations who have grown up in modern Greenlandic society and tend to have different interpretations of “Greenlandicness” than their parents and grandparents; they

focus less on 'old' traditions and they integrate global mainstream culture as part of their everyday lives. I argue that the national identity debate is particularly important to the current political period in which Greenland is beginning to practice increased self-governance.

Informed by Michael Billig's approach to national identity, my paper has investigated how 'forms of life' constitute Greenlandic national identity. The conceptions of "Greenlandicness" are often constituted in dichotomies between the 'Kalaallit' (Greenlander) and the 'Dane', Indigenoussness and non-Indigenoussness, Greenlandic-speakers and Danish-speakers, "real Greenlanders" and "modern Greenlanders" which structure the discourse on national identity. I have suggested that Inuicity (Inuit identity) has been nationalized; the 'Kalaallit' is therefore often perceived as synonymous with being Inuk. Furthermore, I argue that discourses on "Greenlandicness" often refer to 'old' traditions of, for example, hunting and kayaking. As a result, it may seem difficult to be both Greenlandic *and* modern. Dichotomous discourses on Greenlandic national identity have led to conceptions of a "loss of identity" for Native Greenlanders or a perceived impossibility to *become* a Greenlander for newcomers. Moreover, investigating the question of Greenlandic national identity, it is crucial to consider the ways in which the "minority-majority" position of Danes and the Danish language (a minority-majority that the majority of the population has to adapt to) influence this discourse – and challenge Greenlandic self-governance. Due to the fact that Danes and the Danish language occupy elite positions, Greenlandic attempts to demarcate the differences are strong. Concurrently, there are new movements towards renegotiating and redefining national identities that are less focused on dichotomies, emphasizing self-identification and solidarity with the country. Young Greenlanders in particular are re-interpreting static conceptions of "Greenlandicness".

The paper has interrogated the ways in which Greenland, as a post-colonial nation, is represented in Denmark. Greenland-Denmark relations can be analyzed as a form of Eskimo Orientalism (as termed by Ann Fienup-Riordan). Orientalism, according to Edward Said, concerns the creation of essentialized images of the Orient as 'the Other' *in* and *for* the West. Orientalist discourse enables and ensures the durability of socio-economic and political power. In this light, Danish colonial representations of

Greenlanders have been used to legitimize the colonial interests. During the colonial period, the image of the 'good Greenlander' as solely the 'happy hunter' was used to legitimize protectionist policies and ensure Danish profits from trade with hunting products. The images of Greenlanders were aligned with Rousseau's description of people as 'pure' in a state of nature, who are subsequently corrupted by civilization. These discourses have strongly influenced contemporary representations of Greenland in Denmark. The current Danish discourses on Greenland reflect Bjørst's concept of 'the Arctic pendulum'; they swing from a positive narrative of Greenlanders as 'the Noble Savage' to a negative narrative of 'the drunk Greenlander'. In this context, the process of 'Othering' represents a configuration of power. Embedded in 'Greenland images' is a notion of a parent-child relation which positions Danes as superior to Greenlanders. I have shown that the Danish media and literature on Greenland contribute to the re-affirmation and re-production of essentialized 'Greenland images' as a 'disguised' form of colonialism.

My analyses of the colonial history, national identity, and Eskimo Orientalism have been set in the framework of Greenland's current decolonization process. Thus, they are connected to my reflections on the possibilities and challenges of the Self-Government agreement. In an explicit description of the Self-Government agreement, I have described that the implementation of Self-Government is a gradual takeover of new areas of governance as the Greenlandic economic and administrative conditions allow. The practice of greater self-determination within the framework of Self-Government is facing major challenges, as the entire framework is based on economic performance. Hence, Greenland's prospects for gaining greater independence rely on Greenland's abilities to foster rapid economic growth. However, the Self-Government agreement does not propose any actual strategies for obtaining growth; it is heavily reliant on Greenland's prospects of extracting mineral resources. An uncritical approach to industrial development and 'modernization' may be extremely risky to the practice of self-determination; it may lead to new dependencies on world prices of primary commodities and foreign investment, as was the experience of newly independent countries in the 1950s and 1960s. Furthermore, the practice of Greenlandic self-determination requires a critical approach to the neo-liberal discourse that is seemingly gaining foothold in some

groups of the Greenlandic community. In the experience of the post-1980 decades, neo-liberalism as a development paradigm has failed globally; it led to increased dependency on a global market controlled by multi-national corporations and other profit-seeking actors. In this light, the emphasis on rapid economic growth in the framework of the Self-Government agreement may negatively affect the practice of Greenlandic self-determination.

Nonetheless, the Self-Government negotiations have been a major step in redefining the relations between Denmark and Greenland. Greenlanders are recognized as a people in accordance with international law and thereby gain the right to self-determination. This means that any future decision about Greenland's full independence will be the decision of the Greenlandic people. I have argued that this provides new opportunities as Greenlanders' rights as both a 'people' and an 'Indigenous people' can be utilized to obtain greater self-determination. The implementation of Greenlandic Self-Government invites new dialogues on how Greenland will work towards its future, and who will be part of this process. This may open up for new conceptualizations of "the Greenlandic people", "Greenlandic national identity", and "Greenlandicness" that is less centered on determining "*who is the most Greenlandic*". In other words, the recognition of Greenlanders as a people may open up new interpretations of Greenlandic national identity that is less focused on dichotomies of traditional vs. modern, past vs. present, and Greenlandic vs. Danish. In Greenland's decolonization process, Greenlandic Self-Government is a historical necessity that is a new step towards greater independence – but self-governance in the framework of the Self-Government agreement requires attention, caution, and critical thinking with respect to the emergence of new dependencies that may affect the practice of self-determination.

In conclusion, let me restate that advancing "equality and mutual respect in the partnership between Denmark and Greenland", as it is announced in the Self-Governance Agreement, requires critical analysis and identification of power relationships and their history. Danish amnesia towards the country's colonial history justifies the reproduction of images of Denmark as a solely good-willed welfare state in equal and "benign" relations to Greenland. Orientalized representations of Greenland in Denmark re-affirm essentialized discourses and reproduce the notion of the parent-child metaphor. These

forms of “disguised colonialisms” inevitably surface in the political relations between Denmark and Greenland. Thus, the ‘wish to advance equality’ in the event of Greenlandic Self-Government necessitates an awareness about and critical education in Danish colonialism and disguised colonialism. I believe that the current political moment invites a re-thinking and re-visioning of the (post-)colonial relations between Denmark and Greenland. I hope that this paper will contribute to new dialogues in both Greenland and Denmark on these important questions.

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