Inner suppression
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“We don't misunderstand me...!!! We are a country that had a primitive life just 60 years ago. The development goes really fast in Greenland. There are still some Eskimos that can't follow. Some are confused, and some can cope. Because of the development we forgot our culture in those 60 years; the development went on, and that's the reason we included some traditional music on "Kataaq". We wanted to wake up the culture, and remind the young people that we after all are INUIT's and we shouldn't forget it. Mixing new music with traditional chants are a thing we like up here. Actually, we won a National Culture Prize in 1996”.

Comment from an interview with Henrik Peterson of Nuuk-Posse, taken off http://www.milkycat.com/reviews/nuukrvw.html
Introduction

The goal is to gain an understanding of complex dynamics of changing gender roles in Greenland and the phenomena of violent behaviour, particularly against women. It is a multifaceted question and not enough to simply look at relations between men and women, those of Greenlanders and Danes must be considered also. Patriarchal power relations between the sexes as well as the dynamic of inner suppression is symmetrical to the patriarchal relationship of Greenland and Denmark. There are intricate ties to identity conflicts and the contradiction between the traditional and political identity of a people of the hunting and fishing culture versus the faster, more modern world. The contradiction is reflected in many areas; the language & education relationship and the rural & urban relationship; one that clearly establishes the existence of two rather distinct cultures of the same people in the same country.

The first section includes a description of important features of this field research and methods used, as well as participants or interviewees and topics of discussion. A brief summary of background information that is particularly relevant to the topics of discussion will then be provided, more specifically the G-50 and G-60 policies of development and centralisation that resulted in drastic changes for the Inuit culture and society. Gender relations will be discussed in section three, first through a brief summary of the changing gender roles within the Inuit society and then by looking at specific areas that are frequently used as a measure of equal status of genders; labour market and education, political participation, legal frame for equal opportunities and a body of monitoring the effectiveness of implementation of such laws and regulation, namely the Equal Status Council. In section four I will view certain aspects of the patriarchal and colonial relationship between the Danes and the Greenlandic population whose remnants can still be found lingering within the structure of modern society in Greenland. They bear a striking resemblance to processess and experiences among women in patriarchal societies. It is the psychological impact of such a relationship that is by some viewed as the core of the most serious ailments of Greenlandic social environment, such as violence. This brings us to the next section where we will look at one of the most serious problems in gender relations in Greenland, violence against women. In section six I will discuss factors relating to the issue of violence and external elements in dealing with it. Finally I will conclude with a discussion on perceptions of the political dynamic in Greenland and the reconstructed identity that may very well be needed if Greenlanders are to realise their dreams of independence from Denmark.
Field research and method

Project research was largely conducted during a field trip to Nuuk, Greenland from the 8th to the 12th of April. Project advisor and organiser was Dr. Joan Nymand Larsen, Stefansson Arctic Institute & Faculty of Law and Social Sciences, Social and Economic Development programme, University of Akureyri.

The object of the research was to gather information concerning socio-economic development in Greenland in addition to acquiring a greater understanding of various developments in the North. Four students participated in the field work, each with a different focus of research: Embla Eir Oddsdóttir’s emphasis was gender relations, Hilda Charlotte van Schalwyk’s emphasis was Socio-economic impacts of mining and other large-scale resource exploitation, Guðbjört Erlendsdóttir’s emphasis was social conditions and Elísabet Ingunn Einarsdóttir’s emphasis was fisheries and economic dependency.

Methodology was based on data and information gathering through semi-directive or informal interviews with both indigenous and non-indigenous residents of Nuuk, Greenland. Both representatives of various ministries and institutions were interviewed as well as un-official members from various spheres of the community. Certain overlaps between the various research focus areas were clear but not all appointments were equally relevant to each researcher. Most but not all intended appointments were made but following is a list, in non-cronological order, of institutions, representatives and persons interviewed and/or visited in relation to the study of gender relations in Greenland:

1) The Statistics Greenland office where we were met by the head of the office as well as with individuals who had specific expertise in our fields of study. For gendered statistics I was directed to speak with Mr. Kean Wong who was able to confirm the registration and existence of certain information that would be necessary for segregated gendered statistics. The shortness of staff at the Greenland statistic office makes extensive analysis of data rather difficult, resulting in lack of availability of truly helpful statistics. Making specific inquiries that are custom made to the need of researchers is however a possibility, for a price, and could be pursued if needed.

2) The Department of finance (Økonomi direktoratet) where we met Mr. Peter Beck and were given insight into the major problems concerning the Greenlandic economy.
3) Department of trade, agriculture and labourmarket (Direktoratet for Erhverv, Landbrug, og Arbejdsmarked) where we met Mr. FE to discuss the labour market in Greenland. Mr. FE was of great assistance, not least in providing information concerning men and women in the labour market and material prepared by the Council of Equal Status.

4) Department of culture, education, research and church (Direktoratet for Kultur, Uddannelse, Forskning og Kirke) where we met three representatives of the department of education to discuss the major issue of education in Greenland, Mr. Jes Dahl, office manager, Mrs. Hanne Lindberg, education consultant and Inaluk Brandt, education consultant.

5) Department of fisheries and hunting (Direktoratet for Fiskeri og Fangst) where we met delegates Torsten Overgaard of the fisheries section and Jens Jakobsen of the hunting section to discuss the condition of the fishing industry, possibilities of diversification as well as the condition of the hunting society in Greenland. Mr. Jakobsen, in particular, was helpful with information concerning changing gender roles among the hunters in small settlements of rural Greenland.

6) Mr. Birger Poppel where we were introduced to the Project of SLICA (Survey of Living Conditions in the Arctic). Mr. Poppel provided us with a presentation and some preliminary findings of the project and participated in informal discussions with the group on various topics of interest.

7) Mrs. Mariekathrine Poppel, a PhD student currently working on her thesis on power relations and men’s marginalisation. Mrs. Poppel proved to be the greatest asset during the research, particularly in establishing contact with key contacts that were to be beneficial to the research on gender relations in Greenland. Mrs. Poppel furthermore assisted me in detective work and the search for statistics for the crisis shelter in Nuuk; The Nuuk municipality, the Department of Family matter and the department of children’s matters were visited under her guidance and translations. In addition Mrs. Poppel established a contact with Mr. Nielsen, Mrs. Ivalu Egede, Mrs. Petrussen and the director of SIK Mr. Josef Therkildsen.

8) Mr. Nielsen, an engineer in social planning and the head of a men’s group in Nuuk. Mr. Nielsen was an incredibly forthcoming and helpful contact and interviewee providing an account on the workings of the men’s group project as well as internal dynamics of colonial relations. His contribution to this project is absolutely central.
9) Ms. APP, a young woman, mother, girlfriend, freelance journalist and publisher of the woman's magazine Arnanut. Ms. APP proved a valuable source on gender relations as seen from a young woman resident in modern Nuuk.

10) The University of Greenland where we were met by Mr. YC, Professor of Anthropology and Head of Department of Social and Cultural History to discuss various matters pertaining to education in Greenland.

11) SIK, labour union where we were met by Mr. Josef Therkildsen on labour related matters. Unfortunately there was insufficient time to truly benefit from our brief visit. It should be noted however that Mr. Therkildsen was very open to our questions and willing to respond to any additional questions by mail.

12) Mrs. Ivalu Egede who was the founder of a woman’s political party in 1991 but unfortunately she was unable to meet me as planned. She showed a willingness to elaborate on her comments made during our brief encounter but has unfortunately been out of the country and unavailable.

13) Royal Arctic Line, personnel manager & Mr. Rasmussen, for a tour of the facilities and informal discussions.

14) The National Museum of Greenland to further grasp the history of Greenland.

Interviews were recorded on a digital dictaphone where possible and only after obtaining permission from interviewees. The following interviews are available in digital form:

- The Department of Labour and Agriculture; Mr. FE
- The Department of Fisheries and hunting; Mrs. Torsten Overgaard & Mr. Jens Jakobsen
- The Department of Finance; Mr. Peter Beck
- The Department of Education; Mr. Jes Dahl, Mrs. Hanne Lindberg & Mrs. Inaluk Brandt
- The University of Greenland; Mr. YC
- The SLICA project; Mr. Birger Poppel
- The Men’s group project; Mr. Nielsen
- Journalist APP
- In addition there are considerable personal notes from various discussion used.

Interviews used have been semi-transcribed for use of material related to my research on gender relations in Greenland. In short, the field research was a success, not least due to excellent organisation by the Project leader as well as a generally good moral and co-operation among the participants. Furthermore we
were welcomed in every place in Nuuk with generosity, hospitality and openness that turned research to pleasure.

**Background**

This section is a brief summary of the historical processes that have taken place during the colonial relationship between the Danes and the Greenlandic population. Particular attention is given to policies that were the most influential in setting in motion the transformation of the Inuit collective hunting and fishing culture to an increasingly modern one.

Previous research of the historical background of Greenland revealed how certain events, policies and subsequent processes resulted in rapid economic, social and cultural changes and turned the world of a people of subsistence hunting upside down in a matter of years. A development, albeit variable from urban to rural settings, that is still taking place and taking its toll on the people. For a quick rehash lets look at a timeline of the most influential factors in this colonial story. Hans Egede’s arrival in Greenland marks the beginning of colonial

(Picture 1 – A timeline of the colonial process in Greenland (author, 2005))

Greenland, starting with efforts to convert the Inuit to christianity. A permanent contact with the Danes had been established by 1782 but their colonial policy consisted of paternalistic and protective measures that aimed at minimising changes to the traditional hunting culture but did not prevent the Inuit from
becoming increasingly dependent on Danish trade. It was however not until after WWII that modernisation truly began with the head-turning pace that led in the end to numerous difficulties. In 1953 formal colonial rule by the Danes ended, but in name only and Greenland became a county within Denmark.

The G-50 report of economic strategies and planning, issued in 1950, reflected a policy of attaching private investment to a modern public infrastructure and the supply of labour in towns on the west coast (Peterson, 1986). Modernization had radical effects on the Greenlandic society and culture and the traditional household economy was transformed through the concept of a national economy and hunting and fishing became a profession in decline, giving way to wage-paying employment. Traditional gender roles shifted, healthcare improved; the population rose and schools were restructured to reflect Danish style of teaching. Modernization was wanted in the Greenlandic political sphere but the framework on which it was built was a Danish one. Its execution and funding was by the Danes, making the process rather different from the expectations of Greenlandic politicians and in fact leaving Greenland even more dependent on Denmark in economic terms. The import of Danish staff to Greenland affected the population in Greenland and a Danish elite with higher wages, better living conditions and social privileges emerged, creating a visible discrimination. The message received by the Inuit was that of a lesser worth (Petersen, 1995).

The Danes adopted a policy of centralization and urbanization in the G-60 report of 1964 which had a huge impact on the Inuit society. People relocated from small and remote communities to towns on the west-coast, which resulted in the breaking up of kinship groups and abandonment of traditional hunting practices and ways of living. Migration was encouraged either by making towns seem attractive through employment, modern housing and public services, or simply by not supporting developing efforts in ‘non-profitable’ villages. By late 1960’s and early 1970’s the composition of the society had radically tilted from a small-scale hunting and fishing economy toward a predominantly modern, export-orientated economy but without adequate infrastructure, such as housing or an efficient social system to provide people with help in adapting to new conditions (Peterson 1986). Increasing numbers of temporary Danish workers in Greenland served to increase ethnic tensions and the Inuit internal migrants were marginalised; feelings of social exclusion created an atmosphere of turmoil, igniting politicization of indigenous culture and a movement for Home Rule which came in 1979. Certain legislative and administrative powers were transferred to
Home Rule authorities including responsibility for municipalities, schools, church, social system and education in addition to many public institutions but major difficulties in the 1980’s were to have a detrimental effect on the economic pillars; mining had ceased, sale of seal skin plummeted, the cod disappeared and the shrimp stock was close to overexploitation. Being the largest export product in Greenland this presented a bit of a problem (Petersen, 1995).

Today’s political environment in Greenland is very much focused on independence but economic dependence of Greenland on the Danish block grant is a serious barrier. For that to change the Home rule searches for avenues through which the block grant may be substituted, such as; diversification of the economy; increased level of education; finding new resources; innovative projects; and increased land-trade such as tourism.

It is clear that certain events and policies have had a great impact on the Greenlandic people and the Greenlandic population is faced with numerous challenges before they will reach the point of being solely responsible for determining their own future. Many issues need to be resolved before that time but focus here is directed at gender and colonial relations of today and the connection between those relations and violence against women.

Gender relations and colonial relations?
In this section we will see how centralisation and development has resulted in changing gender roles that reflect an increasingly modern society and economic activity. Although it is important to recognise that gender issues in Greenland need to be explored from various approaches, including only the so-called Western Feminist perspective it is necessary to keep in mind the extent to which Greenland has become a modern society. Of course realities differ from place to place but it is nonetheless useful to look at a certain set of indicators when trying to determine the status of men and women within a given society. Such indicators are for instance; labour participation, education, wage differences etc. and attention will be given to a few of these indicators.

Gender relations
One of the biggest impacts of modernization and concentration of urban areas was the shifting of traditional gender roles. Gender roles were clearly defined and not easily swayed from even with the phenomenon of gender crossing where the name of someone who died was given to a newborn child. The powers, such as hunting skills, of the deceased person were believed to be transferred to the
There were instances of a man’s name being given to a girl, possibly because of a parents’ wish for a boy. However, cross-gendering was difficult due to the strongly divided gender roles (Poppel, 2006, int.). Women were responsible for domestic chores while the men were out hunting and these roles have typically been considered to have been complimentary and understood by everyone to have equal importance. According to Poppel, M. though (2006, int.), Inuit society has always been patriarchal and still is today.

It is important to understand that people’s attitudes toward gender roles have probably changed less in the smaller communities, particularly when it comes to the home and upbringing of children. According to APP, a young woman journalist and mother in Nuuk, the roles of men and women in the domestic arena are gradually changing in the last few years, especially in Nuuk and the larger towns. People’s attitude in rural areas however have changed less and this is how she describes her perception:

“I was born and raised in Nuuk but my boyfriend is from up north from a very small town and when I am with his family I can feel that they still have that the women should be in the kitchen and boys don’t cry and girls don’t play with cars. I thought that those kind of thoughts were out, its, my parents generations they do that but they still do that, even the young people. It’s a shock. I think that the women from the small places, they don’t just say their opinions like I do now. They are just sitting and waiting until you ask them for something. We are very different even if we are living in the same country” (APP, 2006, int.).

In APP’s view women in Nuuk are considerably more active when it comes to political discussion and participation and are at a much better advantage workwise than their sisters in the rural areas. This is reflected in information retrieved from other sources and we will now look at each in turn.

The labour market

With resettlement to urban areas women joined the labour market and became a part of the wage receiving economy, mostly in fisheries at first. They had now become providers of the family while at the same time they still held on to their traditional roles as caretakers of family and home. The men also became a part of a wage receiving economy but often without the possibility of holding on to the traditional role they had known before. Rather than being their own masters as before they now became unskilled workers with low wages. At the same time skilled workers were needed for construction work and many came from Denmark to work temporarily in Greenland, some of which left with a Greenlandic wife. A
development which gradually led to an imbalance in the numbers of women and men in Greenland, particularly in rural areas (Hamilton, 1998). It is not difficult to imagine the turmoilous atmosphere such circumstances might create, not least because of discriminatory practices by the Danes both in the labour market and the social space. The elite Danes generally had better jobs, higher wages and living conditions that were superior to those of the Greenlandic indigenous population. Women seemed to have an easier time of adapting to this new set of circumstances while men became increasingly marginalised.

The profession of hunting has drastically decreased through the years; a trend which appears to continue although interestingly enough Greenland born listed as employed in ‘animal husbandry, fishing and hunting’ decreased from 1,653 persons in 2000 to 1,479 in 2003, meanwhile persons born outside Greenland show an increase from 386 to 421 in the same period (Statistics Greenland, 2005). Today professional hunters can scarcely make a living without a spouse that has employment elsewhere, more often than not within the public sector. The hunters are classified as self-employed and thus do not recieve unemployment benefits, leaving them with very few choices. A certain shift in gender relations is therefore indicated in the rural communities although not as clearly as in the larger towns. Seeing as the well-being of the family largely depends on the woman having a job outside the home it could be speculated that power relations are somewhat different today. Perhaps this is a source of frustration as would the decreasing number of women in smaller settlements.

Poppel (2006, int.) claims that gender divided choices of professions are still very clear in Greenland and that people are still raised according to which type of work is considered suitable; men are geared toward hunting and fishing whereas women go more for domestic work, teaching and caretaking services. Poppel’s claim is backed by Nielsen’s (2006, int.) remarks on this issue but unfortunately Statistics Greenland does not have gendered labour market information readily available. Mr. FE (2006, int.) with the Ministry of Labour and Agriculture agrees with professions being clearly divided according to gender but also contends that there is actually little difference in status of women and men in the labour market. In fact women are doing better when it comes to skilled work since they often have a better education. Mr. FE also claims that at the management level wages of men and women are no different and there is an increase in women holding top positions. Poppel, M. (2006, int.) is not in agreement here and claims that not only has gender equality not been efficiently implemented, women do have to have a VERY high education to get a good
position. At the Royal Arctic line, a transport company that ships goods between Greenland and Denmark, we were told that workers are mostly male and management is only male (Rasmussen, 2006, int.). According to preliminary results of SLICA women in Greenland do generally have more education and their income is higher in the middle income range whereas men generally have higher income in the lower and higher ranges (Poppel, B., 2006, int.).

In general women seem to have a relatively strong position within certain professions in the labor market although we did not in fact see any records or statistics to verify information on gender division within professions, level of positions or wages.

*Education and language*

One of the largest issues in Greenland today is that of education and the need to raise the level of education within the Greenlandic population. There appears to be great awareness of the importance of education for building confidence in the Greenlandic people, particularly the male population. The Home Rule government is preparing to divert greatly increased funds toward this issue (Beck, P., 2006, int.). A brand new University building where all departments will be united is under construction and a skill-enhancing program for unskilled labor being prepared with the position of a project leader already filled (Nielsen, int., 2006). The aim now is to change the law so that unemployed individuals will maintain their social benefits but be required to take courses that will assist them in advancing their skills, increasing their confidence and the likelihood of becoming employed. Unfortunately this law has been cancelled for the fall (FE, 2006, int.).

There are many reasons for the low level of University Education in Greenland. According to YC (2006, int.) social background and socialization in addition to language complexities and financial barriers could be to blame. The fact that formal education has existed in Greenland for only a short while has to be considered in addition to the actual relevancy of formal education for all members of the Inuit culture. It could be speculated that the pace of which modernisation has taken place has left little time for adjustment and rather absorbed all energy for the process of catching up with headturning structural and cultural changes.

According to YC it is difficult to access accurate statistic for gender proportions in education but women are a clear majority. Again we find that urban and rural realities are very different in Greenland and access to education or perhaps interest, encouragement and confidence results in fewer people from
the rural areas acquiring University education. Of course the fact that instruction and material in the University in Greenland is all in the Danish language is a serious barrier for people from the settlements who often have less skills in the Danish language. APP (2006, int.) believes that the government is right in its policies on education but agrees that the language issue is a great barrier as is lack of diversity within the education system.

While it is clear that the intention of the Home Rule government is to seriously tackle the issue of education it seems equally important to resolve the issue of the dual language situation. One could even argue that a solution to the language issue is vital to the success of the task of raising levels of education. At any rate it would seem that the confidence of the Greenlandic people is the basis for their successful move toward independence. And while women are in a good position, relative to men, when it comes to education the issue has infinitely more to do with closing the remaining gap between an old colonial structure and the Greenlandic society of today.

Political participation

Another indicator that is considered to reflect the status of men and women in a particular society is that of political participation on all levels of society. While women’s political participation in the Home Rule government is surprisingly high the Council of Equal Status is seeking to further increase women’s participation in political decision making processes, particularly in the municipalities. In 2003 a course on “Women in Politics” was held with some success. This project is high priority and ongoing but has unfortunately suffered from lack of funds (Equal Status Council of Greenland). One could say that some success is apparent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Municipal Council</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Women by %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Members</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>23.89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mayors</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>23.53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Mayors</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>23.53%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Greenlandic Parliament</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Women by %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greenlandic parliamentary elections 2005</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>38.71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministers</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>37.50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Table 1 – Women participation on different levels of governance in Greenland)

and the table above reveals the status of women in politics in Greenland today. It is interesting to compare these numbers to those of Iceland. The graph below shows the proportion of women in the parliament, local government and government. The proportion of women at the municipal level has increased and seems to have been around the same level in 1995 as Greenland is today. However, if we look at the parliament it is clear that the proportion of women in
the parliament is greater in Greenland by quite a few percent; the same can be said for government where the proportion of women ministers is considerably higher in Greenland. It is said that equality has been achieved when the proportion of men and women are 60 and 40% either way; by that standard Greenland seems to be doing quite well.

![Graph 1 – proportions of women in parliament, local government and government (Statistical series, 2005: women and men)](image)

One of the concerns of the Council of Equal Status is to spread information on its activities and issues to the public at the local level. In order to achieve this goal the Council set out to find local individuals within each municipality that could be its representatives in spreading knowledge of gender issues, to attempt to create a debate within each community and to be a link between the public and the Council. Although only a few communities responded there are already in place ambassadors in 10 towns and communities. The intention is to hold a course on gender issues for the benefit of the work of representatives (Equal Status Council of Greenland).

A new law (nr. 7) on the equal status of men and women was passed on the 11th of April 2003, replacing law nr. 34 from February 1976 on equal pay, law nr. 244 from April 1989 on equal treatment of men and women in the labour market and article 4 from regulation nr. 12 from October 1996 on leave for pregnancy, maternity and adoption. The law (no. 5) on the Equal Status Council of Greenland was passed in May 1998 and on 11th of April 2003 law nr. 8 was passed with changes to the law from 1998. Law no. 8 focused on the various
associations and institutions appointing specific numbers of men and women in various boards and councils (Landstingslov nr. 7 & 8).

The Equal Status Council is situated in Nuuk and its primary task is to examine and monitor conditions of equality in the community and to provide information and advice to public institutions and private parties. The council includes a chairman and six members appointed by the governments based on recommendations from organizations and parties and is composed of three women and three men. The majority of funding for the council’s activities come from the Greenland Treasury and it receives around 1.000.000 DKK with some additional funding from other parties. Substantially more funding is required as Council meetings and office expenses take up most of the funds at the expense of actual projects. The main focus areas of the Council today, in addition to its involvement with crisis centers, men’s groups and political participation are:

“strengthening self dignity and human dignity; enhancing awareness of men’s right and duties in relation to their families; informing children and young peoples at schools and educational establishments of the Gender Equality Act in leaflets aimed at children and young people; relieving the situation for women suffering violence by drawing the attention of local authorities to the often unsustainable situations of crises centres; establishment for treatment centres for women, men, children and whole families; the good kindergarten providing a basis for Atuarfitsialak, the good school; a national Gender Equality Day to disseminate understanding of gender equality throughout the country” (Equal Status Council of Greenland, p. 17-18)

It seems clear that there is a great interest and ambition in raising awareness and tackling gender related issues but the classical problem of funding is stunting the development of projects somewhat. Additionally the reaction from the public in general has been somewhat disappointing; the debate forum on the the webpage of the Equal Status has not been very active. The webpage can be found at this link http://www.nali.gl/uk/ with various information on projects, report and a debate forum, accessible to the public.

In a report from the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination of Women, adressed to the Division for the Advancement of Women at the United Nations there is a statement of discontent with the governments failure to comply with Acts no. 7 of 11th April 2003. Act no. 7 concerns the appointment of equal numbers of men and women in boards and committees but when pressed the government excuses its actions with lack of qualified women. An excuse the
Council cleverly ignored by providing the Home Rule Government with a pile of CV's of qualified women (Equal Status Council of Greenland).

We have now looked at some indicators of the status of women within the Greenlandic society and found that women’s position in the labour market is relatively good, as is education and political participation of women, all the while keeping in mind the great differences between the urban and the rural. Another type of relations deserves some attention and raises certain questions, namely colonial relations and their impact on society.

**Colonial relations**

Gender relations in Greenland, specifically as pertains to the violence against women, is confounded by the effects of colonial relations which are still very much a part of everyday life. The shift in gender roles and power relations between the sexes took place in symmetry with increased inequality between the ruling class and the indigenous population.

Denmark’s initial protectionist policy gradually underwent changes in the face of a changing world and the effect of colonial policies has been great, not least the G-50 and G-60 policies of development and centralization. After WWII it became clear that the existence of two distinct cultures in Greenland, the modern Danish one and the traditional Greenlandic, was no longer viable. Intermarriage had by then increased drastically producing individuals of mixed origins who became leaders within the political, social and cultural spheres (Ørvik, 1976). The formation of an elite within the Greenlandic society as well as the discriminatory practices of the Danes, such as in the ethnic difference in wages and employment had created an unequal society that encouraged ethnic tension. All development and decision making was at the hands of the Danes.

In 1979 Home Rule was established by a vote and a Greenlandic government was elected in April of that same year. Certain legislative and administrative powers were transferred to Home Rule authorities including responsibility for municipalities, schools, church, social system and education in addition to many public institutions such as the Royal Greenland Trade Company (renamed Greenland trade), the Greenland Technical Organization (renamed Nuna-Tek) and the Department of Health. Today’s political environment in Greenland is very much focused on independence and in 2004 a Joint Greenlandic-Danish Commission on Self-Government was established with both
Greenlandic and Danish politicians as members. Its role is to provide information on how to best shift away from Home-Rule toward self-determination.

A legislation has been in place from 1979 that requires positive discrimination in the labour market for those resident in Greenland. This however applies only to low-skilled work but not jobs that require a university education and really only excludes non-Nordic applicants. This legislation is called Rule nr. 1 and is enforced by the municipalities (FE, 2006, int.) but does, unfortunately sound rather ineffective in providing educated Greenlandic people with an advantage on, in most cases, Danish people. An interesting point in light of Nielsen’s, (2006, int.) remarks on how Greenlandic people are forever trying to reach the position of their ‘dominators’ without ever getting there because even educated Greenlandic people have less trust than the Danes, among the Greenlanders. This view is supported by another interviewee, Mr. YC (2006, int.) who fears that Rule nr. 1 is not always effective on higher levels and that it is partially an issue of trust. This does not necessary reflect a preference of either the Danes or the Greenlandic; it is simply a remnant of an old colonial and patriarchal structure which is difficult to eradicate but has created a dynamic that appears detrimental to the self-esteem of the Greenlandic people.

One can see how a serious effort both in raising educational levels and in establishing ground rules that are firmly encouraging for hiring Greenlandic people is necessary to prevent this cycle from sustaining itself indefinately. Recently there was a discussion in Iceland on why there are not more women in management positions and why more women are not voted to parliament. One theory has been that people, men and women alike, simply have not quite established faith in the ability of women to hold these kinds of positions. If we consider for a moment what sort of a ground a patriarchal system is based on, we could come to the conclusion that all this is due to a very slow erosion of old patriarchal perceptions. A patriarchal system basically consist of two groups that each are perceived to have a particular role according to their abilities; the dominant group and the suppressed. The dominant group defines the role of the submissive group and makes sure that it’s own role is out of reach of the submissive group, more often than not by resorting to claims of inadequacy. Gradually the dominant group believes its own claims and what is worse, so does the submissive group; resulting in a very skewed perception of abilities and a serious, deep-rooted lack of confidence. Usually, radical measures are needed to rupture the fabric of ideas that describe the submissive as ill equipped to hold positions of importance and responsibility (Miller, 1991). Lets connect the idea of
the patriarchal system to the theory of Annas (1993) on how an individual's perception, however limited or distorted, of his or her abilities or possibilities may actually define his or her wishes. Perhaps we have here one of the components of the engine that sustains the cycle of inequality.

Nielsen (2006, int.) describes it very powerfully when asked about conflict avoidance. Question: So, when they talk about conflict avoidance, they are not just talking about avoiding conflict with other people, they are also talking about avoiding conflicts within yourself?

Yes, within yourself because, they way I see it, when you have, especially my generation. We are the first generation after Greenland became a part of Denmark as a recognised area where we had the same, almost the same rights as the rest of Denmark. And we are the first generation after the new era in our history where they decided to develop Greenland. But there is they didn't take up and they do to us as a take away or what did especially the last part something which we an inner suppression. stopped for Greenland our homerule but that inner suppression stops to be aware of that It's a process. If you, if homerule- and it a human level, on a spirituality, then you just stand still as a person. In my Greenland you can see that the society is developing, yeah I can see that. There are many of my fellow Greenlanders who are taking education etc. I can see that there is some kind of political development dynamic, but how come I don't feel the same thing? And that's because you have a little engine you start now and then calling an inner suppression. And no one else but you are starting it. It might be something triggered it but other people can't start it. And this inner suppression has many side-effects. One of them is anger. A very easy tendency to become jalous and also it creates fear because something is happening. Something new is happening. I don't know what it is, it makes me afraid. It makes me fear the future of my situation (Nielsen, 2006, int.). (Picture II Straitjacket by Julie Edel Hardenberg)

However, not all is bad in paradise and in spite of how many Danish people can still be found in the Home-Rule Government, when advertising positions the government requires a Greenlandic speaking person and if such a
person applies is given preference. Since the Danish almost never speak Greenlandic one could say that this is a tool that could be used to increase the number of Greenlandic people with jobs in the public sector or governance. Of course the lack of education is a bit of a drawback here, which is precisely why so many Danish people can still be found in the Home Rule. However, there has been an increase in the number of Greenlandic people in the Home Rule and the politicians are Greenlandic (FE, 2006, int.).

“It is beginning to be more and more Greenlandic people in the home rule so we can supply the politicians with our opinions, instead of Danish made opinions. A lot of system is still Danish, and the, off the record, they make the politics, because they write the law and...of course according to the politician’s wishes but, cause they know only their own system and not what we want” (FE, 2006, 6, April, int.).

When asked whether Greenlandic people find it hard to claim their interest, Mr. FE’s response was: “Yeah, but we also have to learn what we want.” He explained how self-confidence of the Greenlandic, or rather the lack thereof is affecting their ability to make changes according to their own wishes. Today the ministry of labour and agriculture and the ministry of education will be jointly under the same hat with the purpose of encouraging closer cooperation between the labour market and the educational system. Programs are being initiated to assist people in enhancing their skills and boosting their self-confidence, of which there is a general lack within the Greenlandic labour market. Furthermore a database is being developed for use in all municipalities to monitor how many foreign workers are working in the towns and the type of work they do. The purpose being to be encourage Greenlandic people to obtain an education that will equip them to do those same jobs (FE, 2006, int.).

It is difficult for a person to get a good job if one does not speak the Danish language since many company owners are in fact Danish. A similar problem can be found within the educational system where an increasing amount of instruction and material is in Danish, in effect barring those of the Greenlandic population who do not have a considerable knowledge of the Danish language, from obtaining the education they may in fact desire (FE, 2006, int.). This is the most important problem with the language situation in Greenland and is in fact discriminatory in essence. That which is most needed in Greenland today is education, not least for the more remote towns and settlements who desperately need this tool of empowerment.
It is interesting to look briefly at the idea of collective self-esteem or collective identity and how being a part of a devalued group can affect emotional wellbeing. Research indicates that individuals who identify with a devalued social group could be at risk via three pathways; 1) by internalizing negative stereotypes about their group, which in turn negatively impacts personal self-esteem, 2) by being devalued on the sole basis of belonging to a particular group and 3) by some members of the group being socialized to develop behaviour that puts them at greater risk for emotional distress (Katz, Joiner, Kwon, 2002). One could speculate that these findings could also be applied to colonised societies that have suffered discrimination. It relates to symptoms deriving from loss of power over one’s own well-being, thrust into unfamiliar conditions and then treated unequally by those who are perceived as domineering and powerful; at the same time internalizing values that devalue their own group. It could also apply to internalised values among women who accept the role of submission in any shape or form, not least in feelings of being responsible for abuse they are subjected to. Perception of real worth has been skewed so significantly that any other type of reality seems in fact unnatural.

There are staggering similarities between the experiences of women and indigenous peoples: Patriarchal domination, inner suppression, skewed self-esteem, low self-confidence, skewed perception of abilities and possibilities, battle to reach level of historical dominators, lack of access to resources, the need for positive discrimination to break old patterns, lower pay, lower level wage bracket. If we take certain discriminatory structures and add the notion of inner suppression, lack of confidence and certain cultural aspects that prevents the male population from expression, we have perhaps found a recipe for frustration and despair that could conceivably, under certain circumstances, break out in violent behaviour.

**Violence against women**

One of the most serious problems in the Greenlandic society today is that of violence against women. The Equal Status Council believes that violence against women is an indication of gender inequality and that it is not enough to draw people’s attention to the problem of violence but that actions to break the cycle of violence and prevention
measures are necessary and that a change in people’s attitudes, women and men alike, is required. A project “Stop Violence against Women” is ongoing and in the hands of an internal working group. Again funding is a problem but TV spots and posters have been made in the hope to draw attention and establish a debate on the issue. The posters were sent to all local authorities before the UN International day of combating violence against women (Equal Status Council of Greenland).

On of the basic tools in the fight against violence against women are crisis centers. There are in fact some crisis shelters in Greenland or in six out of seventeen municipalities. If we look at figures on the number of people staying at shelters in the year 2005 we find ourselves looking at staggering numbers and please note that figures from Nuuk were not available and are therefore not included. Nuuk is by far the most populated town in Greenland with approximately 14,500 inhabitants, the next biggest town of Sisimiut has only a population of approximately 5,300.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shelters 2005</th>
<th>No. of people</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of women who stayed at the shelter</td>
<td>562</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of men who stayed at the shelter</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of children who stayed at the shelter</td>
<td>379</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- of them adressed themselves</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- of them came from the police</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- of them came from the hospital</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- of them from the social services</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- adressed the shelters by pone</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- of them were mentally abused</td>
<td>179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- of them were physically abused</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(The Table II – No. of people staying in shelters 2005)

The total number of men, women and children (excluding Nuuk) who stayed at shelters in the year 2005 was 985 of which 941 were women and children. The total population of Greenland is just under 57,000 and for the sake of comparison it is

The violence is the same as everywhere else; “....she looks in the mirror and discovers that her face doesn’t look as bad as she expected. Her teeth and gums are better than yesterday and as long as they are not broken.....she can’t bear to think of being without teeth at the age of 32.....the blue marks under her eyes and on her chin have turned brown and her face doesn’t look so battered anymore...nothing a little makeup can’t cure.”
(Translation by author from Petrusseen, 1991, p. 61). But she stayed indoors for six days without daring to go out or speak to anyone. This is her second time at the shelter and she has reliaed that she herself has to take the first step in getting help. This time, no matter how much her partner apologised and promised to stop drinking, she would never go back (Petrussen, 1991).
interesting to look at figures for the women’s shelter in Iceland. In the year 2005 92 women came to the shelter to stay with 76 children but in addition there were 465 support interviews. In total 283 women came to either stay or receive council through interviews in 2005. The population of Iceland is close to 300,000 so if we calculate the number of women and children staying at the shelter in Iceland as a proportion of the whole population we have 0.06%. If we do the same in Greenland we have 1.73%, even without the figures from Nuuk.

There were rumours that the crisis center in Nuuk was being shut down but a visit to the offices of Nuuk Municipality clarified the situation. The crisis centre is currently being altered from a center for abused women and their children, to a more family oriented center where families have access to a small apartment as well as both individual and couple’s counselling. The facility is no longer on a voluntary basis but falls under the Nuuk municipality with payed staff (Nuuk municipality, 2006). Whether or not this will prove to be an improvement remains to be seen and is particularly interesting when the powerful and complex dynamic of violent relationships are kept in mind. One would be particularly worried about how easy it is to deal with mental violence in a setting such as this, as it is more often than not made completely invisible to the outside eye. Unfortunately there have been reports of crisis centers in other communities being shut down; a negative development if ever there was one.

Crisis centres are a crucial tool in the battle against domestic violence since having a safe place to stay, support and good council is a key to breaking the cycle of violence. However, crisis centers are a remedy for symptoms rather than a cure and therefore it is necessary to look further into the core and see what lies there.

**Contributing factors**

If we look at but a few of some of the factors that could potentially be contributing to maintaining patterns of violence in general it becomes clear that there are many sides to this issue that need both further research and more effective policies. Gender and colonial relations may have a central role to play but the significance of cultural features are equally important to observe as is the uniqueness of the Greenlandic legal system.

Lisbeth Søvndahl Pedersen believes that a lack of confidence is one of the reasons men are violent toward women as well as unrealistic pressures from the community to make no mistakes, not cry, provide for the family etc. There is also
the conflicting nature of the Greenlandic culture versus the Danish one and the
tendency for both education and work environment to be predominantly led by
Danes. Furthermore there is the possibility of long term oppression resulting in
massive feelings of guilt and inferiority complexes which, when combined with
emotional silence breaks out in extreme frustration and violence, not least in
combination with alcohol consumption (Petrussen, 1991).

Emotional silence does in fact, albeit briefly, turn up repeatedly in
conversation in Greenland in connection with cultural taboos. Nielsen (2006, int.)
describes men’s emotional taboo very well:

“Yeah, when you are a man you don’t talk about feelings. You are just a man, you
are just tough guy, of course you can deal with everything. ‘laughs’ You can’t!
You are a human being! We are like other human beings, we need to talk about
feelings too. Maybe that is how it was for three or four generations ago but that’s
not how it is any more. We have to deal with what is coming up. Now, when I,
when we grew up, we grew up in this where, well you have to be providers of the
family. You have to be the proud caretakers of our Eskimo culture, you have be
hunters or fishermen, or at least know something about it. But we are not
hunters and fishermen all of us. We are not Eskimos anymore” (Nielsen, 2006,
int.).

The emotional silence of men appears to be an aspect of a cultural trait
referred to as conflict avoidance and has to do with a certain way of interacting,
or rather not interacting with other persons. Agressive or expressive display of
irritation or anger was to be avoided and direct confrontation was reserved for
songs. This is what helped create the notion of “The peaceful Eskimo”, but this
kind of withdrawal could lead to internal stress and outbursts of violence.
Community response appears to have been similarly non-confrontational (Larsen,
F.B., 1996); an interesting feature to bear in mind when we look at the legal
system later in this section.

In research on the psychology of violent offenders a prominent type is the
‘overcontrolled’ personality where restrained expression may put individuals at
risk for violent outbursts. “For controlled and inhibited individuals....violence may
represent a last resort when attempts to resolve a situation through compliance
or aviodance break down (Blackburn 1986, in Larsen, 1996, p. 53).

It should be made clear in this discussion of conflict avoidance that beating
ones wife or inflicting pain in some other way does seem to have been an
accepted form of discipline and reflects the male-dominant feature of the culture
The existence of this acceptance in today’s Greenlandic society is supported by comments made by two of my respondents, Nielsen (2006, int.) and APP (2006, int.).

"It’s because a natural way of dealing with or solving problems, if it has been allowed for generations, then it becomes a, lets say, normal way of dealing with problems. That you can say if you are outside of your, if you are studying a society or a group of people, well that’s their way of dealing with problems. Yes than it becomes a natural part of... this is part of the solutions. Well not the solution, it isn’t a solution but that’s a normal way of dealing with things..the other situation is that if society does’nt do anything...it’s condoning it” (Nielsen, 2006, int.).

"But it is like that we know some woman who gets beaten but we never say, we just know it, we don’t say it to the police or...we don’t talk about it. We know that there are some politicians who beat their vives. We know that they are there but we don’t do something. It’s scary. We hear rumors about, he does this and did that but we don’t talk about it” (APP, 2006, int.).

Question: Is there acceptance of this being the natural way of power relations between a man and a women? "No I don’t think so but if we don’t talk about it, it is like that we accept it. It’s scary but that’s the way things are” (APP, 2006, int.).

It is interesting to observe the difference of opinion when it comes to the ‘natural way’ of handling problems but both respondents confirm the silence within society when it comes to domestic violence.

Another interesting question to ask is whether trying to maintain a culture and identity of a people of hunting and fishing while in fact reality does not support such an identity is more detrimental to a person’s well-being than adopting an alternative identity. In fact it has been speculated that women’s more successful adaption to modernisation has largely to do with the fact that they were forced into a more offensive strategy of modernisation. Perhaps the combination of actively joining the wage receiving economy while at the same time still maintaining relevant ties to their traditional roles through children and home, was exactly what was needed for a smoother transition of identity from traditional to the modern. At the same time men became a part of the wage receiving economy but with seriously severed ties to their traditional world. The housing that migrating people were provided with did not really provide them with facilities to practice hunting and fishing, even as a sport and in that deprived them of a connection with the world they knew before. With centralization men
found themselves working in industrial processing rather than small-scale fishing and hunting, a transition that was brought on by necessity rather than preference (Ørvik, 1976).

One theory was that when Greenland got Home Rule the problems of alcoholism, violence and suicide would decrease but in fact, although alcohol consumption in general has decreased (see table below) alcoholism has become more serious, deeprooted and tough (Nielsen, 2006, int.). Sexual offences are more numerous, assaults have not decreased and suicides have remained stable.

It is of course possible that this increase in figures of violent offences are due to the somewhat increased debate in society and thereby better registration. It is also possible that an improvement of police procedures and attention to domestic and sexual violence has provided women with a more effective means to report incidents of violence and seek assistance. According to Mariekathrine Poppel (2006, int.) women are more likely to report incidences of violence following a conscious effort that started in 2001 to focus in on police reaction.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Light beer</td>
<td>1.345</td>
<td>1.390</td>
<td>1.508</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beer</td>
<td>7.027</td>
<td>7.105</td>
<td>7.194</td>
<td>7.097</td>
<td>6.632</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luxury beer</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>301</td>
<td>271</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wine</td>
<td>572</td>
<td>625</td>
<td>672</td>
<td>789</td>
<td>854</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spirits</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average consumption of alcohol</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>1.16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Table III. Consumption of alcoholic beverages (Statistics Greenland, 2005))

As we can see from the table above there has been a decrease in the amount of alcohol consumed per person older than 14 years of age, but note how
consumption of light beer has shifted to increased consumption of wine and luxury beer. Maybe a list of consumption in alcohol volume would give a better idea of actual consumption.

There is only one treatment center in Greenland and it is based on the AA method, the Minnesota model. There are those who believe in the effectiveness of the program in sobering people up but feel there is a lack of venues to work further with those individuals who do not benefit from the program in the long term (Nielsen, 2006, int.). This brings us to the men’s groups.

**Men’s groups**

There are currently two groups active in Nuuk, a Danish speaking group and a Greenlandic speaking group. Nielsen is one of two men running the Greenlandic speaking group.

“We started the group 5 or 6 years ago because of these three words, or feelings which was anger, jealousy, fear. Then after four months we decided to continue on our own because it was so good and we really needed this forum to, I mean, If you go to a psychologist you have this client/sick person relation and we didn’t consider ourselves sick, we just didn’t have a forum where we could talk about feelings…… (Nielsen, 2006, int.).

The group kept going for 5-6 years in the end with around 60-70 men moving in and out of the group. A new group was formed last October that currently has five men in addition to the two men running it. Adverts were ran in the local paper and posters hung up, looking for men to join the group. As before the basic feelings worked with were: anger, jealousy and fear. Every group will be a maximum of eight persons and they will each be told to stay with it for eight months. Experience has revealed that four or six months are simply not enough when you need to establish a trust relationship between members of a group. The aim is to develop a group where every man, if he has been under stress or exposed to neglect or sexual abuse as
a child has a forum to come to. Four other communities have attempted to establish men's group but due to the nature of the task they have been unsuccessful. Persons who join such a group do so because they are in a desperate state, some even suicidal, so having the strength and knowledge to handle such situations is vital and not everyone is prepared for this. The idea for such a group originally came from Alaska and the community approach they have adopted there and is quite different from the European system they are familiar with in Greenland (Nielsen, 2006, int.). The group has proved beneficial to participants and is most likely a very important community initiative in alleviating symptoms of social stress.

The Equal Status Council has attempted to request local authorities all over Greenland to establish a forum for men to discuss their issues and problems and recieve support and council, including but not restricted to violent behaviour. Unfortunately response from local authorities has been poor and only a few have responded positively (Equal Status Council of Greenland). Interestingly enough, preliminary results from SLICA indicate that in spite of the numerous problems related to alcohol consumption, violence and suicides the majority of the respondents in the Greenlandic part of the SLICA survey did not perceive those issues as a problem (Poppel, B., 2006, int.).

Now that we have looked at issues of conflict aviodance, community acceptance of certain methods of solving problems and the fact that, according to the SLICA results, many do not perceive violence as a problem it seems like a good time to look at the legal system.

The legal environment

Another interesting matter when looking at the question of violence is the absence of prisons in Greenland. Instead of prisons a prevention and resocialisation mechanism is in place; a unique legal system based in large part on traditional Greenlandic ‘justice system’ based on a magistrate’s court assisted by two lay assessors, none of which has any formal legal qualifications. All types of cases are tried in this court including criminal cases but decisions can be appealed to the Greenlandic High Court where in fact the judge has legal qualifications. Sentencing is made by the magistrate who is usually a member of the community in which he resides, the idea being that it is more appropriate for sentencing’ to have background knowledge within each community. The court has a free hand in choice of sanctions and sentencing is based on the ‘principle of the offender’ rather than the ‘principle of the act’ meaning that reactions are determined
according to the offender's personal conditions rather than according to the offence committed. The main criticism of this code has been that sentencing is too lenient; often in the form of fines, suspended sentences and supervision by the probation services. The following comment is from an editorial in the Greenlandic newspaper ‘Atuagagdluitit’ in August of 1988.

“It cannot possibly be intended that the victims must suffer for the rest of their lives while the criminals are let off with three or four months in the Institution for Convicts. It cannot be intended either that the courts which are for all of us in the community where we live are making decisions in favour of the criminals, apparently quite careless whether these hard criminals are going to commit the same misdeeds after a few months. It seems quite grotesque when compared to the sentences of the same courts in trite theft cases” (Brøndsted, 1996, p. 143-144).

The question is really whether an increasingly modern Greenland with a considerable rise in the number of violent offenses as well as level of severity, needs to adopt the institutions that are generally found within modern, western societies.

**Discussion**

It is clear that the impact of colonial relations and structures is still inherent within the Greenlandic society of modern day. The changing patterns of gender roles coincided with changes in the dynamics of colonial relations following the development and centralisation efforts after WWII. The struggle for an equal status of men and women is intertwined with the struggle for equal status of Danes and the Greenlandic. Remnants of certain structures within the different spheres of society are still in place, such as the duality of language in both education and labour market, the divide between the elite and the rest of the population, culturally ascribed gender roles etc.. This serves to create multidimensional tensions in interaction between different groups within society; men vs. women; Danes vs. Greenlandic; urban vs. rural; traditional vs. modern. This tension coupled with certain elements of the traditional culture that still are alive today have created an environment that sustains itself and at times leads to outbursts of violence that in any shape or form is a problem and on the rise.

There are however indications of changes and a willingness to begin to confront important issues, for instance the Home Rule plans for renewed effort in education and men’s groups; important community efforts to adress the issues
that men are dealing with in their daily lives, and so greatly impact their immediate environment. There is perception of a strong link between the issue of independence and all others and that confidence is both the expected result and the prerequisite for independence from Denmark. This of course makes life rather difficult for the Greenlandic nation.

Politically and psychologically the question comes down to identity and whether it is possible that by holding on to the romantizised and masculine identity of the hunter culture, when in fact the reality of today does not provide an adequate environment for such an identity, the conflict within escalates. Were individuals to develop and adopt an identity that more accurately reflects reality, they would in fact become better equipped to cope with an already altered culture. In fact a reconstruction of identity seems to be in the making with discussion on language of education and the fact that the Prime Minister speaks only Greenlandic. Perhaps slightly inconvenient at times in an increasingly globalised world, but probably very strong politically. It is a statement for identity building and that may very well be the most important part of the process of achieving independence, both economically and politically as well as creating a more peaceful environment for the Greenlandic people.
Long ago we came
To these lands where we now roam
lived off the rich nature
gathered our power from it
It is for our Descendants
what our forefathers possessed
It is the land of the Inuit
It is their right – for ever!

Then came those with different eyes
Brought in their way of life
Proclaimed of holy ones
wanted to influence us in every way!
Their leaders declared
that they should rule our lands
Take away their riches
And sell them over our heads!

To you
whom we elected Councils
We have been lulled to sleep!
United as one
we want to stand up!
For it is for our Descendants
what our Forefathers possessed.
It is the land of the people
they will rule it as one
It is their right – for ever!

(Malik Høegh: Greenlandic songs and poems)
References


Landstingslov nr. 7 af 11. april 2003 om ligestilling af kvinder og mænd.

Landstingslov nr. 8 af 11. april 2003 om ændring af landstingslov om Grønlands Ligetilingsraad.


Nuuk municipality, 2006. Information obtained with the help of MarieKathrine Poppel during a brief visit to the facilities of the municipality.


Rasmussen (2006). Royal Arctic Line. Get information from Joan


Appendix I – The SLICA project

The SLICA project is very large project currently underway and whose purpose is to find a relevant measure of people’s perceptions of their living conditions. By basing the survey on the perception of indigenous peoples in four different countries; Greenland, Alaska, Canada and Chukotka, as opposed to surveys that have been based on ideas of living conditions that reflect the dominant culture. The second goal of the SLICA project is to try to determine the impact structural change has on individual well-being (Andersen & Poppel, 2002). According to Poppel, B. (2006) the most important task was to define what to measure and find out what people’s priorities are. The approach revolves around resources such as: money, goods, health, mental and physical energy, social relations, physical security etc., the individual possession of those resources and the extent to which the individual can control his living conditions given certain external situations. For example, an individual with a high and very specialised education needs a certain set of external circumstances for this level of education to be of full use. Being a brainsurgeon is of less use in a small settlement in Greenland than having the full use of hunting skills for survival. Another interesting aspect of the SLICA project is the attempt to analyse causal relationships for changes in living conditions such as: climate change, government policies, self-government, resource development and education, among others. These are extraneous variables that affect both the individual and collective resources (external), not least in the rural Arctic of today.