

(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', Indigenes and non-Indigenes, 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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